

Universal Design Guidelines for Changing Places Toilets

Plain English Summary

June 2024



**Centre for Excellence
in Universal Design**

**Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority**

A Plain English Summary of the Guidelines

This Plain English summary was developed in response to public consultation feedback.

It was felt that a non-technical summary of the guidelines would be useful for some users of Changing Places Toilets.

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

Universal Design is about creating an environment that can be used by all people. It should not matter about your age, size, disability, or ability.

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design is part of the National Disability Authority.

It works to have excellence in Universal Design in:

- the design of the buildings and spaces
- the design of products and services
- information and communications technologies
- the development and promotion of standards
- education and professional development
- raising awareness of Universal Design

More information and updates on the website at: www.universaldesign.ie

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We also thank the individuals and organisations who attended the consultation workshop in June 2023 and gave their views to the public consultation in January 2024.

2 Statement on Language

In these guidelines, we use both the terms ‘people/persons with disabilities’ and ‘disabled people’.

Some people prefer the term ‘disabled people’. Many people in the disability rights movement in Ireland connect this term to the social model and human rights approach of disability. It recognises that people can be disabled by barriers in the environment and society.

However, others prefer the term ‘people/persons with disabilities’. This recognises that a person is a human being first with human rights. This is the language used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

We also know that some people don’t identify with either term.

3 Introduction

3.1 Aims

These guidelines are for:

- designers
- building managers
- owners of buildings and services
- people that use buildings and services
- people working in the industry
- people with an interest in disability

These guidelines will:

- say where Changing Places Toilets should be in a building
- say how Changing Places Toilets should be designed
- say how Changing Places Toilets should be managed and maintained
- work with the Building Regulations Part M 2022

3.2 What is a Changing Places Toilet?

A Changing Places Toilet is an accessible toilet space with a toilet, hoist, washbasin, adult-sized changing bench, and sometimes a shower.

There should be enough space for people with a range of abilities who may need assistance.

Image I - A Changing Places Toilet



Key

- A.** Toilet with space on both sides so assistance can be given.
- B.** Washbasin that can change height.
- C.** Privacy screen.
- D.** Changing bench that can change height.
- E.** Tracked hoist on the ceiling that covers the full room.
- F.** Shower – there might not be a shower in every Changing Places Toilet.

3.3 Who uses Changing Places Toilets?

Changing Places Toilets are larger toilet spaces.

They support people with complex care needs to take part in everyday activities such as travel, shopping, family days out, or going to a sporting or cultural event. This includes people using larger motorised wheelchairs.

Some neurodiverse people may also benefit from Changing Places Toilets as there is more space and less noise.

3.4 How many people use Changing Places Toilets?

The NDA carried out research. This research showed that between 17 and 38 thousand people in Ireland could use Changing Places Toilets.

3.5 Benefits of providing Changing Places Toilets

There are many good things about providing Changing Place Toilets. These include:

- **Increased participation in society:**

Providing access to a Changing Places Toilet supports a disabled person to take part in their community. It also benefits family members and personal assistants/carers, who may assist the disabled person.

- **Better hygiene and dignity:**

Some people have to use the floor of toilets as a space to change. This is not safe or clean and does not respect a person's dignity. A Changing Places Toilet can stop this.

- **Business benefits:**

Organisations that have a Changing Places Toilet can get different people to visit their business. Their customers will be more satisfied.

3.6 The difference between Changing Places Toilets and wheelchair accessible toilets

A Changing Places Toilet is not a replacement for a wheelchair accessible toilet. It is an extra toilet to meet the needs of people that cannot use other toilets.

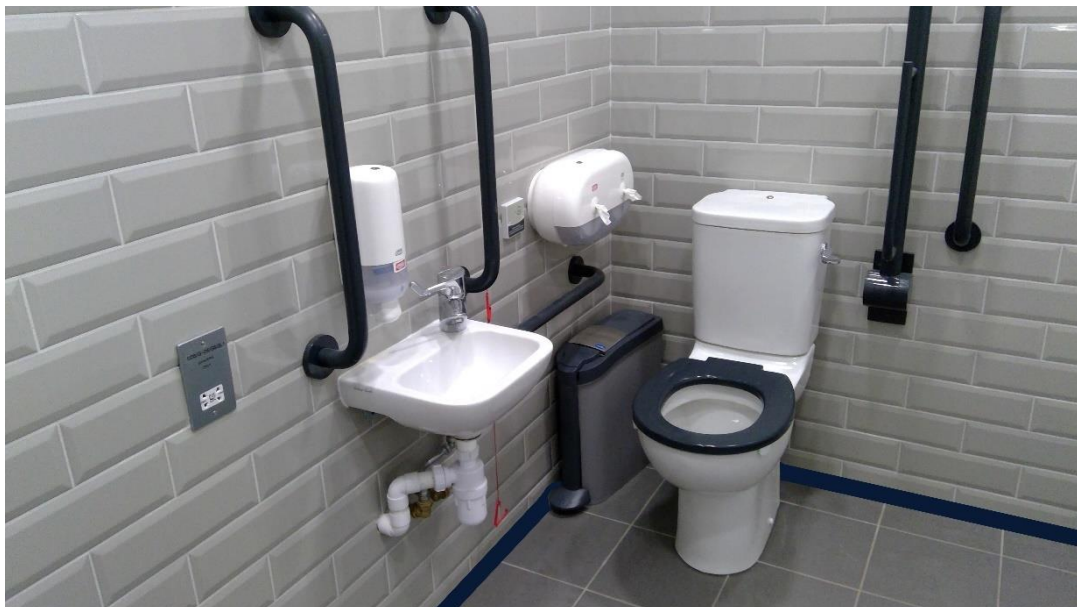
Changing Places Toilets are different to wheelchair accessible toilets in many ways:

- Changing Places Toilets are designed to allow Personal Assistants/Carers to assist someone in the room. Standard wheelchair accessible toilets are designed for people to use independently
- Changing Places Toilets have equipment and space to change clothes, carry out personal care routines, and in some cases take a shower
- In a Changing Places Toilet, the washbasin and the toilet are arranged differently to a wheelchair accessible toilet. The toilet has space on both sides for wheelchair transfers or assistance. The washbasin is not as close to the toilet as it is in a wheelchair accessible toilet

Image 2 - Toilet in a Changing Places Toilet with space on both sides for wheelchair transfers or for assistance to be provided



Image 3 - Wheelchair Accessible Toilet with corner toilet and washbasin within reach of the toilet



3.7 National Building Regulations Requirements

In 2022, the Minister of State for Housing, Local Government and Heritage changed Part M of the Building Regulations. This was to make Changing Places Toilets available in certain buildings.

The Building Regulations Part M says the least that should be done by law to provide Changing Places Toilets in certain buildings. This is called the minimum requirements.

There is a guidance document to go with the Building Regulations. This is called the Part M Technical Guidance Document 2022. This was also changed.

The Part M Technical Guidance Document says that people designing and putting up buildings should think about Universal Design. Universal Design is about following the law and doing more to make buildings accessible.

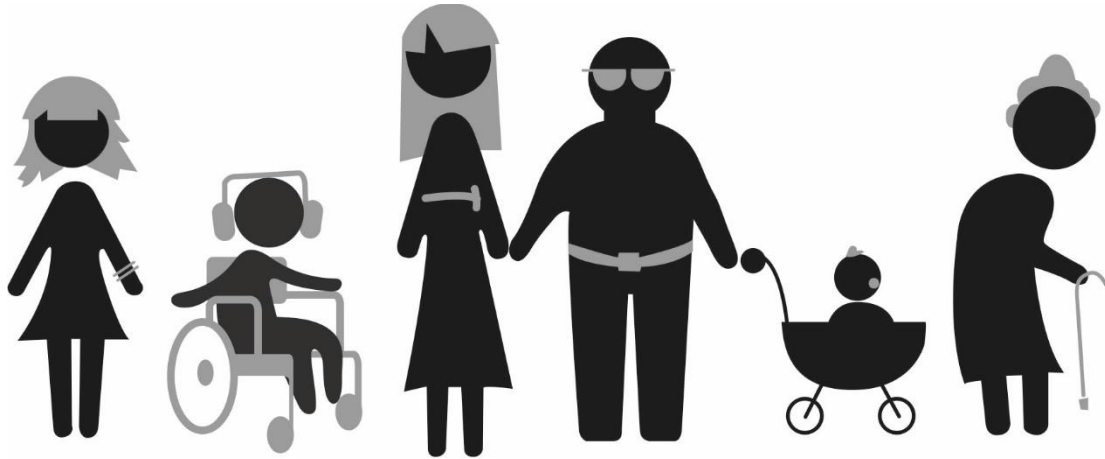
These guidelines recommend good ways of providing Changing Places Toilets. Some of these recommendations are about doing more than just the minimum requirements.

The Building Regulations do not say how a Changing Places Toilet should be managed or maintained. However, this is important and helps to keep the building accessible.

3.7.1 What is Universal Design?

Universal Design says that all buildings and places should be accessible. Accessible means that they are designed so everyone can use them easily. It should not matter about your age, size, ability, or disability.

If an environment is accessible and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. Universal Design creates products, services, and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, Universal Design is good design.



3.7.2 Involving Users in the Design Process

Universal Design involves users in the design process from an early stage. When planning a Changing Places Toilet, it is always good to talk to users and organisations at an early stage. This makes sure that the Toilet meets the needs and preferences of users, as well as the Building Regulations.

There are a range of users that could be consulted including:

- Disabled Persons Organisations
- Older Persons Organisations
- Groups for workers (where a Changing Places Toilet is being provided in a workplace)

[Changing Places Ireland](#) and the access officer in the local authority may have contact information for local organisations.

3.8 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

3.8.1 UNCRPD and Universal Design

Ireland agreed the UNCRPD in 2018. Article 4 of the Convention talks about universally designed buildings and services. It talks about promoting Universal Design in standards and guidelines.

3.8.2 UNCRPD and the participation of disabled people in decision making

Article 4 says Governments should make sure that disabled people take part in putting together policies and laws. They should help put them into action and check if they are working.

They should be part of making decisions about policies and laws at the local, national, and international level.

The NDA have guidelines called ['Participation Matters: Guidelines on implementing the obligation to meaningfully engage with disabled people in public decision making'](#). These guidelines support public officials to involve disabled people and their organisations in developing policies and in other decision-making.

This is an important part of following the UNCRPD.

4 Key Things to Think About

4.1 Provision



Changing Places Toilets are needed as well as wheelchair accessible toilets.

Follow the Building Regulations 2022 and provide a Changing Places Toilet when the law says you should.

Think about providing a Changing Places Toilet in other buildings and public spaces where they are not required by law.

This will make sure everyone can access the building.

4.2 Location



If you can, put a Changing Places Toilet near other toilets.

Think about where the Toilet will go early in the design.

This will make sure it is accessible to everyone.

Think about how close the Changing Places Toilet is to accessible parking.

4.3 Design and Installation



Make sure that you follow the Building Regulations when you design and put in the Changing Places Toilet.

Talk to people that will use the Changing Places Toilet to find out about their needs and preferences.

Pay attention to important details in the design, equipment, and finishes in a Changing Places Toilet.

4.4 Management and Maintenance



Have information for people before they visit a building.

Have signs that help people to find and use a Changing Places Toilet.

Make sure users can get into the Changing Places Toilet easily. Do not have complicated security arrangements.

Train staff to manage the Changing Places Toilet.

5 Provision

5.1 Changing Places Toilets – Making sure more people can use a building

Providing a Changing Places Toilet means that more people can use a building. If there is no Changing Places Toilet, some people could be left out because there would be no toilet to meet their needs.

It is important to find out if a Changing Places Toilet is needed in a building. It is important to decide if more than one Changing Places Toilet is needed.

5.2 Minimum requirements for a Changing Places Toilet

5.2.1 Part M Technical Guidance Document 2022

The Building Regulations say that there should be Changing Places Toilets in certain buildings.

The size and use of a building is important. The Part M Technical Guidance Document sets out 14 different building uses and sizes where a Changing Places Toilet is needed. There should be at least one Changing Places Toilet in these buildings.

5.2.2 Minimum Requirements for Mixed-Use Buildings

Some buildings are used for different things. These are called mixed-use buildings.

The Part M Technical Guidance Document says that it is enough to have one Changing Places Toilet in such a building if it is in the right place. For example, it may be beside other toilets and available to everyone using the building.

If the building layout or management means that some people using the building cannot access the Changing Places Toilet, more than one may be needed. For example, in a mixed-use building with a shopping centre and cinema of the right size, there could be a shared Changing Places Toilet. This should be available from when the shopping centre opens until the cinema closes. If the Changing Places Toilet is not available when the shopping centre or cinema is open, there should be a separate Changing Places Toilet for the shopping centre and the cinema.

5.2.3 Minimum requirements for outdoor places used for people to meet and for leisure activities

The Part M Technical Guidance Document says when a Changing Places Toilet is needed for certain outdoor places. These are places where people meet. They are used for leisure and entertainment, such as zoos, amusement parks, and theme parks.

For these outdoor places, it is important to think about the size and the distance from another building that has a Changing Places Toilet.

A Changing Places Toilet is needed in a building or part of a building that can have more than 2,000 people outdoors (not counting staff). This is unless there is another building with a Changing Places Toilet within 250 metres. This distance is measured as a straight line between buildings, rather than as a travel distance.

5.3 Taking a Universal Design approach - going beyond the minimum requirements

We should think about having Changing Places Toilets in other buildings and public spaces. This would make them accessible to all. For example:

- provide a Changing Places Toilet in a building where the use or size is not listed in the Part M Technical Guidance Document
- provide a Changing Place Toilet in a building that is already there
- provide more than one Changing Places Toilet in a large building
- in a theatre, provide a Changing Places Toilet backstage for performers as well as one for members of the audience
- in a stadium, provide more than one Changing Places Toilet so people in different parts of the stadium do not have to travel far to use it

When you think about providing a Changing Places Toilet, think about what the building is used for and how many people can use it. Try to make sure that the people using the building have a good experience.

5.4 Improving the access and use of existing buildings

Many organisations want to improve the access to and use of their buildings and services. They want to improve the visitor experience for everyone.

Organisations should check if Changing Places Toilets should be provided within their buildings.

5.4.1 Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005

Section 25 of the Disability Act says that public buildings should follow any changes to the Building Regulations.

This should happen not later than 10 years after the change is made.

The Building Regulations Part M started on 1 January 2022.

The Disability Act says that a public building is a building, or part of a building, that members of the public access and which is occupied, managed or controlled by a public body.

Public bodies should know what to do to follow Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005. This might mean that they need Changing Places Toilets in their buildings.

5.5 Planning and building control

A Changing Places Toilet may need planning permission.

It will need to meet the Building Regulations and Building Control Regulations.

If you are thinking of putting a Changing Places Toilet into a building, you should get advice from a professional person that knows about Changing Places Toilets. You should do this in the early stages of a project. This will make sure that all work meets planning and building laws.

6 Location

It is important that people can easily find a Changing Places Toilet in a building. It is important that you can get in and out of the Toilet safely.

6.1 Consider location at early design stages

Think about where to put a Changing Places Toilet in a building at an early design stage. This will make sure there is enough space, and it is in the best place. It will cut down on security arrangements and make sure the route to the toilet is accessible.

6.2 Maximising access and use

Changing Places Toilets should be easy for everyone to access and use.

Ideally, a Changing Places Toilet should:

- be near to other toilets
- be near accessible parking or set down areas
- be close to the entrance to the building
- allow for security and management arrangements that make access easy

For example, there is a Changing Places Toilet in a school. This is used after hours for community events and sporting activities. It should be in a part of the school that is available during all opening times.

6.3 Accessibility and security

Wherever possible, you should be able to access all toilets freely. This will maintain the dignity and privacy of users. Some people need to use the toilet more often than others, and some people need to use the toilet quickly. If you have to find a key or member of staff, this will delay

access. This can be a problem and may cause discomfort for some people.

Changing Places Toilet should be in a part of the building that keeps security arrangements to a minimum level. Wherever possible, the Changing Places Toilet should be unlocked during opening times. A Changing Places Toilet in a staffed building should be kept unlocked when not in use.

In some cases, you might need to lock a Changing Places Toilet, for example, to stop anti-social behaviour.

6.4 Location in existing buildings

Changing Places Toilets can be put into a building that is already there. They should be near the entrance to the building or beside other toilets.

The route to the Changing Places Toilet should be easy for everyone to use. This may mean changing corridors and doors along the route. For example, doors along the route to a Changing Places Toilet may need to be widened and/or held open.

6.5 Signage and wayfinding

Signs needs to be carefully designed. They should be placed so it is easy for users to find a Changing Places Toilet.

Image 4 - Example of signage at a Changing Places Toilet at an outdoor venue.



Design Features

- Clear, large signs that are easy to see and read.
- Different colours and textures so you can see the entrance door and outside wall and ground

7 Design and Installation

Putting a Changing Places Toilet into a building is called an installation. The design and installation of a Changing Places Toilet should follow the Building Regulations.

It is important to pay attention to details on the design, equipment, and finishes. For example, if you have large equipment in the Toilet, the room might need to be bigger so there is still space to move around.

This section gives guidance on the design of Changing Places Toilets, taking a Universal Design approach.

7.1 Approach

Careful planning and design are needed to make sure that the route to a Changing Places Toilet is accessible to a wide range of users. This should happen in new and current buildings.

Doors should be wide enough for everyone. They should open and close in a way that is accessible and safe for all.

There should be enough clear space outside the door to the Changing Places Toilet. This will support users to enter the Changing Places Toilet easily, or to turn around if the Changing Places Toilet is already in use.

7.2 Size and space

Changing Places Toilets should be a certain size. There are minimum requirements for size and wheelchair turning space.

There are minimum requirements for the arrangement of equipment, grab rails, and other fittings in a Changing Places Toilet.

7.3 Doors to Changing Places Toilets

The door to a Changing Places Toilet should not self-close unless the door is an accessible power-operated door or a fire door.

Doors should be easy to open, close, and lock. You should be able to open the door with a closed fist.

The privacy bolt or lock should have a visual sign to show if the Changing Places Toilet is free or if it is being used.

There are minimum requirements for the width of the doors and the space around them. This is to make sure that people using large wheelchairs can use the Toilet.

Doors to Changing Places Toilets should have an emergency mechanism so they can be opened from the outside. The best option is a door that opens out from the Changing Places Toilet. This gives the most room for moving around in a wheelchair inside the Toilet. A door that opens out can be opened easily in an emergency if a person has fallen against the door inside the room. Doors should be planned and built in a way that does not block access or escape routes when they are opened.

Doors should be automatic where possible. This is because opening a door while guiding a wheelchair can be difficult. Controls for automatic doors should be easy to use and easy to see.

It is important that noise is kept inside the Changing Places Toilet. This is for privacy. Doors should be designed so that you cannot hear conversations taking place in the Toilet. Listeners may hear sounds but should not be able to make out what the speakers are saying.

7.4 Toilet pan

There are minimum requirements for the toilet pan in a Changing Places Toilet. This says where the toilet pan should be placed and how much clear space should be around it. There should be space on either side of the toilet to allow for Personal Assistants / Carers to assist on both sides.

There should be drop-down support rails and grab rails on the wall on both sides of the toilet.

There should be a toilet paper dispenser on at least one of the drop-down support rails and on both drop-down support rails if possible. Wherever possible, you should be able to change the height of the dropdown support rails.

Image 5 - Image of a toilet pan with space around it and support rails



The toilet seat should be at a certain height above the floor. In some buildings, for example, day centres, health-care settings, or schools a different height toilet may be needed.

There should be a shelf for personal care items. This is to keep them clean and dry, for example, sanitary pads, wipes, hygiene products, incontinence wear, and PPE.

It is important to talk to users to see if there is a need for the following items:

- A toilet that can change height
- A toilet that can wash and dry. This takes away the need for a person to wipe after using the toilet

Image 6 - Example of a toilet that can change height



7.5 Changing bench

7.5.1 Wall-mounted changing bench

The Part M Technical Guidance Document says that there should be an adult-sized changing bench in a Changing Places Toilet. This should be hung on the wall.

A changing bench hung on the wall cannot be removed from the Changing Places Toilet. This is the best option in most public buildings.

You should be able to change the height of the bench with a control that is powered by the mains. There should be a safety switch to stop the changing bench from lowering if there is anything under it.

There should be clear space in front of the changing bench.

There are minimum requirements for the size of the bench and the weight that it should be able to hold.

The changing bench should have side safety rails that can be folded up or down. There should be instructions on how to use the rails and on how to change the height of the bench.

There should be a grab rail at the side of the changing bench.

If there is a shower, there should be a suitable changing bench to get rid of the wastewater.

The material on the changing bench should be comfortable, easy to wipe, and should support infection control.

There should be no lights above the head or foot of the changing bench.

7.5.2 Freestanding changing bench

A freestanding bench can be moved. The person using it can be assisted by two or more people either side of the bench. When a bench is hung on the wall, it means that the person using it can be assisted on one side of the bench only.

In some cases, for example in a day centre with staff who know the equipment, a freestanding changing bench may be better than a bench hung on the wall. It is important to check what works best for the users of the Changing Places Toilet.

Image 7 - Example of a changing bench hung on a wall. You can change the height of this bench.



Image 8 - A person, using a hoist, being moved onto a changing bench by two assistants. The changing bench is hung on the wall.



7.6 Washbasin

You should be able to change the height of the washbasin. This will meet the needs of both standing and seated users. The washbasin should be power-operated. There should be clear space around it. If there is a remote control, it should be easy to see and there should be a place to hang it.

There are minimum requirements for the height of the washbasin. There should be nothing under the washbasin. There should be a safety switch to stop the washbasin from lowering if there is anything under it.

There are minimum requirements for the size of the washbasin. It should be big enough for people to have a full body wash, or to wash personal care equipment.

There should be grabrails beside the washbasin to provide support and allow a person to steady themselves at the washbasin. They may be used by some people to pull themselves up to standing.

There should be an automatically controlled tap or a tap that can be worked with a closed fist. You should be able to see the washbasin and tap against the background.

There should be waterproof instructions on the wall about how to work the washbasin. These should be easy to understand, with suitable pictures.

Image 9 - Example of a washbasin that can change height, from Kildare County Council



7.7 Mirrors

There should be a mirror over the washbasin. This should be of a certain size.

Some washbasins that change height have a mirror with the washbasin. This allows the height of both the mirror and washbasin to change together.

There should be a full-length mirror on the wall. It should be easy for everyone to access this. Both seated and standing users should be able to see themselves.

The mirror should not go down to the floor as it may be damaged by wheelchair footrests. It can also be mistaken for a door or wall opening.

7.8 Soap dispenser

There should be a soap dispenser above the washbasin.

The soap dispenser should be automatic or easy to work with one hand. Pump dispensers should not be used.

It is good practice to have a hand sanitiser. It should also be automatic or easy to work with one hand.

7.9 Hand drying

There should be a hand dryer and a paper towel dispenser in a Changing Places Toilet. Having both gives the user choice, for example, those who are sensitive to noise or heat may prefer to use paper towels.

Hand dryers should be low noise. Loud hand dryers can cause discomfort for people who are sensitive to noise. The hand dryer

should work by motion sensor or push button. The push button should work with a closed fist.

The hand dryer should be near the washbasin. The hand dryer should not need the user to put their hands into the top of the dryer.

There should be enough space in front of the hand dryer for a wheelchair user to wheel up to it.

The paper towel dispenser should be hung on the wall, close to the washbasin. It should be easy to work with one hand.

Both the paper towel dispenser and hand dryer should be easy to see against the background.

7.10 Wide paper roll dispenser

There should be a wide paper roll dispenser. This should be hung on the wall. It should be beside the head of the changing-bench.

Where possible, the paper roll dispenser should not be too close to the shower.

7.11 Hoist system

There should be a hoist that covers the full room in a Changing Places Toilet. This should always be charging.

There are minimum requirements on the type of hoist that can be put in a Changing Places Toilet, and how it should be installed.

The room and hoist system should support a safe load of not less than 200kg. The hoist, the washbasin, and the changing bench should have the same lifting load.

There are minimum requirements for the space needed for a ceiling hoist.

The hoist should be able to lift a person from the ground in an emergency.

The controls for the hoist should be easy to see against the background.

There should be clear, visual instructions for the hoist. Signs for the hoist should have information on the safety features, for example, the maximum weight it can take, the date of the last service.

It is important to talk to the people that use the Changing Places Toilet about extra equipment that might be needed for the hoist. This might be an attachment, such as a spreader bar or weighing scales.

Image 10 - Example of a user being hoisted within a Changing Places Toilet.



7.12 Privacy screen

A privacy screen is a folding screen hung on the wall, or on wheels. It can be pulled out to give dignity to the user in a Changing Places Toilet.

7.12.1. Privacy Screen hung on the wall

The Part M Technical Guidance Document says there should be a privacy screen hung on the wall. This gives extra privacy to a person using a Changing Places Toilets when they use the changing bench or toilet.

There are minimum requirements for the size of the privacy screen. The screen should have a surface that is easy to clean and dry.

A privacy screen hung on the wall cannot be removed from the Changing Places Toilet. This will be the best option in most public buildings.

7.12.2. Freestanding Privacy Screen

A freestanding privacy screen can give more flexibility than one that is hung on the wall. It can be put in different areas of the room. In some cases, for example in a day centre with staff who know the equipment, a freestanding privacy screen may be better than one that is hung on the wall. It is important to talk to the people that use the Changing Places Toilet about the best screen for them.

If a freestanding privacy screen is provided, it should have sturdy wheels that can carry the weight of the privacy screen when moving and stop it from tipping over.

Image 11 - Example of a privacy screen hung on the wall.



7.13 Waste disposal bins

There should be 2 bins in a Changing Places Toilet, 1 for general refuse and 1 for sanitary / offensive waste.

The bin provided for sanitary / offensive waste should be large enough for PPE and incontinence products.

The bins should not block space in the Toilet.

Some users may not be able to use pedal-bins. Hands-free bins are good for infection control as they stop people from touching the top of the bin. Automatic or sensor bins are accessible and use a low amount of power. They do not need the battery to be changed very often.

7.14 Ventilation

Ventilation is about getting air from outside into a room. There should be enough fresh air. It should be possible to take away moisture after showering. Extra ventilation, for example windows, may be good.

If there is a fan, it should be as quiet as possible. Noise can upset some people and can be a barrier to communication.

Heating and fans should not blow air on top of a person using the Toilet. For example, do not put fans over the changing bench or toilet where a person can be for long periods of time.

7.15 Sanitary towel dispenser

Think about having a sanitary towel dispenser in a Changing Places Toilet. Make sure that it is in a place that is accessible to everyone.

7.16 Emergency assistance alarm system

There should be an emergency alarm with 2 pull cords in the Changing Places Toilet. This will allow the person using the Toilet or Personal Assistant / Carer to call for help if needed. These cords need to be carefully placed so they do not stop the hoist from working.

The 2 alarm pull cords should have 2 red bangles. These should be placed so the cord can be reached by a person who has fallen to the floor. They should also be reached by someone sitting or standing.

There should be a reset button to set the alarm again if the button has been used.

There should be signs that staff can see or hear at a central control point to alert staff if there is an emergency call. There should also be a sign that can be seen and heard by people outside the Changing Places

Toilet. This is so they can give help. The sound should be different from the fire alarm sound.

The alarm system should be planned in the early stages of design, so it works with all other alarms in the building.

There should be clear instructions on what to do if you need to press the alarm. There should be information about how help will be given in an emergency.

7.17 Lighting

Timed lighting should not be used in a Changing Places Toilet.

Lights should be placed to avoid creating shadows, glare, and reflections. Ceiling lights should not block the hoist.

Lights should be suitable for a 'wet room'.

Lights should be evenly spread throughout the room.

Ultraviolet light should not be used in Changing Places Toilets as it cuts down lighting levels and makes it harder to see things.

Lights that can be changed in the room may be good for some neurodiverse people.

7.18 Heating

Changing Places Toilets need to be heated to a comfortable temperature. People using the Toilet may be undressed for long periods of time while they are changing or showering.

Think about using underfloor heating in the design as it will give a consistent temperature around the room.

If radiators are used, they should not stick out into the space or cut down the wheelchair turning space or the space beside the toilet, washbasin, or changing bench. Radiators should not be near the changing bench where a person could touch it and it could cause an injury. They should have a screen over them or have their surfaces kept at a temperature below 43° Celsius.

7.19 Shower

A shower in a Changing Places Toilet allows people to wash after using the toilet or to get changed, for example at a leisure centre or swimming pool.

A shower is not needed in all Changing Places Toilets. A shower is needed if spaces with showers and toilets are provided for use by people other than staff, for example in sports and leisure centres.

It is important to talk to the people using the Changing Places Toilet about the need for a shower.

If there is a shower, the controls should be easy to use. You should be able to work them with a closed fist. The markings on the shower control should be clear. The shower control should be accessible to everyone.

The shower rail should be near to the changing bench.

There are minimum requirements and guidance for the shower and equipment, for example, the shower head, hose, water temperature.

When installing a shower into a Changing Places Toilet, it is important to think about how the wastewater will be removed.

A Changing Places Toilet with a shower will need regular cleaning as wet floors may stop people from using it. The changing bench needs to be dried before dressing, and users should be reminded to bring their own towels.

7.20 Accessories

There should be a changing shelf near the toilet. There should be another shelf near the changing bench to allow Personal Assistants / Carers to easily reach personal care items. Shelves should not stop Personal Assistants / Carers being able to safely work the hoist or attend to the person on the changing bench.

There should be at least 2 clothing hooks.

7.21 Signage

There should be signs at the entrance of the Changing Places Toilet. This should say where the nearest accessible toilet and baby changing room is located. It is useful to give information on the right use of the Changing Places Toilet, for example in Image 12 below.

Image 12 - Example of door sign about the use of a Changing Places Toilet



There should be accessible signs with instructions on how to safely work the changing bench, hoist, and washbasin.

Information should also be provided on who to contact should the Toilet need to be maintained or cleaned.

Think about having Braille signs on taps, hand dryers, and on the toilet near the flush.

7.22 Flooring and surface finishes

The floor surface should be step free, level, and slip resistant, especially when wet.

The surface finish of the floor should look different to the walls and door. Matt surface finishes should be used throughout to avoid glare.

There should be careful use of colour in the design. Strong busy patterns should be avoided on walls and floors. They can cause confusion, particularly for people who are blind and partially sighted and people who are neurodiverse.

Finishes should make the room inviting and user friendly.

If there is artwork in the room, it should be carefully located so that it does not compete with signs and instructions. Large wall murals and floor to ceiling artwork should be avoided as they can cause confusion for some people with dementia.

8 Management and Maintenance

This section gives guidance on good ways to manage and maintain Changing Places Toilets.

8.1 Pre-visit information

Organisations should tell the community about new Changing Places Toilets. It is important to give people information before they visit a building. This will help them to plan their journey and to have a better visit experience.

It is particularly important for disabled people and their Personal Assistants / Carers to have information before a visit. They do not always know if the toilets will meet their needs.

8.1.1 Registration of Changing Places Toilets

Changing Places Ireland keep a register of Changing Places Toilets in Ireland. They have a map of all the Changing Places Toilets on their website. They also have a link to each Changing Places Toilet.

Putting a Changing Places Toilet on the register allows users to find out where Changing Places Toilets are throughout the country.

The register gives information on the design and equipment in place at each of the Changing Places Toilets. All information is available in one place.

The website is very helpful as it gives direct links to individual websites and contacts for each Changing Places Toilet.

To voluntarily register a Changing Places Toilet, contact [Changing Places Ireland](#).

8.1.2 Checklist of pre-visit information

Information that people need before they visit a building is usually on a website and should have the information in the checklist below.

8.1.2.1 Person to manage and maintain the Toilet

- Contact person's name, number, and e-mail
- Say clearly how long it will take for this person to return a call/email
- You should be able to contact the person when the Changing Places Toilet is open

8.1.2.2 Person in case of emergency

- Contact person's name, number, and e-mail
- Say clearly how long it will take for this person to return a call/email
- You should be able to contact the person when the Changing Places Toilet is open

8.1.2.3 Details about the Changing Places Toilet

- Where the Changing Places Toilet is
- Opening hours
- How to get into the Toilet, for example, is it unlocked, locked by a key, or is there another way to open it, information on any security arrangements
- Car-parking spaces and routes to the Changing Places Toilet, distance to the Toilet from accessible parking spaces, and the opening hours of parking

- Photographs of the Changing Places Toilet, the route to it, and its equipment
- Description of the Changing Places Toilet and the equipment in it, including the size of the room
- Clear information on the equipment, for example, the type of hoist or changing bench, the weight that they will take, the type of slings that can be used with the hoist
- Instructions for using the hoist, changing bench, washbasin etc. You should be able to download these
- Reminder to users to bring their own sling or slings, and towels if there is a shower
- Any things that are different about the Changing Places Toilet, for example, if you can switch off the hand dryer or if there is extra equipment for the hoist
- A feedback form for after the visit

You should have information about the Changing Places Toilet in the social story of the building, if there is one for visitors to download. A social story helps share information about the building in a way that people can understand. Parents, professionals, and people with autism of all ages can use the social story.

Members of the local community should be made aware of Changing Places Toilets. For example, you could have printed maps and guides at reception areas in local buildings, such as public libraries and community centres.

8.1.2.4 Pre-visit information for Toilets already in place

In Ireland, a number of toilets were put into buildings before the changes to the Building Regulations (Part M). Some, but not all, meet the new rules for a Changing Places Toilet. For example, the room might be smaller than the recommended size, it might be missing some important equipment, or the equipment may not be to the right standard. Some of these toilets are known as ‘step-down’ facilities.

It is important to give people clear information about these toilets before they visit a building. This information should say clearly the size of the room and give information about the equipment in place. This helps users decide if the toilet will be accessible to them before they visit the building.

8.2 Information during visit

There should be good information about the Changing Places Toilet at the building.

There should be good signs, so the Toilet is easy to find.

There should be information about the Changing Places Toilet in the accessible visitor handbook and at reception areas. There should also be information at key points around the building.

Information on Changing Places Toilets should be given at events and festivals also. There should be enough information about a mobile Changing Places Toilet so all visitors can have a good experience.

There is an information checklist below:

8.2.1 Information at and inside the Changing Places Toilet

- Well-designed signs and ways to find the Changing Places Toilet

- Opening hours, security, and how to get into the Changing Places Toilet
- Instructions for all equipment that you use with a switch or control, information on what types of slings can be used with the hoist
- Contact details for the people that manage the Toilet, deal with emergencies or accidents, information about who to contact if the room or equipment is not working properly
- Cleaning plan – showing the last time the Toilet was cleaned

8.3 Managing accessibility and security

It is important that disabled people can easily get into a Changing Places Toilet. They should not have to get around complicated security arrangements or depend on security staff to open the Toilet.

Ideally, a Changing Places Toilet should be left unlocked when not in use. This makes it easy for disabled people to access and use it.

On-site security staff and the use of CCTV outside are ways of checking the use of the Changing Places Toilet. It is important to follow data protection law when putting in CCTV.

Where a Changing Places Toilet is locked for security reasons, the following measures should be in place:

- A management plan to make sure that users can access the Toilet when they need to. This plan should think about the fact that some users may require very quick access to a Changing Places Toilet
- Staff training
- There should be good information for people about security at the Changing Places Toilet before they visit a building. For example,

information about the lock and key if the door to the Toilet is locked for security reasons. There should be information about where to go to get the key to the Toilet

- Get feedback from the people that use the Toilet. Make improvements regularly and make sure access is well maintained
- Security arrangements so users can easily get into the Changing Places Toilet such as:
 - have a universal key system: say where to get this type of key at information points and at customer service desks
 - give keys to regular users of the centre or building
 - find different ways to keep the Toilet secure. For example, different ways to get into the Changing Places Toilet, such as a fob, keypad code, with a mobile phone, using new technology
 - have an accessible intercom at the door to the Changing Places Toilet. People could use this to contact building management to get access to the Changing Places Toilet. The intercom should be accessible to all users

8.4 Staff training

You should train staff when you put a new Changing Places Toilet into a building. This training should tell staff the good things about a Changing Places Toilet. It should tell them how to manage the Toilet.

Staff training should explain that that some users may not be wheelchair users and some users may have disabilities that you cannot see.

Information on the Changing Places Toilet should also be part of regular Disability Awareness Training. This will make sure that all staff are

aware of the accessibility issues faced by disabled people and how to manage the Toilet.

People that move disabled people should have manual handling training. Staff should be trained to understand that they should only help move a person in the Changing Places Toilet if they have the right training. This is to stop accidents and to stop people from getting hurt.

Staff should be trained to record any problems with the Toilet or equipment, and how to bring issues to management.

8.5 Routine monitoring and maintenance

Maintaining a Changing Places Toilet makes sure that it is always fully accessible and can be used. There should be on-going routine monitoring and maintenance. Equipment should be tested regularly. There should be plans in place to keep the Changing Places Toilet clean at all times and to dry the floor if a person uses the shower.

8.5.1 Maintaining equipment

There should be ongoing testing, servicing, and maintenance of equipment. This should follow recommendations from the companies that made the equipment, European and international standards, and Health and Safety laws.

There should be ways to check equipment and to keep it working well. The management team should have a policy for regular servicing of equipment. They should keep up-to-date records on services and inspections. Testing and servicing should be carefully planned so it does not stop access to the Changing Places Toilet.

Broken equipment should be fixed quickly or replaced with new equipment. It would be good to get feedback from users when new equipment is needed in the Changing Places Toilet.

8.5.2 Cleaning

Changing Places Toilets should be cleaned regularly so they are safe and pleasant for everyone to use. All staff that clean the Toilet should know how to maintain the Changing Places Toilet. Managers in the building should carry out regular inspections to make sure the Toilet is clean. Information about ways to clean the Toilet and what to use for the Changing Places Toilet should be kept in the building manual.

Staff should be trained on:

- How the Changing Places Toilet and equipment should be cleaned.
- What cleaning products should be used in the Changing Places Toilet
- How often the Toilet and equipment is cleaned
- How to record information about the cleaning plan
- How to report problems in cleaning or maintaining the Toilet
- What PPE to wear when cleaning the Changing Places Toilet and how to get rid of cleaning waste and PPE
- How to get rid of different types of waste in the Toilet

8.5.3 Routine maintenance and checks

Changing Places Toilets need regular maintenance, so they work correctly and meet the needs of the user. It is important to check the following:

- The door is easy to open, and locks and handles are working

- The hoist is working
- The changing bench is working
- The washbasin and taps are working
- The toilet has been flushed and is clean
- The floor is dried after shower use
- The grabrails are firmly secured and the drop-down rails are working
- There is enough toilet paper, paper towels, paper rolls and PPE
- Any extra equipment is stored in the right way
- The lights are working and are not flickering
- Cleaning supplies or equipment is not stored or blocking the way in the Changing Places Toilet
- Signs and instructions are up-to date, accessible and clear to read
- Assistance alarms are in the right place and working
- Heating is working
- There is good movement of air around the Toilet
- Fire alarms are tested regularly in line with the law and good practice

8.6 Health and Safety

8.6.1 Evacuation planning

Changing Places Toilets can be in a building or a public space. Careful planning is needed to make sure everyone can get out of the Toilet safely in an emergency. There may need to be a policy for this.

It is important to think about getting people out in an emergency when you design a Changing Places Toilet.

8.6.2 Risk assessments

Risk assessments can help cut down the risk of injury and illness when using the Changing Places Toilet. They can help keep users safe.

Risk assessments should be done when you design and before you open a Changing Places Toilet.

As part of the risk assessment, you could think about vandalism, staff responsibilities, anti-social behaviour, break-ins, theft, people using the Toilet or equipment in the wrong way, and staffing issue.



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