



**Centre for Excellence  
in Universal Design**

**Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais  
National Disability Authority**

# **Universal Design Guidelines for Changing Places Toilets**



**This is an Easy to Read report.**

# This is a Changing Places Toilet



# What is this information about?



This information is about guidelines for Changing Places Toilets.



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais  
National Disability Authority

These guidelines are from the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, which is part of the National Disability Authority.



Guidelines help us do things well.  
These guidelines tell us the good ways to design, build, and manage Changing Places Toilets.



The guidelines can help make sure that Irish building laws are followed.  
For example, Part M of the Building Regulations, 2022.

# Who are the guidelines for?



- Designers – people that have ideas, think about, plan, and make things



- Builders



- People that own and manage buildings



- People with disabilities and their supporters.

# What is Universal Design?



Universal Design says that all buildings and places should be accessible.

Accessible means they are designed so everyone can use them easily.



The law tells us the minimum that must be done.

Universal Design is about following the law and doing more to make buildings accessible.



With Universal Design, the people that use a building help with the design from the start.



It is important to talk with the people that use Changing Places Toilets about their needs.

# What is a Changing Places Toilet?



Some people may not be able to use a wheelchair accessible toilet. These are for people to use independently.



A Changing Places Toilet is different to a wheelchair accessible toilet.



It has a toilet, sink, changing bench, and hoist. Sometimes, it may have a shower, for example, in a leisure centre.



This Toilet has space for personal assistants or carers to help a person. A person can have personal care support, for example, to have a pad changed.



A Changing Places Toilet has different things to help a person in the toilet.  
This is called equipment.



A Changing Places Toilet should meet the needs of people with different disabilities.  
For example, people with physical disabilities, older people, autistic people.



Some people prefer to use a Changing Places Toilet because there is more space, and it is not as noisy.



The number of Changing Places Toilets you need depends on the building and people in it.  
Some places might need more than one Changing Places Toilet.

# What are the good things about a Changing Places Toilet?



A person may not be able to use a building if there is no toilet to meet their needs.  
A Changing Places Toilet means more people can use a building or public space.



This means more people can take part in their communities.  
This is good for the person, their family, personal assistants, and carers.



Having a Changing Places Toilet means there is a safe clean place for a person to be helped to use the toilet or to change a pad.



Organisations with a Changing Places Toilet can have more people to visit and happier customers.



# Where should a Changing Places Toilet be?



It is important to think about Changing Places Toilets when a building is designed. This is so there can be enough space, in the right place, from the start.



The way to a Changing Places Toilet should be accessible. Corridors and doors need to be wide enough for people with large wheelchairs.



There should be good signs so people can find the Toilet easily.



Changing Places Toilets should be in the same place as other toilets in a building. They could be near the front door of the building.

# Designing and Building a Changing Places Toilet



It is important to get advice from an expert when planning a Changing Places Toilet. This is to make sure that all building laws are followed.



Here are some examples of the guidelines for Changing Places Toilets:



There should be clear space outside the door to a Changing Places Toilet.

This means you can get in easily or turn around if someone is in the Toilet already.

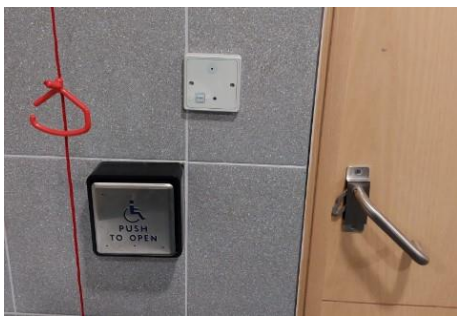


The size of a Changing Places Toilet is very important.

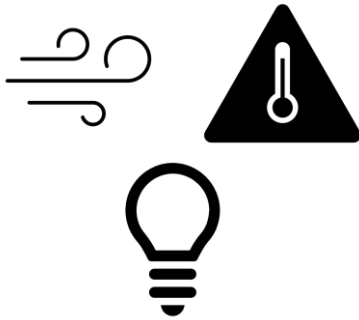
There should be enough room for a wheelchair user to turn easily.



The door should be automatic if possible.  
This means it can open and close by itself.  
It should open out from the Toilet to give more space inside.



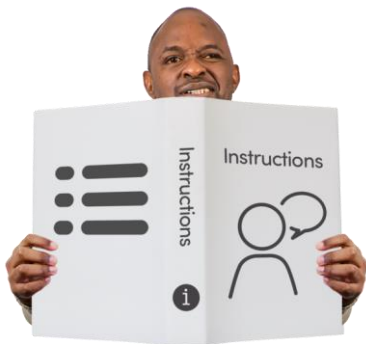
The door handles and locks should be easy for everyone to understand and use.



The guidelines give advice on fresh air, heat, and light in a Changing Places Toilet.



The layout of the Toilet is very important.  
There should be enough space at the changing bench, toilet, and sink for a person using a wheelchair and their personal assistant or carer.



The equipment and controls in the Toilet should be easy to use.

There should be clear information about how to use the equipment.



It should be easy to see the difference between the floor, wall, toilet, sink, and rails.



The floor should be level.

It should not be slippery, especially when wet.



There should be an emergency alarm pull cord.

This should not be tied up.

There should be information on what to do in an emergency.



There should be a safe hoist on the ceiling which meets the safety laws.



There should be rails near the toilet and sink. The guidelines say what type of rails should be used and where they should be placed.



There should be space on both sides of the toilet so a person can be helped on both sides.



It is good to have a shelf near the toilet for personal care items, for example, wipes or pads.



There should be space around the sink.  
You should be able to change the height of the sink, so it suits people sitting or standing.



The sink should be big enough for people to have a full body wash, or to wash personal care items.



The hand dryers should be low noise.  
If they are very loud, it can be uncomfortable for some people.



There should be an adult-sized changing bench with clear space around it.  
You should be able to change the height of the changing bench safely.



The changing bench should have safety rails at the side that can be folded up or down.



The changing bench should be comfortable and easy to wipe and clean.  
There should be a paper roll for the bench.



There should be a privacy screen.  
This can be pulled out to hide the person using the toilet or changing bench and their personal assistants or carers.

# Managing a Changing Places Toilet



Here are some good ways to manage a Changing Places Toilet:



People should be able to get information about the Toilet before they visit a building. They can check it meets their needs. This information could be on a website.



The website should have the name, number, and email for a contact person. It should say who to contact in an emergency.



The information should say where the Toilet is, the opening hours, and how to get into it.





It is better if a Changing Places Toilet is not locked during normal opening times.



Some people may need to use the toilet more often or at short notice.



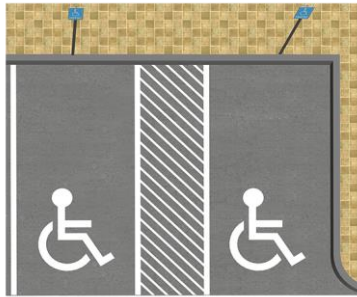
Finding a key or member of staff could delay the person and make them uncomfortable.



If a Toilet is locked for security reasons, there should be ways to support people to use it if they need to.  
For example, a special button to press or a key.



Information should have photographs of the Changing Places Toilet and the things in it. There should be information about the different things in the Toilet, for example, the hoist.



The information should say how far the Toilet is from the car parking spaces.



There should be a form for people to fill out after their visit. This should give them a chance to say what worked well and did not work well.



It is important to tell members of the local community that there is a Changing Places Toilet.



It is important to make sure that the Toilet is looked after properly and checked often. It should be clean and the things in it should work.



If there is a shower, it will need to be cleaned regularly and the floor dried. The changing bench also needs to be dried.



There should be information on the cleaning plan. There should be information on who to contact if equipment is broken.



There should be information on security for the Changing Places Toilet. For example, if CCTV is used to check on it.



When a new Changing Places Toilet opens, there should be training for staff in the building. This will help them to manage it well.



There is a list of Changing Places Toilets in Ireland, called a register. You can find the register on the Changing Places Ireland website.



It is important to keep this information up to date.



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Ace Communication helped to put together this report.

Experts by Experience helped with this information.

