

Changing Places toilets for severely disabled people to be compulsory in new public buildings

- Compulsory inclusion of Changing Places Toilets in new public buildings to help 250,000 people
- Shopping centres, sports stadiums and arts venues among buildings listed
- Changes will help ensure everyone in society benefits from lockdown easing

More than 250,000 severely disabled people will have greater access to public places after the government moved to make Changing Places toilets compulsory in new buildings. Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers.

A major change to building rules in England will require thousands of large (12m²) and well-equipped accessible toilet facilities to be designed and built into new public buildings, from next year.

The government estimates it will add the toilets to more than 150 new buildings a year. A £30 million fund to install Changing Places in existing buildings will open in the next few months.

Shopping centres, supermarkets, cinemas, stadia and arts venues are just some of the buildings that will be required to include at least one Changing Places toilet.

Building Accessibility Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

For too long, the lack of Changing Places toilets has meant that severely disabled people have faced severe difficulties in attending public places.

Changing Places toilets give disabled people and their carers the space and equipment they need to have the confidence to leave their homes and go out.

We are making the installation of these toilets compulsory in hundreds of new public buildings in years to come to help bring major, life enhancing freedoms to the more than 250,000 people who need them.

Rob Burley, Director of Campaigns, Care and Support at Muscular Dystrophy UK, said:

This is huge news for the quarter of a million people in the UK who need Changing Places toilets. Having access to these much-needed facilities increases independence and improves quality of life. This legislation will make it easier for disabled people and their families to enjoy activities that many take for granted, whether that's a day's shopping or attending a concert.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work of our wonderful campaigners. Thanks to everyone working together, we have taken a big step towards ensuring Changing Places toilets will be more widely available to everyone who needs them and tackling the exclusion people face.

There are more than 1,400 Changing Places toilets in the UK, up from just 140 in 2007, but more are needed to support more than a quarter of a million people who need them in the UK.

In the absence of Changing Places facilities, disabled people and/or carers face:

- limiting what they drink to avoid needing the toilet when they are out – risking dehydration and urinary tract infections
- sitting in soiled clothing or dirty nappies until a suitable toilet is found or they return home
- having to change a loved one on a dirty toilet floor
- manually lifting someone out of their wheelchair – risking safety
- reducing their time out of the house – restricting their social lives

The government remains steadfast on a commitment made by the Chancellor in the Budget on 11 March 2020 that the changes are expected to take effect early next year.

The Department for Transport, in partnership with Muscular Dystrophy UK, has also announced £1.27 million to install 37 more changing places at service stations across England. These new facilities will give people with complex needs and their carers the confidence and freedom to make more journeys by road as coronavirus restrictions ease.

With this latest round of funding, 87 of England's 118 service stations will be set to have a fully accessible Changing Places toilet in the early 2020s. This investment is part of the government's Inclusive Transport Strategy, which aims to provide equal access to transport by 2030, with assistance if physical infrastructure remains a barrier.

Transport Accessibility Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

It is hard to overstate the importance of something as simple as an accessible area for the over 250,000 people nationwide who have a severe disability.

I want everyone to have the confidence to travel by any means so it is incredibly important for us to work with Muscular Dystrophy UK to provide Changing Places facilities at the majority of service stations in England.

Kerry Thompson, Changing Places campaigner said:

This is incredible news. Having access to more changing places toilets means freedom. For not just myself but the 250,000 other disabled people and their families. Having this much needed change to building regulations guidance will make life easier and more fulfilling. It opens up a whole new world for everyone that needs these life changing facilities. All these changes are helping myself and thousands of others to live the life that we choose, not one that is chosen for us.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Justin Tomlinson said:

This is such an important step forward for severely disabled people and their families who often find it difficult to enjoy a day out without worrying about accessing basic facilities. Our priority is to build on this by ensuring disabled people's interests are at the heart of our recovery from coronavirus.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

Dignity and independence is something many of us take for granted but can be a daily challenge of people with severe disabilities, especially when there is a lack of access to adequate toilet and changing facilities. All public spaces should cater for people with disabilities so they don't have to suffer discomfort, embarrassment, or even injury without access to a Changing Place.

Compulsory Changing Places in new public buildings is a major step in reducing the health inequalities faced by so many and will mean that future generations can live with independence, without having to worry about something as simple as basic amenities.

- The [government's full response to the consultation](#) has been published.

- Places of assembly, recreation and entertainment with a capacity for 350 or more people will be required to install the facilities if they are newly built or have a major refurbishment.
 - They include art galleries, cinemas, concert halls, conference centres, further education colleges, universities, hotels that include leisure facilities, libraries, motorway services, museums, places of worship, and theatres.
 - Shopping centres or retail parks with gross floor areas of 30,000m² or more, retail premises of 2,500m² or more, sport or leisure buildings over 5,000m², and stadia, theme parks, zoos, or exhibition centres with a capacity above 2,000 people will also be included in the rules.
- Approximately 250,000 people (and their carers and families) with profound and multiple learning disabilities will benefit, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis. Without these facilities in public buildings for changing adults and larger children, these people, their carers and families are largely permanently house bound.
- We are working to increase the number of Changing Places within NHS hospitals and we announced £2m funding to improve provision in December 2018.
- So far, we have allocated over £700,000 to NHS Trusts on a matched-funding basis, to install 19 Changing Places facilities in locations across England.