

12.6 Changing Places facilities

COMMENTARY ON **12.6.** Changing Places (CP) facilities are designed for use by people with complex and multiple disabilities who require the assistance of up to two carers. The space needs to be fitted with a fixed tracked hoist system so that carers can fit the user's slings to the hoist and move the person to the various items in the facility.

Any larger building where the public have access in numbers or where visitors might be expected to spend longer periods of time are advised to consider provision of a CP facility. Such facilities are particularly important in buildings that might offer the only suitable sanitary accommodation within a locality, or in buildings where public services are provided, such as those operated by local authorities.

CP toilet facilities require extended space to accommodate disabled people, often with large complex wheelchairs with elevated leg rests, a reclining facility or integral oxygen cylinders, and space to fit slings for use with the hoist. It also needs to be possible for a wheelchair to be parked within the facility when not in use without compromising the safe access and use of the equipment.

As they are not designed for the use of independent wheelchair users, it is desirable for facility providers to indicate the location of the nearest unisex accessible WC. However, although the CP facility is not intended for general use when changing babies, it could be used by disabled parents for baby changing.

Further advice on the design and installation of CP facilities can be obtained by contacting the Changing Places Consortium (see Bibliography under Information sources).

A CP facility should be provided in larger buildings and complexes, such as:

- a) major transport termini or interchanges;
- b) motorway services;
- c) sport and leisure facilities;
- d) cultural centres, such as museums and art galleries;
- e) stadia and large auditoria;
- f) shopping centres and shopmobility centres;
- g) key buildings within town centres;
- h) educational establishments.

Where possible, a CP facility should be located close to other managed facilities in a development. If remote from a surveillance point, the facility should be lockable by a universal key system (e.g. the RADAR National Key Scheme)

The CP facility should be at least 3 m wide and 4 m long, with a ceiling height of 2.4 m.

The doorway should have a minimum effective clear width of 1 000 mm, with a level threshold.

NOTE 1 If the access route is restricted, it might be necessary for the door to open into the room. In this case, it might be more convenient to achieve the required effective clear width using double leaf doors, rather than single leaf doors.

CP toilets should have a full room cover overhead tracked hoist system (either ceiling or wall mounted) conforming to BS EN 10535. The room structure and the track should be capable of supporting a safe working load of 200 kg. All ceiling fittings and fixtures should be flush, recessed or shallow fittings to allow free movement of the moving rail of the tracked hoist. Manufacturers' instructions should be clearly displayed.

NOTE 2 The use of a mobile hoist might restrict the flexibility and long-term use of the facility. However, a full room cover system provides greater flexibility by being able to reach all areas of the room. Written instructions on the use of equipment needs to be displayed beside each item (see Annex G). It is expected that the premises management will provide information to prospective users on the type of sling connector and the types of sling that are compatible with their installed hoist and track.

NOTE 3 The loop type of connector is preferred by the vast majority of private users, whereas the click type is more common in healthcare buildings. More information on slings is available in Annex G.

The room should have either a mobile or fixed changing bench, in each case height-adjustable, capable of operating at a safe working load of 125 kg. The covering of the bench should be suitable for use when a person is showering as well as changing.

NOTE 4 A mobile changing bench has the advantage that carers can give assistance from both sides when the bench is moved away from the wall (see Annex G). Attention is drawn to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 [29]. Useful guidance is also available in *Guide to the handling of people* [30].

Sanitary bins and waste disposal bins should, where practicable, be recessed into the wall to avoid being an obstacle to carers moving alongside the WC.

The wash basin should be height-adjustable to accommodate both wheelchair users and carers.

A peninsular WC layout should be provided, with drop-down support rails either side.

NOTE 5 It is an advantage if the support rails are height-adjustable.

A retractable privacy screen should be provided to allow the disabled person to maintain their dignity when using the WC, as a carer will always be present.

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NOTE 6 The screen will also benefit carers who require to use the WC without leaving the disabled person unattended.

Ventilation extract fans should be as quiet as possible in operation as their noise can be disturbing to some disabled people.

A sign should be provided at the entrance to the CP facility indicating the location of the nearest unisex accessible WC.

The CP facility should be heated, as users might be undressed and in the facility for up to 30 min.

The illuminance in the room should be maintained at 300 lux at bench level.

NOTE 7 It is not appropriate to install ultra-violet light in this type of facility, as it reduces the ability of blind and partially sighted people to appreciate visual contrast and might trigger seizures in people with epilepsy. It is also inappropriate to install timed lighting.

A CP facility should contain, as a minimum, the fittings and accessories shown in Figure 59.

Figure 59 – Changing Places facility

Dimensions in millimetres

