

PLAIN ENGLISH SUMMARY

When older adults start to struggle with bathing, difficulties with other activities in the home often follow. Adult social care services provide equipment or minor adaptations (sometimes known as Assistive Technologies) that can help older adults manage bathing.

These include aids such as a perching stool, minor adaptations such as grab rails, and major adaptations such as a walk-in shower. However, bathing is considered to be a low priority by adult social care services. There are differences across the services in how equipment or aids are provided and in the time that people wait for them. We think older adults might lose some of their independence whilst they are waiting for equipment and/or adaptations, and those who wait longer might use more health and social care services. Disability in bathing, or not having the appropriate aid, can also impact the confidence and independence of an older person.

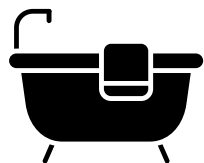
This programme is about how we provide equipment or aids to help with bathing to older adults who have difficulty getting washed. This means the whole process from when an older adult with bathing difficulty contacts the council until they are provided with their equipment/ adaptation and the case is closed. This is known as a pathway. We want to identify how this could be made simpler and reduce differences between services.

We also want to improve our understanding about:

- how usable the equipment and adaptations are
- how they help older adults maintain their independence
- if they reduce the need for other health and social care services
- the impact of waiting times on outcomes

We are working with a public involvement panel, with a range of lived experience using equipment or aids for bathing, and a practitioner insight panel with a range of experience supporting their use. Together we will design and carry out the following programme of work:

- We will map common pathways for older adults to access equipment and minor adaptations for bathing in up to 30 local authorities using a survey and workshops.
- We will talk to older adults who are waiting for, have been offered, or provided with equipment or minor adaptations for bathing by adult social care services or who have paid for them themselves. We will support individual needs, including those with literacy or language barriers.
- We will follow a certain group of people in a study which will compare the cost and impact on the lives of people who have had equipment or minor adaptations within different timescales. We will then compare this information with other studies that have been completed in the past.



- We will identify the priorities of people who use and provide equipment or minor adaptations for bathing in order to develop a tool to help local authorities to make decisions.
- We will use this information to look at how different ways of working impact the provision of equipment or minor adaptations. We will then discuss these ways of working in interviews and workshops with people involved in providing equipment or minor adaptations to older adults, to get their perspective on what works well and what doesn't.



In collaboration with our public and practice insight panels, we will combine the findings from all parts of the research to make suggestions about possible changes to the pathway. We will share our findings with members of the public, practitioners, policy makers, and academics.