

Justification for Need & Funding of an *Arjo Sovereign* bath for boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) & for children & adults with other types of muscular dystrophy & allied neuromuscular conditions

There are many reasons why a bath may be chosen in preference to a shower for a person with a neuromuscular condition and Chapter 7 *Bath vs Shower* is available to help with this choice. The ability to soak in warm water relaxes muscles and also bathers are able to enjoy the movement of their limbs in the water, both of which are likely to be important for anyone with severe muscle weakness. Although this buoyancy has undeniable value, it is important that the disabled person, who lacks trunk control, is well supported and feels safe.

The carer's role should also be considered, particularly in relation to the ease of using equipment for lifting in and out of the bath and in helping the disabled person to wash.

In justifying the expense of the *Arjo Sovereign* bath it is important to consider:

- ⇒ difficulties involved in using a standard bath with a ceiling hoist;
- ⇒ use of the *Arjo Sovereign* bath to overcome these problems.

Difficulties involved in using a standard bath with a ceiling hoist

These are as follows:

- movement of limbs is not possible with a sling in position;
- the sling material makes it difficult to reach all parts of the body for washing;
- taking the sling off when using the bath may make it difficult for the disabled person to balance;
- leaning over the rim of the bath with a rotated spine to take off/reposition the sling will cause back strain for the helper;
- the sling is padded and when raised, there will be a gush of water and a dripping wet sling.

Use of the Arjo Sovereign bath to overcome these problems

The procedure and value is as follows:

- the user is hoisted on to the chair using a ceiling hoist (with an extended track from the en-suite bedroom);
- the sling is removed while it is still dry, at a height that is suitable for the carer, and is replaced at this optimum height;
- the chair is rotated and lowered electrically into the bath independently, by the disabled person who may need help to lift their legs over the rim, but who at all times remains safe, confident and well supported;
- the arms of the chair are within easy reach and extend in front of the user to provide front support when in the bath, and yet retract and can be removed, if necessary;
- there is an excellent headrest to provide head support, which will be particularly important to boys with DMD and any other user who has undergone spinal fusion;
- as the seat glides gently forwards, it reclines as it reaches the base of the bath (a supported reclined position is difficult to achieve with other bathing equipment for a disabled person); this also enables the depth of the water to be used to its best advantage;
- the knee support within the bath is ideal for anyone who has knee contractures or is likely to have difficulty in fully extending their legs; the support behind the thighs prevents the user from floating forwards in the water.

Models

There is a choice of three models, depending upon the height of bath needed:

Sovereign Standard - 610mm (24")

This may be the ideal model for families wanting the bathroom to look as normal as possible. This is a satisfactory choice if the bather can stand up from the seat and if the carers do not have any difficulty kneeling at the side of the bath.

Sovereign Fixed Height - 840mm (33")

This is suitable where a bath is needed at a higher level, in order to protect the back of a carer who cannot kneel on the floor at the side of the bath – or to help a bather stand up from a higher seat.

Sovereign Hi-Lo - 615-960mm (24 1/2" - 38")

This is a sophisticated solution where the bath height can be altered instantly to provide flexibility to protect the backs of carers of different heights.

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