

Justification for the Need & Funding of a satisfactory Central Heating System

for boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy & children & adults with other types of muscular dystrophy & allied neuromuscular conditions

Muscles are the main source of heat production and maintenance of body temperature. Therefore, the severe muscle wasting in neuromuscular conditions, coupled with the inevitable reduction or lack of mobility, means that it is essential to provide a higher-than-average level of heating, i.e. 21° – 24°C in both the bedroom and bathroom. This is particularly important in the bathroom, especially where it has more than one external wall. Without adequate heating the bathroom will not be used.

It is important to stress that most children with muscular dystrophy feel the cold from a very young age. As they get older, and their muscle wasting increases and their mobility decreases, the problem becomes more severe. This difficulty is shared by people of all ages with similar muscle conditions.

The installation of a new central heating system or the extension of an existing system, if necessary with an upgraded boiler, can be grant funded where there is medical need. This need should be confirmed by the disabled person's hospital consultant. The cost of installing radiators in rooms that are either inaccessible to the disabled person or not used by them, will not be covered by the grant.

It is also important to stress that the type of heating system chosen must be:

- instantly controllable and therefore, capable of being boosted when necessary;
- able to provide a constant temperature;
- suitable to be left on, when the disabled person is out of the house.

Storage heaters are not adequate because the temperature must remain constant over any 24-hour period. Also, individual radiant electric heaters are not suitable, because many people would hesitate to leave them unattended - and in no circumstances should the disabled person have to return to an unheated house.

In addition to central heating and a radiant heater in the sitting room, it will be necessary to provide a booster heater in the bathroom. This is needed to increase the temperature during a particularly cold spell in the winter - prior to bathing - and to use when the central heating system is turned off in the summer.

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