

Future-proofing Tenant Bathrooms

Based on research with Housing Association managers
and produced in conjunction with AKW

Providing affordable, safe, good quality homes for people to thrive in is top of every social landlord's to-do-list. However, juggling budgets to accommodate day-to-day and future tenant demands can be challenging to say the least. Taking a snapshot look at tenant profiles, it is clear to see that the future-proofing of property is increasingly becoming an issue.

Changing demands as population ages

According to research carried out by the Government Office for Science¹, by 2040, nearly one in seven people is projected to be aged over 75. Also demand for housing (both social and private tenure) that meets the needs of older people will increase as the population ages. Importantly, the majority of these future-proofed homes are likely to come from adapting existing housing stock, as even by 2050, the majority of housing will have been built before 2000².

When looking at the social housing sector specifically, the need for future-proofing is even greater. Figures from the 2020 English Housing Survey³ show that: out of the 2.4 million properties rented from housing associations and 1.6 million from local authorities, 26% of the key householder representatives are aged over 65 and over half (54%) of households in the social rented sector have one or more household members with a long-term illness or disability.

Within the social sector, most (72%) of the local authority housing stock was built between 1945 and 1980, compared with 47% of housing association homes. Just 11% of local authority stock was built after 1980, compared with 38% of housing association homes⁴. This means that many properties were built at a time when tenant needs were vastly different. So, one of the challenges being navigated by social landlords at present is - how can such properties be future-proofed to meet up-and-coming tenant needs, as cost-effectively as possible? An area of particular future-proofing concern amongst social landlords is the bathroom space.

"Once we have an adapted bathroom in place, we don't tend to 'dis-adapt' back to a standard bathroom, unless a very young family moves in."

Future-proofing social housing bathrooms – a key area of concern

Recent qualitative research carried out by AKW into the key issues facing housing association managers⁵ when it came to tenant bathrooms showed a range of concerns. The biggest requirements that came up were that the bathrooms needed to be:

- + Easy to keep clean
- + Low maintenance
- + Long-lasting
- + Contemporary looking
- + As future-proof as possible

The bathroom space is particularly challenging when it comes to future-proofing. This is because adaptations can range from the addition of grab rails to entire wet room installations. As some of the points raised through AKW research show, it is a common theme that housing association managers are grappling with.

"Is there any potential for a less intrusive way to design out problems that may be encountered by the tenant, as it's a dirty, messy job to change a bathroom?"

Feedback from a Housing Association manager

"We change our bathrooms every 20 to 28 years or so – how can we ensure that the space works for multiple tenants throughout that timeframe?"

Can bathroom future-proofing offer value for money?

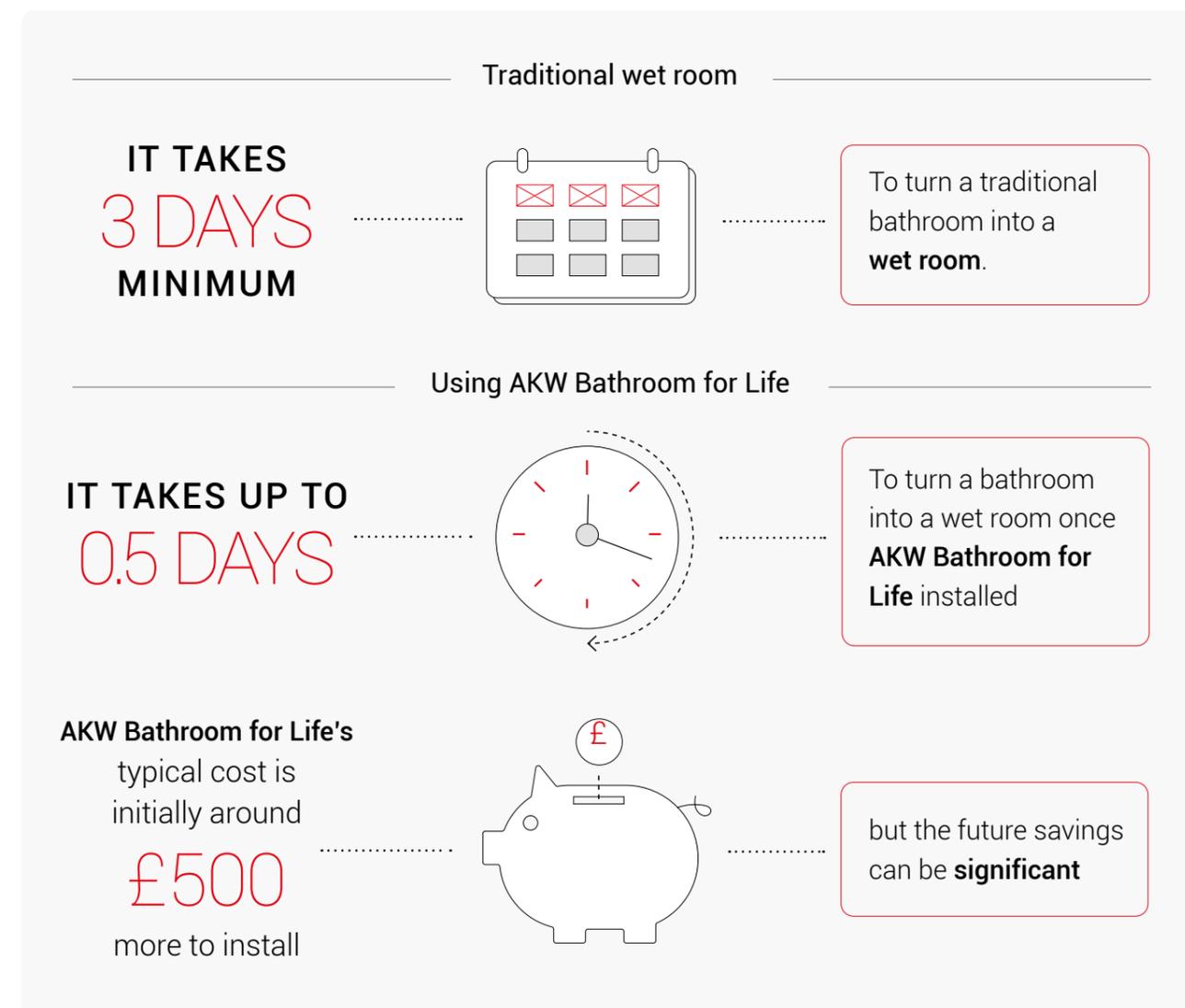
Value is so much more than just getting the cheapest price on a job, particularly when it comes to bathroom procurement in social housing. Once factors such as lifetime cost and sustainability are taken into account, there is a strong argument for why social landlords should look at future-proofing tenant bathrooms. But how can this be done simply and cost-effectively?

AKW's 'Bathroom for Life' solution

AKW has developed an easy to install 'shower/bath waste adaptor kit' that ensures any bathroom space can be adapted to suit changing tenant needs.

Called 'Bathroom for Life', this solution includes an AKW 'future-proof waste adaptor kit' and a bath sized wet room former. This kit enables a 'universal bathroom / wet room' to be installed, whether a bathroom is being refurbished or built for the first time.

Using Bathroom for Life, a standard bath can be added, if that is what is preferred or needed by the tenant, or it can become a wet room – with grab rails and a shower seat added quickly and easily. At any point the bathroom can be changed from bathroom to wet room or vice versa.



A Bathroom for Life

Upgrading bathrooms to make them more accessible can be both expensive and disruptive. AKW have considered how your tenants' requirements might change over time, and have developed a solution you can use to future-proof your bathrooms.

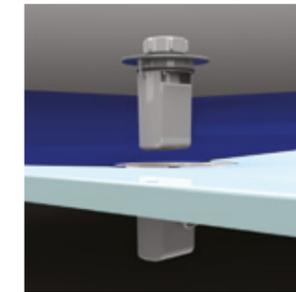
Creating a new 'AKW Bathroom for Life' involves installing a wet room former with a special AKW waste adaptor beneath the bath, so that if your current or future tenant loses some mobility, a wet floor shower room can quickly be created, as the components are already installed. You simply remove the bath and the bath waste adaptor. You can also be reassured that by using our Tuff Form wet room formers, the showering / bathing area floor can support a full bath and bather, up to a 60 stone combined weight.



Bath-to-Tray Adaptor
(waste not included)



Bath legs can be situated directly
on top of the Tuff Form®



Typical waste connection
(Bath to Tuff Form® and below)



From
this



to
this

in as
little as
½ a day*

*Once AKW Bathroom for Life is installed

Key elements required to create a Bathroom for Life:

- + **Slip-resistant waterproof* safety flooring** such as the dementia-friendly range offered by AKW – this offers tenants maximum safety whether the bathroom has a bath or is used as a wet room.
- + **Waterproof* wall panels** – not only are these quick to install and save up to 25% versus the cost of tiles, they are easy to keep clean and require no periodic re-grouting. Wall panels also offer structural grade support with a durable surface finish, making it easier to attach grab rails and seats etc. Being the full height of the wall, they also avoid the issue of exposing half an un-tiled wall when the bath is removed.
- + **AKW Bathroom for Life waste adaptor**
The key future-proofing benefit is that at any point, the space can be quickly and easily be converted to become a wet room or a bathroom, at the fraction of the cost of a fully inclusive bathroom refurbishment.

*Waterproof / leak-proof bathrooms

AKW's 'Bathroom for Life', is fully waterproofed by using:

1. heavy duty slip-resistant flooring that covers 3 inches up all 4 walls
2. wall panels in the showering / bath area

This can significantly reduce bathroom water leaks that are an increasing cause of social landlord insurance claims.

A common cause of water leaks in bathrooms is decayed / missing grout between tiles or missing sealant around the bath top where it meets the wall.

Wall panels offer a solid waterproof surface, and when used with covered non-slip flooring any water leak from perished bath sealant cannot leak through the waterproof flooring, thereby preventing a major cause of water damage to a property.

AKW
Life Made Better

Talk to the experts

To find out more about AKW's **Bathroom for Life** and how it can help you build future flexibility into your housing stock, contact us today; you can request a visit at www.akw-ltd.co.uk/contact-us or contact us using the details below:

Tel: **01905 823298** | Email: marketing@akw-ltd.co.uk

Fax: **01905 823297** | Website: www.akw-ltd.co.uk

Address: **AKW, Pointon Way, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich Spa, WR9 0LR**



Key benefits

AKW Bathroom for Life

For the landlord:

- + Quicker re-lets so there is no loss of rental income whilst waiting for a wet room to be installed or removed.

For those funding the adaptation (DFG / landlord or shared funding):

- + No removal of wet rooms that cost £4-£5k in order to make a property suitable for a family wanting a standard bathroom.
- + No costly and often lengthy DFG applications to process when changing standard bathrooms to level-access bathrooms. This can save a council 26 hours work on average per DFG wet room (based on a report quoted in the *Foundations DFG Review*, Dec 2018) and this could save c £300 in council admin / staff costs.

Most importantly, for the tenants:

- + Increased stock of accessible housing reduces waiting times for an ageing and increasingly disabled tenant base.
- + Much fairer – the person with the highest points gets the property irrespective of their bathing needs.
- + Less disruption to tenants and noise for neighbours when a wet room is being removed or installed.

The extra cost

Including the adaptor, the wet room former and labour, the extra cost for creating a Bathroom for Life is unlikely to exceed £500 but the potential future savings and benefits are significant for everyone.