



## Solutions for people with dementia

CARE homes across the UK are increasingly having to install equipment that has been designed for specific conditions, such as dementia, and nowhere is this more prevalent than in bathing.

Washing and bathing is a common source of anxiety for people with dementia. It is not hard to understand why – most of us have been managing this on our own from a young age, and requiring assistance from another person with something so personal raises many issues.

There are numerous reasons why a person with dementia may feel anxious about washing and bathing.

These may include the depth of the bath water – deep water can make a resident feel worried, as well as the use of an overhead shower; some people may prefer a

hand held shower. Feelings of self-consciousness and isolation are also known to affect the bathing experience and it is important that family members and carers talk positively and be sensitive towards the person when discussing how they feel about being bathed.

Reassure them that despite it being a very personal activity, you are happy to help. Ask how they feel and what they would prefer and try to find as many ways as possible to help them remain independent, and offer support as unobtrusively as you can.

There are more and more solutions available these days to assist with bathing, and residents of Buckingham Lodge Care Home in Aylesbury are benefitting from the latest bathing innovation, the Active Bathing Compact bath.

Buckingham Lodge, part of the Anchor Group, a not-for-profit charitable organisation, opened in April 2015 with six Compact baths installed over three floors.

Home manager Wendy Luck said: “We are always looking for the best possible solutions when specifying equipment. Buckingham Lodge is primarily for people living with dementia and we were looking for equipment for this condition, which would allow our residents to bathe as independently and safely as possible. The Compact bath met these requirements.”

The Compact bath has been designed with the residents and staff in mind, which was a significant factor for Wendy.

“Our aim is to keep residents living as independently as possible for as

long as possible and the Compact bath helps ensure this,” she added. “The chair lift offers a very safe and smooth transfer into the bath and once the resident has been lowered into the water, the design of the chair and bath means many do not even realise they are still in the chair and can bathe themselves, depending on their level of mobility, which is excellent for their confidence and dignity.

“The Compact bath provides a relaxing experience for our residents; in the past I have worked in care homes which have spa baths and these often left the residents feeling unnerved and even scared by the noise and sensation of the jets in the water. The baths are very easy to operate, clean and maintain and offer excellent value for money.”