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**Toileting and single handed care:  
making the numbers work**

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A care package is not just about £ to whoever is finding the care package. It is about best value, for the care providers and the care recipients- and for other related services.

Taking a more client-centred approach, by applying one of the most basic principles an Occupational Therapist is taught- the Person- Environment-Occupation- Performance (PEOP) model can be pivotal.

## **The drivers:**

According to the Office of National Statistics, by 2041 25% of the population will be over 65. Local Authorities are keen to invest in reduction in care packages to best manage their resources. However, breakdown in informal care can lead to increased cost in health and social care (according to Age UK).

Better, appropriate use of single handed care solutions can provide the solution. It is a matter of balancing technology versus carer

Do you provide one or two carers to help the client toilet, or provide equipment- a wash and dry toilet and toilet lifter?

The wash and dry WC's integrated douching and drying features mean there is no need for a carer to assist in cleaning after bladder and/or bowel movement. Fitted over the WC, the toilet lifter provides a safe, controlled means of getting on and off. The unit automatically and smoothly lowers the user over and onto the toilet and then raises them to standing, whilst ensuring their centre of gravity and thus balance remains stable

The clinical reasoning

A client's ability to go to the toilet, and deal with their intimate care and cleanliness is one of the fundamental Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). An activity analysis shows it is in reality a highly complex process, using gross and fine motor skills.

If the client needs help, a thorough moving and handling risk assessment is crucial. We have to consider the risk not just to the client, but the carer. Small details are critical, as no two people carry out a task the exact same way- even down to how do they access and use toilet paper?

That has to be balanced alongside legal requirements, of the LOLER (Lifting Operation and Lifting Equipment Regulations), and the Care Act.

## **The Care Act:**

Section 1 of the Act states that social services has a duty to uphold the wellbeing of an individual.

Wellbeing is defined to include nine components, among which are-

- personal dignity
- physical and mental health, together with emotional wellbeing
- control over day to day life
- suitability of a person's living accommodation
- personal relationships

Toileting assisted by carers impacts on personal dignity. It impacts on the client' control over day-to-day life. It impacts on their emotional wellbeing.

Would you like someone to wipe your bottom, whether they are a stranger, or a partner?

How will they use the toilet?

## Manual handling:

We need to consider the manual handling reasoning.

NHS data indicates that falls are a common occurrence among those aged 65 or over, and they are most likely to happen in the bathroom.

The process of helping someone on and off the toilet, and cleaning them, could pose significant risk to carers (and client), particularly if not carried out properly.

The client's hygiene should also be considered, whether they are trying to clean themselves, or a carer is performing that task.

Faecal or urinary residue could transfer via hand:body contact.

Inefficient cleaning could lead to health issues, incurring additional healthcare costs.

## The financial reasoning:

From a financial point of view, a care package costs approximately £15/hour. That equates to £11,000 pa if the client needs a carer for 14 hours/week to assist with toileting.

However, if equipment is used in place- specifically a Closomat wash dry toilet and (Aerolet) toilet lifter over, the total capital equipment cost is less than £6000.

It may be possible depending on the Local Authority's policy on funding of Disabled Facilities Grants, use of Regulatory Reform Orders (RROs) to further include a total 10 years' worth of service and maintenance of the equipment as part of the purchase cost.

Benefits include:

- Dignity for the user
- Independence for the user
- Better cleansing leading to better skin integrity and improved hygiene
- Increased sense of wellbeing
- Reduced risk, to client (falling) and care giver (back injury)

The numbers show the monetary argument is proven.

The additional benefit of enhancing someone's dignity, independence, health and wellbeing is a bonus, that one cannot put a price on.

There is a growing trend towards adapting a home to prevent care need. Toileting is a perfect example of how beneficial it can be.

Changing a conventional WC is not a major alteration, but it provides significant benefits in all aspects.

## References:

Age UK (2012) In Sickness and in Health retrieved from: [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/campaigns/carers\\_week\\_2012\\_in\\_sickness\\_and\\_in\\_health.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/campaigns/carers_week_2012_in_sickness_and_in_health.pdf?dtrk=true) accessed on 20.01.2020  
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## How does Closomat support the adaptations team in effectively delivering single handed care?

Closomat takes responsibility for the whole process.

Its team of expert product specialists supports and assist in client assessment, to consider even the little things that make difference- for example, how the client sits on the toilet, where they position themselves over the pan, to ensure the douche “hits the right spot”, the location of drainage, soil and electrical connections etc. If appropriate, the team will support the adaptations team in choosing additional bathroom adaptative equipment, including shower chairs and seats, body dryers, ceiling track hoists, wash basins, support rails.

The team will help write the specification, so the correct Palma Vita and/or Aerolet is ordered, delivered, and installed.

Closomat’s national network of in-house engineers and trained installers will care check (commission) each unit, to ensure it is correctly installed, everything is working as it should, and, most importantly, the client understands how to use it, to help them live better.