

Moving home when your child is on long term ventilation with a tracheostomy: information for families

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) gives a few suggestions for features to look out for when you are looking at a new home that meets your child's needs. Please note: this list is not exhaustive and is provided as a rough guide only. If you have any questions, please contact your Occupational Therapist.

Remember, your Continuing Care Nursing team and Occupational Therapist may want to assess the new home to make sure it is safe for your child and meets their needs. We advise that, where possible, this is completed before you pay a deposit and complete the paperwork as you may not be able to reclaim any money if the new home is judged unsuitable for your child by your community team.

This information sheet has been given to you by your Occupational Therapist and is for your personal use only. Please do not copy or post this for anyone else, they can ask their therapist for this advice too, if they need it.

Property types

Properties that may be suitable

- Ground floor flats
- Bungalows
- Houses with a room on the ground floor that can be turned into a bedroom

Properties that may be unsuitable

- Blocks with only one lift up to the flat
- Houses or flats with stairs leading to the main entrance

General accessibility

Parking

- Off street parking (or a designated parking space within easy reach of your home)

Doors

- Level access to the front door or a single step that could be fitted with a ramp
- All exit doors (front and back) should be a minimum of 800mm wide

- Internal doors should be a minimum of 750mm wide

Bedroom

- The child should have their own room, not shared with brothers and sisters or other family members
- Their room should be at least the size of a double bedroom
- If getting to the bedrooms upstairs is difficult, a room on the ground floor could be turned into a bedroom
- There should be enough room for the bed or cot to be away from a radiator or window
- It should have central heating and a reliable electrical supply
- There should be four to six double plug sockets in the bedroom, although if there are not enough these can be easily added to the room
- The overhead (ceiling) light should be bright enough to light up the entire room

Internal staircase (if applicable)

- If you will be carrying your child upstairs, it should not be too steep
- Spiral staircases are not suitable
- There should be at least one handrail up the entire length, if you are carrying your child upstairs
- The stairs must be evenly spaced
- They should be wide enough to carry your child and an equipment bag

Bathroom

- There should be enough room for a small trolley or ventilator stand as well as the adult bathing your child
- A downstairs toilet would be helpful but not essential

Storage

- Cupboard for ventilator supplies – this must be dry and away from radiators
- Storage for any other equipment your child uses

Safety issues

- No evidence of mould or damp in the home with no condensation on internal windows
- The landlord or freeholder must be informed that you will be using home oxygen – they should also inform their insurer
- There must be a reliable electrical supply – not using a 'pay as you go' meter

Minor adaptations

- If adaptations are required to ensure the property is suitable, your Social Care Occupational Therapist will be able to advise you.
- If these are needed, the landlord or freeholder should be informed before work is carried out
- Common adaptations include:
 - Installation (by a qualified electrician) of additional double plug sockets in the bedroom – some to be at raised height
 - Additional handrails for staircases
 - Grab rails in the bathroom
 - Ramp access to the front door