

A Changing Places toilets policy for Belfast City Council

Proposed by Councillor McMullan

Seconded by Councillor Mulholland

Changing Places are specialised toilet facilities which make public places and spaces accessible and inclusive for everyone, including children, adults and older people with complex needs or mobility issues.

Where they are not provided, people are changed on a toilet floor, which is dangerous, unhygienic and undignified. Without them, people may be excluded entirely from certain public spaces.

The Council notes its commitment in the Belfast Agenda to deliver an accessible City for all and its unanimous support for a COVID-19 response and recovery inclusive of disabled people, older people and carers in July, 2020.

It further recognises the importance of Changing Places toilets in delivering our vision of an accessible and inclusive Belfast.

The Council notes that Building Regulations in Northern Ireland only require standard accessible toilets to be provided. Despite discussion to add Changing Places toilets to these regulations, there is currently no requirement for these facilities. As a result of this, Changing Places are not usually provided as a matter of course- even in new buildings.

This Council will, therefore, develop a Changing Places toilet facility policy for Belfast City Council, with input from disabled people, older people and carers, to include the following:

The Council will commit to include a Changing Places facility in every new building in which the public will have access to its services and where public toilet provision is available for others.

The Council will also make every effort to include Changing Places facilities when it extends or extensively refurbishes an existing Council-owned building. These schemes will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the early stages of feasibility/design to establish whether there is an opportunity to install a Changing Places.

It will review where such facilities could be installed on the Council Estate (e.g. playgrounds) and put a plan in place to ensure that all inclusive playgrounds are equipped with such a facility.

It will ensure that organisers of all large-scale public events (e.g. concerts, festivals, family days) with a license from the Council will have a fixed or portable Changing Places unit as part of the design of the event.

Where the Council is organising a large public event, it should be considered if it can take place at a venue that already has a Changing Places facility and include a mobile/portable facility, if a permanent Changing Places toilet is not available.

For smaller public events, these should be advertised early and adequately communicated with the option to request access to a Changing Places facility whereupon they can be moved or have a mobile/portable facility provided.

**(To be referred directly to the
Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)**