

CASE STUDY: THE ORMAN FAMILY

Abacus Healthcare makes bathing more enjoyable for Southampton family



Project:	The Orman Family, Southampton
Installation:	Height adjustable bath with platform
Bath:	Aquanova Gemini (platform series)
Accessories:	Net postural support and back rest
Local Authority:	Southampton City Council

Katherine Orman, who lives with severe disabilities, can now experience the pleasure and comfort of bathing at home thanks to an Aquanova Gemini bath supplied by Abacus Healthcare.

Having previously struggled to bathe their disabled daughter safely and efficiently in the home, the Orman family from Southampton chose a Gemini platform bath so bathing is now a more enjoyable experience. Gillian Orman lives with her husband and 28-year-old daughter, Katherine, who has severe physical and mental disabilities and requires round-the-

clock care. The family receive help from Social Services to look after Katherine through a team of support workers, however as she has grown, bathing Katherine at home had become extremely difficult.

The challenges of bathing in the home

As Katherine is unable to walk, moving her between rooms, from her bed and into the bath requires transfer equipment such as hoists and wheelchairs. Although these have resolved many moving and handling issues, bathing Katherine in a standard bath was still problematic. It was

especially challenging for carers who had to manually lift Katherine in and out of the bath. Katherine also found the experience stressful and was not comfortable with the use of a shower. This resulted in regular bed washing, which was not ideal for Katherine or her mother. Their situation, which can be common with families caring for disabled relatives, improved dramatically when Abacus Healthcare was commissioned to install a Gemini hi-lo bath with built-in changing platform.

Gillian explains: "I first discovered this bath at the local Bradbury centre which provides respite care for disabled individuals

and their families. I enquired about their Gemini and decided this style of bath would be perfect for Katherine. The care team were more than happy to help me bathe Katherine and demonstrate all the features it provided. As it has an integrated height-adjustable platform, I could change Katherine above the water line and lower her gently into the temperature-controlled water to bathe. This meant additional transfers could be avoided and my back was protected against potential injury.”

Gillian continues: “Bath-time was supposed to be a relaxing, pleasurable experience for Katherine and I. However in reality, using a standard bath meant each visit to the bathroom was very stressful. Bathing at home was becoming impossible, as Katherine would get agitated when I'd mention bath-time and I would be anxious about damaging my back.”

Client assessment and pre-installation requirements

Gillian contacted her local council and her Occupational Therapist, Pauline Dix, to enquire about the possibility of a powered bath being installed in her home. Southampton City Council had provided excellent levels of support in the past and once again agreed to assist Katherine and her mother, Gillian. Following home assessments to identify the specific challenges that the Ormans were facing, Pauline approached Abacus Healthcare to assist with the project and installation of a new bath.



The Gemini's integrated platform provides a height-adjustable changing, drying and bathing surface



Gillian demonstrates how the Gemini can be electrically raised or lowered

Abacus Area Sales Manager, David Bertorelli, visited the Orman family several times to provide guidance and offer support throughout the installation process. David's initial visit involved assessment of Katherine's needs, the requirements of her carer, Gillian, and the difficulties they both faced day-to-day. The number of transfers Katherine had to complete, moving between bed to bath was identified as a major concern. Katherine's postural and mobility difficulties were critical when assessing her care requirements. It was then clear the Gemini bath would match her bathing needs, perfectly.

David completed an extensive survey of the bathroom and supplied room layout designs to ensure maximum access around the bath, for a wheelchair and hoists. David then liaised directly with the building contractor regarding the conversion work, prior to installation. Once the Gemini bath was installed, David then returned to provide user training for the Orman family and care team.

Life-changing benefits

Gillian summarised: “I can honestly say our new Gemini bath has improved our lives and happiness no-end. I am so grateful to Pauline, Abacus Healthcare and all our support workers for making this bathroom conversion happen. Without this bath, life would have been extremely difficult for Katherine and the rest of my family. Being able to manoeuvre around the bathroom quickly and easily is so crucial. I have also

“I am really impressed with the Gemini bath; the features it provides together with its compact size are perfectly suited to Katherine and her family's needs. The variable height function and the integrated changing platform, provide a comfortable working height for her carers and a safer, more efficient bathing experience for all.

The space available was limited and to ensure adequate access for carers either side of the bath meant that there was no margin for error in positioning the bath. Re-routing of drainage, water supply and electrics were all needed and David Bertorelli, from Abacus, was very helpful in liaising with MYSELF and OUR Adaptations Team to ensure the installation went smoothly and to plan.”

PAULINE DIX,
Occupational Therapist



been free of back pain for the first time in a long while. I can now comfortably bathe Katherine everyday and when I say 'bath-time' to her, Katherine's eyes light up and she gives me a big smile which is quite simply priceless.”



Katherine, her mother and their care team are thoroughly delighted with the new Gemini

To arrange a free home demonstration, contact Abacus Healthcare on:

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