

General shower information

Electric showers

An electric shower is essentially a water heater. It works by very quickly heating mains-pressure cold water as it flows towards the shower head. There is no pump involved, so the amount of water you get through the shower head will depend on your mains water pressure.

Electric showers are very economical as they heat only the water you need. They are the only type of shower that works independently of the hot water system, so if your boiler fails you can still have a hot shower.

By their nature, electric showers are susceptible to a build-up of lime-scale on the heating element; this can cause the heating element to break down.

Plumbing and electricity

In order to work an electric shower only needs to be plumbed to a mains cold water supply and connected to the electrical supply. The high power electrical element (between about 8.5kW and 10.8kW) also needs to be connected to a separate fused electrical supply circuit.

Mixer showers

A mixer shower works by mixing the existing hot and cold water, in a special valve, before it is available at the shower head.

They are suitable for either low or high water pressure (check with your supplier that the mixer valve you buy is suitable for the system you have). Mixer showers can be surface mounted (where the pipe work is easily installed on the top of your existing surface), or flush mounted (where the valve is seen, but the pipe work is hidden behind the surface). They are ideal to install in a new shower cubicle where the pipes can be built into a wall.

To operate correctly both the hot and the cold water need to come from a source operating at the same pressure. Both can come from a mains-fed system, (combi-boiler or multi-point water heater and

cold mains) or both can come from tank-fed water (immersion and cold storage tank).

If one supply must come from high pressure and one from low pressure, a pressure balanced mixer valve can be installed.

A mixer shower will not increase the flow of water to your system. If your water flows from your taps at a poor rate, this is the rate it will feed the shower.

A drawback to installing a mixer shower is that it will usually be connected to pipes which supply water to other points in the property. When the other points are used (taps, toilet cistern, etc.) the flow rate to the shower will be affected. This in turn will affect the temperature of the water coming out of the shower and, in the case of the cold being drawn off elsewhere, could lead to scalding.

Thermostatic mixer showers

A thermostatic mixer shower incorporates a pre-set thermostat that will sense a dramatic change in temperature and rectify the situation.

Some advanced thermostatic mixers will even cut the water off when a failure in flow is detected.

Most thermostatic mixers also have a temperature limiting device to stop very high temperatures being selected by the user.

If you have concerns about any of the services in your home, please call the Customer Service Centre who will be happy to help.