

Bathroom Suites:

A typical bathroom suite usually consists of these main items of 'sanitaryware'



- **Washbasin**

Which may be fitted into furniture, bolted to the wall or mounted on a pedestal.



- **WC and cistern**

The WC may be freestanding, back to wall or wall hung.
The cistern may be exposed or sometimes hidden from view.

- **Bidet**

This is not a common fixture in the average UK bathroom.

The bathroom may also include

- **Bath**

Which may be made in various materials and may be fitted with hydrotherapy units.



- **Shower unit**

Which may be fixed over the bath or in a separate shower enclosure.

Sanitaryware items are manufactured in ceramic, stainless steel, or plastic. Each material has its own particular features so there is lots of choice for the consumer. The most common and most important material used in the bathroom is a type of ceramic called 'vitreous china'. This is hard, long-lasting and has a glass-like surface.

Features and Benefits

Feature	Benefit
Semi countertop washbasin	Space saving basin allowing use of furniture for storage
Pedestal washbasin	Traditional styling. Simple design and relatively easy to fit
Dual flush WC	Water saving. The user chooses the amount of water for flushing
Back to Wall WC	The cistern is hidden from view. Stylish
Wall hung WC	The cistern is hidden from view. Very stylish and very easy to clean
Box rim	The flush is better controlled, creates least turbulence and less aerosol effect
Open Rim	Simple, and effective. Entry level and inexpensive
Rimless	Easiest WC design to clean
Wrapover seat	Best looking seat and cover
Soft closing seat and cover	Does not fall with a thud on closing
Germ resisting seat and cover	Ideal seat for use in healthcare situations. Resists bacteria build up

Checklist: What to look out for/ things to ask about

- Company pedigree – for how long has the manufacturer and retailer been trading. Is the manufacturer a member of any trade organisation such as the BMA?
- Customer service – what does the manufacturer and retailer offer?
- Guarantee – what length of warranty and what conditions does the manufacturer give for sanitaryware?
- Spare parts – what are available and for how long in the life of the product?
- Water Regulations - Does the new WC fully conform with the requirements of the Water Regulations 1999, including flush volumes and reliability. It will be illegal to install if it doesn't.
- Maintenance - How easy is the flush valve or syphon to maintain? Could you do it yourself or will it require the expertise of a plumber to replace valve seals or diaphragms?
- Noise levels - How noisy is the fill valve on the cistern? Does it have a silencer device?
- Flush volumes - What is the flushing volume of the WC suite? Is it dual flush or single flush.



Frequently asked questions

Q Which is the best washbasin to buy?

A Well that is a very difficult question to answer since it all depends on your needs, your preferences, your budget and the space you have available. The choice is wide and you will be best to look through the manufacturers' brochures and visit bathroom showrooms to get ideas before you start making decisions.



Q I want a washbasin where no pipework shows. What can you recommend?

A A number of styles of washbasin are available where the plumbing is totally hidden. The best would probably be a countertop washbasin. Here the basin rests on top of a counter and all the supply and water pipes are hidden below inside furniture. If you don't have room for furniture then a wall hung washbasin with a semi pedestal (which hides the pipes) would be a good option to choose.

Q How can I choose between a syphon mechanism and a pushbutton valve mechanism in my new toilet.

A Very often the choice will be made for you! Generally a modern style of WC will be fitted with a pushbutton valve mechanism. The push button lends itself to fashionable and modern styling. Whereas a traditional syphon mechanism with a lever flush handle lends itself to traditional styling with a nostalgic feel. The two mechanisms are not interchangeable but retro fit devices can be obtained if you wish to convert a syphon to a valve.

Q Are wall hung toilets safe? I don't fancy sitting on the loo which is off the ground.

A Yes. The wall hung toilet is supported either on very robust brackets which are fixed to the floor behind a wall. Or they are supported on well engineered frames, again behind a wall or inside furniture. Both systems are tested by weight loading at loads well above the average human weight.

Q Which is best – the open rim or the box rim toilet?

A Both types of rim perform well and do the job of controlling the cascade of water into the bowl of the WC. Box rim pans tend to be more expensive than open rim pans since they are much more difficult to manufacture. They do however create less turbulence since the water flow is better controlled. They may be slightly quieter in operation.



Q I bought a new WC and I want to save water but there is no room in the cistern for a brick! What do you suggest?

A If you bought your WC after 2001 it will already be water efficient with a maximum flush of 6 litres. The suite (the WC pan and the cistern) will be factory matched and perfectly designed to work well together. You should not attempt to save more water by placing a brick or other device in the cistern tank since this will interfere with the correct functioning of the suite, it may not clear correctly and you may end up using even more water by multiple flushing.

Q I want a bidet and would prefer the old style with a rising spray in the bowl. I can seem to find one anywhere. Any suggestions?

A The rising spray bidet requires very careful plumbing and strict rules apply, on health grounds, to how the bidet should be connected to the domestic plumbing system. The UK Water Regulations 1999 also require that permission is granted from the local water authority before installation is started. For this reason this type of bidet has largely died out and the 'over the rim' design (a bit like a sit on washbasin) is now the most common available.

Q I have an old 'double trap syphonic WC' but need a new one but I can't seem to find one anywhere. Can you help?

A The type of WC which works with a clever suction effect usually requires 9 litres of water to function correctly. The Water Regulations 1999 state that no more than 6 litres of water can be used in a newly installed WC. So the double trap syphonic is now outlawed and have been withdrawn from sale.

Q How do I connect my new horizontal outlet WC to the drain which used to be connected with a P-trap WC?
A Easy. Use a special 'pan connector' available from good builder's or plumber's merchants.

Q I find it difficult to operate the lever on my WC because of my advancing years and onset of arthritis. Any suggestions?

A May we recommend you exchange the existing lever with a special enlarged handle. These ergonomically designed handles are spoon shaped and make it much easier use with, say, a closed fist or elbow.

Q I'd really like one of those toilets you sometimes see in other countries which have a simple chrome valve on the wall instead of a cistern tank for flushing? Where can I get one?

A It is not legal to fit this type of mains fed flush valve in a home in the UK. They are therefore not available.

Q What is best to clean my bathroom?

A Most manufacturers suggest 'warm soapy water, rinse with clean water and dry with a soft cloth'.

Q Help! My new WC and cistern came without an overflow. My supplier says this is how things are now. Surely this can't be right?

A Your supplier is correct. The overflow (or warning pipe) is no longer a mandatory requirement in the Water Regulations 1999. Excess water from your cistern will now flow into the WC bowl.

Q The syphon in my old cistern needs replacing. Can I put one of the new pushbutton valves in its place.

A Yes you can but there will be a difference in outlet pipe sizes. Your old syphon will have a 1.5 inch pipe outlet but a valve has a 2 inch pipe outlet. A good builder's or plumber's merchant will advise you on what adapters and conversion kits are available.