

Carcase construction

Carcases are made from 15 or 18 mm thick melamine faced chip-board (MFC) with all exposed edges lipped with melamine tape. Cheaper ranges will be made from 15 mm MFC and may have hardboard rather than MFC backs.

Carcases can be supplied *rigid* or *packed flat*, the latter being cheaper to buy, but may cost more for the contractor to assemble.

Base units have MFC or hardboard backs set in 50 mm to allow for pipe runs.

Drawers, which may be plastic, wooden or have metal sides are generally supplied fully assembled together with metal runners.

Shelves are usually supported on adjustable socket and peg shelf supports. Tall 'larder' cupboards may have one fixed centre shelf for rigidity.

Doors, if supplied, will normally be fitted with 90° concealed hinges which can be adjusted to align the doors correctly.

Plinth boards can be attached to plates with clips which clip on to the adjustable legs supporting the cabinets.

Free-standing cabinets

Free-standing, ready-made kitchen cabinets can be bought from shops and furniture warehouses. These have the benefits of fast delivery and being transportable, should the clients wish to take them on to their next home.

Otherwise the disadvantages are lack of flexible planning and impractical and unhygienic gaps between units.

There is, of course, the vogue for having a kitchen with completely free-standing cupboards and appliances, harking back to large nineteenth century kitchens with a cooking range, a

big dresser and a large central wooden table. This is coupled with the idea of not wanting the kitchen to look too 'stream-lined' or 'minimalist'.

However, for sheer efficiency and for cooking in a hygienic environment, there is nothing to beat the continuous worktop with appliances built into cabinets above a continuous plinth. Also, the exposed legs of free-standing units make the area underneath inaccessible and difficult to clean, which all too soon becomes colonised by undesirable creatures.

Cabinet accessories

Whether cabinets are bought off-the-peg or purpose-built or assembled from standard carcasses with purpose-made doors, some of the accessories which go inside the cabinets are certainly worth considering. These can be bought from specialist kitchen hardware suppliers. The number of items is endless but they can be summarised as:

Support fittings

Adjustable feet, long legs for table/peninsular worktops, cabinet and worktop support brackets, internal shelf supports, wall cabinet hangers, worktop connection fittings, brackets for small microwave oven and TV.

Hardware

Hinges, door flap and lift-up fittings, door and drawer handles, knobs and continuous pulls, catches, stays, worktop edging, cornice profiles.

Drawers

Moulded plastic drawers, wooden drawers, metal drawer sides, runners, dividers, insert trays.