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This report looks at the following areas:

What you need to know

Online has been the real winner when it comes to retailing in recent years with pureplay online specialists capturing 26.5% of bathroom furniture and accessory sales in 2019. If the online sales of those in the DIY retail sector and home furnishing retailers such as IKEA are included, the online channel takes on even greater significance.

The COVID-19 crisis is set to have a major impact on the bathroom and bathroom accessory market. Sales are forecast to drop by more than a quarter during 2020 only returning close to near their 2019 level by 2025. Future consumer confidence, the performance of the property market and the completion of the UK's departure from the EU are all set to weigh down the market.

A major worry for the sector is that expenditure associated with the bathroom sector will be trimmed in what is expected to be a period of personal austerity. Research for this Report records a fall in those undertaking full and partial bathroom refits with purchases focused instead on accessories and freestanding furniture.

Looking ahead, the recent experience of consumers during the COVID-19 crisis in using digital has the potential to benefit all. There appears a clear demand from buyers for contactless ways of viewing and purchasing products. For retailers and manufacturers, growing pressure from online specialists opens up the opportunity for a service that marries both traditional and modern retailing thereby acting as a counterweight to what is a growing threat to their position.

Key issues covered in this Report

• The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour towards bathroom fittings, furniture and bathroom accessories.



"The bathroom furniture and accessories market has recently suffered from a slowdown in the UK economy and stagnant property transactions. Despite COVID-19 bringing further difficulties for the market, opportunities exist with the online channel growing in importance with traditional retailers well placed to learn from pureplay online specialists who currently dominate this channel."

Neil Mo Buy thi	son, Head of Retail s report now
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- The performance of individual product groups within this market and how these may be affected by COVID-19.
- Factors that are affecting demand and changing the way that consumers purchase bathroom fittings, furniture and bathroom accessories.
- Consumer demand and use of channels to purchase products.

COVID-19: Market context

This update on the impact that COVID-19 is having on the market was prepared on 13 August.

The first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in the UK at the end of January, with a small number of cases in February. The government focused on the 'contain' stage of its strategy, with the country continuing to operate much as normal. As the case level rose, the government ordered the closure of non-essential stores on 20 March.

A wider lockdown requiring people to stay at home except for essential shopping, exercise and work 'if absolutely necessary' followed on 23 March.

On 10 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced revised guidance, recommending that people who could not work from home should return to the workplace, and giving people more scope to spend time out of the home. The government allowed non-essential stores to re-open from 15 June.

Economic and other assumptions

Mintel's economic assumptions are based on the Office for Budget Responsibility's central scenario included in its July 2020 Fiscal Sustainability Report. The scenario suggests that UK GDP could fall by 12.4% in 2020, recovering by 8.7% in 2021, and that unemployment will reach 11.9% by the end of 2020, falling to 8.8% by the end of 2021.

The current uncertainty means that there is wide variation on the range of forecasts however, and this is reflected in the OBR's own scenarios. In its upside scenario, economic activity returns to pre-COVID-19 levels by Q1 2021. Its more negative scenario, by contrast, would mean that GDP doesn't recover until Q3 2024.

We are working on the assumption that a vaccine will be available by mid-2021, but that there will be continued disruption to both domestic and global markets for some time after that.

Products covered in this Report

This Report focuses on bathroom retailing in the UK, looking at consumer spending on fixtures, fittings, furniture and accessories for bathrooms for domestic premises, either by end users or small professional installers on behalf of end users.

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It looks at DIY retailers, bathroom specialists and online specialist retailers, as well as other general retailers.

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Nielsen Ad Intel coverage

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