

Off-site construction presents new challenges to enclosure suppliers

The UK is in the throes of a housing crisis. On average, house prices are almost seven times English worker's incomes, while house building needs to almost double to reach the government target of 300,000 new homes a year by the middle of the next decade¹. The need for housing that can be manufactured quickly while offering home buyers affordability is clear – it's a problem that off-site modular construction is now beginning to address – but how do suppliers of electrical enclosures keep pace with this necessary shift in construction techniques?

Off-site construction takes place, as the name suggests, away from site. Instead of building a structure brick by brick, modules such as bathrooms or living rooms are manufactured separately in a production facility. These ready-made modules or rooms are then transported to site as a complete unit, incorporating all required services such as electrics and plumbing, before being installed into the structural frame of the building. This minimises installation times on-site, while also reducing costs as most of the construction work has been carried out off-site by the manufacturer.

Construction off-site does present new challenges to enclosure suppliers though. Contractors typically need to assemble all the building materials at the manufacturing facility before construction can begin, which places increased emphasis on supplying enclosures on reduced lead times. Furthermore, despite being constructed in similar modules, not all building projects are uniform in design, so a variety of different enclosures may be required to suit different projects. For example, an enclosure for a bathroom unit may require higher condensate protection than one for a general living area. Off-site building also demands that the majority of installation work, and that includes electrics, is carried out before the module makes it to site. Therefore, enclosures and accessories must all be incorporated in their entirety early on to minimise work for installers on-site.

Spelsberg UK has invested heavily in its services to help support the needs of the off-site construction market. With significant in-house CNC capabilities and a working assembly line, it is able to offer added value to customers far beyond that of a typical enclosure supplier. Bespoke, turnkey enclosure solutions can be delivered to customers with design and aftermarket support included.

Unlike many suppliers that outsource their customisation services, Spelsberg UK can provide custom samples in 24 hours and roll out a full delivery schedule in a matter of weeks. The full catalogue of enclosures is available for customisation and a wide selection of accessories are available including DIN rails, terminals, hinges and cable glands. Pre-assembly greatly reduces the demands of electrical installation once with the manufacturer. In fact, in many cases, on-site workers will only have to make one electrical connection to integrate the enclosure into the structure as a whole.

As the market of off-site, modular build construction grows, it's important that enclosure suppliers understand the shifting pressures that their customers will be facing. Spelsberg has been working with market leaders such as Offsite Solutions for almost a decade, partnering with them to perfect their services and add value with every enclosure that's supplied.

¹Larry Elliott, Want to Solve the UK's housing crisis? Here's how, The Guardian , 29th April 2018
[\[https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/29/want-to-resolve-the-uks-housing-crisis-heres-how\]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/apr/29/want-to-resolve-the-uks-housing-crisis-heres-how)

Photograph Captions

Photo Caption 1: Bespoke, turnkey enclosure solutions can be delivered to customers with design and aftermarket support included.

Photo Caption 2: With significant in-house CNC capabilities and a working assembly line, it is able to offer added value to customers far beyond that of a typical enclosure supplier.

About Spelsberg

Spelsberg is one of the largest manufacturers of electrical enclosures in the world. With over 4,000 enclosures available as standard and further customisation possible, it offers solutions for almost any application.

With the largest supply of non-metallic enclosures, ex-stock in the UK, its products are often available for delivery within 24 hours; customisation is possible on any product, including bespoke entries, engraved corporate logos or fitted terminals, within 48 hours. Products can be ordered direct from Spelsberg or from most leading supply specialists including RS, Rapid, Farnell and CPC.

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