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INSIDE

Post lockdown, can FMIs still meet carbon cutting targets to achieve sustainability goals?

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Early on in the pandemic, with little in the way of effective treatments against the Coronavirus and with a vaccine still in development, the use of accurate data was our first line of defence. Eighteen months on, we’re all conversant with public health data that shows daily infection rates to help us determine risk factors.

For the FM sector, the use of data in day-to-day operations has taken a leap forward over the past 18 months. The widespread utilisation of digital technology has been adopted to help ensure facilities managers make informed decisions based on hard data rather than gut feel or familiarity.

This issue of FMJ delves deep into the many ways data can be mined to help improve both the performance of building assets and FM services. Whether it’s by reducing energy use to help meet sustainability targets, using technology solutions such as virtual receptionists and automated front of house check-in to support social distancing or installing sensors to produce accurate occupancy planning, access to accurate data is of huge importance.

The power of data was the theme of an event FMJ hosted during Facilities Show Connect, which appropriately enough took place online in June (see page 10). Here we all agreed that while FMs may use data in different ways, the key is to understanding which areas are most useful for your organisation and the benefits it needs to deliver.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the role of FM has been recognised as a vital one in maintaining business as usual and the evidence base provided by data could help maintain that momentum. As one of the panel of experts involved in Facilities Connect commented, the systematic use of data will help elevate the FM function from a ‘fixer of things that go wrong, to a provider of the space that offers users a good experience’.

As always, we’d welcome your feedback about any aspect of the magazine, together with your insight into what’s happening in the FM sector.
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This month’s summary of everything that has hit the headlines in the FM sector.

The latest news and views from RICS-IFMA and IWFM.

Facilities Show Connect (8 -10 June) afforded a virtual way to catch up with some of the leading vendors and experts in FM.

As lockdown restrictions lift, interior plants can help create a healthy, thriving office in the post-COVID era.

The Legionella Control Association (LCA) offers advice on the areas to consider when interpreting and reporting positive legionella results.

Refrigerant gas is one of the most overlooked parts of any air conditioning system, so if your HVAC is not working properly, it’s most likely because your unit is leaking gas.

Andrea Temporiti, Head of Digital at ABB Electrification says meeting sustainability targets begins with analysing the data properly.

The need to maintain a low carbon footprint remains a priority for FM. But with months of lockdown making it difficult to produce an accurate analysis of energy management rates, how can organisations get back on track in meeting carbon cutting targets that help achieve sustainability goals?

Find out who’s moving where in the facilities management profession.

Will Richards, Head of Workplace Experience at ISS UK says research suggests a new approach will be required to enrich the post-COVID workplace experience.

ABM UK recently introduced an innovative mental first aid training programme for its front-line staff, and believes the rest of the FM industry needs to follow suit.

This month we hear from Terry Kemp, Operations Manager, Covent Garden Estate from Incentive Facilities Management.

In our case study; the BCO’s report on the important role that wearable technology plays in workers’ health and wellbeing includes evidence from architecture firm PLP on how the tech can be applied to create a healthier and more productive environment. We discover how organisations must adapt their catering facilities to meet new working patterns; from the provision of vending solutions to help meet variable demands to an increased use of digital apps. We explore the specifications to consider when choosing flooring in order to meet a multitude of requirements throughout a building and how floor layouts could help support a reduction in formal desking areas in favour of break out and collaborative zones. And we ask, how do UK fire Safety regulations compare to those of countries in the EU?

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Media Plan Report on sustainability demonstrates why the sector must adopt a progressive business model with sustainability at its centre says Sunil Shah of Acclaro Advisory & SFMI.

Faced with so much disruption to traditional working patterns, front of house providers must explore new ways to welcome staff and visitors back into the workplace.

One of the biggest threats to commercial buildings left unoccupied as a result of pandemic lockdowns is the possibility of a serious pest infestation, warns the British Pest Control Association (BPCA).

Mark Caskey, JLL’s CEO, EMEA Corporate Solutions has over 20 years of experience in corporate real estate so he’s well placed to ponder the direction of travel for the workplace.

Caroline Judd of Turnkey Fire Services looks at the basics required when carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and the range of fire detection and warning systems available.

New product and service launches and company news from the FM industry.
During May and June of 2021 two procurement policy notes and a procurement policy statement were issued, which represent a significant change of emphasis in public procurement. ‘Together they could transform government’s ability to bring forward a just transition to a low carbon economy. But will they really have the desired effect?’

The National Procurement Policy Statement issued in May 2021, and recently signed off by PPN 05/21, states that contracting authorities should have regard to national strategic priorities for public procurement by considering three national priority outcomes alongside any additional local priorities in their procurement activities:

- Creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills,
- Tackling climate change and reducing waste, and
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience.

To some extent this procurement directive overlaps with the New Social Value Model introduced in PPN 06/20 last September, which introduced a minimum 10 per cent weighting for Social Value and narrowed its scope to focus on five key policy themes and eight policy outcomes. A key difference is that the National Procurement Policy Statement applies to all contracting authorities, whereas the New Social Value Model applies only to central government procurement.

The stated aim of the NPPS is to leverage the approximately £290 billion spent by public sector procurement every year to support the delivery of public policy priorities including generating economic growth, helping communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and supporting the transition to net zero carbon. Contracting authorities are advised to review their policies and processes to ensure that they are aligned with these goals, as well as ensuring they have the skills and capacity to deliver them.

The National Procurement Policy stops short of compelling purchasers to embed the three national priority outcomes into their procurements, but the government has stated its intention to bring forward legislation to make this requirement mandatory when Parliamentary time allows. Additionally, it intends to require contracting authorities to publish procurement pipelines and to benchmark their procurement capability, with target dates of April and 12 months later for those spending in excess of £100 million.

The government’s decarbonisation commitment was further boosted by the issue of PPN 06/21 in June 2021 which requires all tenderers for central government contracts worth more than £5 million per annum to have published a Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) that commits to, and outlines the actions put in place to support the delivery of, a goal of net zero emissions for their UK operations by 2050 at the latest. CRPs must include scope 1, 2 and a defined group of scope 3 emission, be signed by a senior leader, published on the company’s website and be in place by September 30th 2021.

Subsequently it must be updated at least annually. Similar to the Modern Slavery statement, the CRP is something of a blunt instrument – its very existence is sufficient to secure the right to bid, regardless of its level of ambition or, indeed, its credibility. But it does, at least, compel potential bidders to analyse and report the carbon emissions of both their own operations and, to some extent, their supply chain. Like the Modern Slavery Statement, it is targeted at larger businesses since few SMEs would be equipped to bid for a contract above the £5 million per annum threshold but the methodology is equally suitable for smaller companies who could benefit from the opportunity to report voluntarily. Acclaro is already supporting a number of clients to prepare net zero roadmaps and action plans that will underpin their CRPs.

**ENVIRONMENT POLICIES**

**SETTING NEW STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

TRACY RAWLING CHURCH, A PRINCIPLE CONSULTANT AT ACCLARO

The FM industry has largely recovered from the economic downturn brought about by the lockdowns and is coming to terms with the new working environment, according to the latest forecast by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) from RICS. However the forecast warns there may be labour shortages to come.

Where workplaces are shut, essential maintenance will still be required, but overall, the amount of maintenance work being done will be reduced. Once workplaces open again, labour costs could go up because of the backlog of work and staff shortages, but could well fall in the longer term as more staff become available.

Demand for cleaning is likely to increase over the forecast period, there will be deep cleaning work as businesses open and staff return to work. In the longer-term requirements for cleaning are likely to be increased.

Over the forecast period (Q1 2020 to Q1 2026):

- Maintenance costs will rise 14 per cent, mainly reflecting wage rises.
- Cleaning costs will rise 18 per cent: there will be demand pressures as workplaces open up and pressure on wages from demand and the National Living Wage (NLW). Costs are expected to rise 2 per cent in 2021 and by around 4 per cent per annum for the remainder of the forecast.
- Energy costs are expected to rise by 19 per cent, driven mainly by the underlying movement in fossil fuels used in electricity generation.
- R&M output is expected to grow just under 13 per cent from 2020 to 2026. It will recover in 2021 and 2022 as pent up demand and alteration required by a new working environment push up demand. Output will decline slightly over the rest of the forecast period.

**FIRST DEDICATED DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP IN FM IS LAUNCHED**

The first dedicated degree apprenticeship in facilities management will be delivered by the University of Bolton having won approval as an IWFM Recognised Centre to deliver the IWFM Level 6 Extended Diploma as a dual award with its BSc (Hons) in Facilities and Built Asset Management programme.

The two qualifications are requirements of the Senior/Head of Facilities Management Degree Apprenticeship standard. Bolton’s course, starting this autumn, is the first of its kind since the Level Six Standard was introduced and it represents an important option to those who want to study FM at this level as part of an apprenticeship.

IWFM has long advocated the opportunities apprenticeships can offer, especially in a sector as diverse as workplace and facilities management; and the Institute has been greatly encouraged by the introduction in recent years of Levels 2, 4 and 6 to accompany the Level 3 standard.

For more information and/or to register your interest, please contact Peter at: p.farrell@bolton.ac.uk
AWA indicates Inner London could lose 835,000 jobs post COVID–19

Two out of five people living and working in Inner London could do their jobs elsewhere, as workers adapt to new ways of working prompted by the COVID–19 pandemic.

This is according to analysis of official Government data by global management consultancy, Advanced Workplace Associates (AWA), who say that as many as 835,000 roles could be relocated away from the 14 boroughs that make up Inner London.

AWA has analysed which jobs need to be based in Inner London – with the work associated with roles in healthcare, education and skilled trades unlikely to be relocated, while customer service, administration, managerial and a significant amount of civil service work could be moved outside Inner London.

It is estimated that 835,000 roles could move out of Inner London, some 41 per cent of the current workforce.

Founder of AWA, Andrew Mawson, commented: “The COVID–19 pandemic has shown organisations and their employees what can be done in different ways and places than they’ve traditionally been configured, and raises all sorts of questions about how we organise work in the future.

Employers will wonder whether they need as much expensive Inner London office space, and workers will question whether they need to spend time and money commuting if they don’t need to.

This raises important questions for business and policymakers about their location strategies, property needs, and transport planning. It may prompt a rethink of the role of central London in the longer term.”

To read AWA’s report ‘The Future of Work In Inner London’ visit https://www.advanced-workplace.com/awa/research/whitepapers/

SURVEY LAUNCHED BY UKGBC ON VERIFICATION FOR NET ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS

The built environment sector requires urgent, widespread and real decarbonisation of existing and new buildings to meet the UK’s 2050 net zero targets, says the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) as it launches a survey to gather feedback on market drivers, expectations and characteristics for a potential net zero carbon buildings verification scheme.

UKGBC’s Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework Definition built industry consensus on the steps to achieving net zero buildings, provided the property and construction sectors with much needed clarity. Since its release in 2019, there has been a significant shift in the global and UK context driving up demand for net zero buildings, which is reflected in feedback received from members and other industry stakeholders.

Due to this, UKGBC are currently undertaking a major project to explore potential routes for a net zero carbon buildings verification scheme in collaboration with wider industry bodies. Verification will ensure robustness to net zero claims and will help catalyse industry-wide transformation of our built environment. It is, therefore, vital that market analysis is conducted to ensure any proposal delivers a scheme that will genuinely work for the industry.

To better understand the market drivers, expectations and characteristics for a potential net zero carbon buildings verification scheme, the UKGBC is launching an industry survey that will inform next steps to be undertaken by UKGBC and industry collaborators later in 2021.

Responding to BEIS consultations on performance-based policy and performance-based ratings for commercial and industrial buildings, the UKGBC welcomed recommendations for a mandatory performance rating for all commercial and industrial buildings but argues that further incentives and penalties could be required.

To take part in the survey visit www.getfeedback.com/r/h1I90bYu/
RICHS SURVEY SHOWS SUSTAINABILITY GOALS REMAINS KEY PRIORITY

Fifteen months ago, we were all hugely impressed with the resilience and performance of the FM sector during the pandemic and asking ourselves if this was something we could build on to really showcase the range and value of the role of FM professionals in organisations and the wider economy.

It seems clear that we are seeing exactly this and a profession emerging that is confident, innovative and leading on key issues that government and business are highlighting.

Our most recent RICS UK Facilities Management Survey results found that despite the disruption of the pandemic, the majority (85 per cent) of contributors believe that clients consider sustainability to be one of the most important issues, with energy management and health and wellbeing seen as the fastest expanding areas.

As the UK moves to reduce its carbon footprint quicker than other countries, companies are now doing their bit to help reach this target, with 38 per cent of survey respondents highlighting that end users are now regularly considering implementing energy efficient measures to reduce carbon emissions.

The survey shows a greater demand for services across all sectors, apart from retail, with FM employment opportunities increasing. Furthermore, for the first time since the COVID-19 crisis swept across the world last year, profit margins in the sector are expected to rise. A growth in demand for FM services was most prominent in the healthcare sector where 91 per cent more respondents reported a rise in workloads, up from +87 per cent in the previous quarter. A demand for services has seen more respondents suggest that employment opportunities in FM are rising.

A net balance of +58 per cent reported a rise in headcounts over the past three months, up from +24 per cent in the previous survey. This is the strongest reading since the survey began, with more people also being offered FM based apprenticeships, training and qualifications across the sector.

Employment expectations for the whole sector recorded the strongest reading on record for the year ahead with +37 per cent more respondents expecting more FM based jobs to become available in the coming 12 months. Respondents have noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult to source building operation and maintenance workers, with over half of respondents (+51 per cent) citing this as an issue, up from over a quarter in Q1 (+28 per cent).

Respondents expect workloads to pick up over the next 12 months with workplace and relocation management anticipated to see the strongest growth across all areas of FM.

RICS President and FM specialist, Kath Fontana commented: “This latest survey reinforces the crucial role of effective facilities management as we build back better, and now greener, from COVID19. It is encouraging to see a very high focus on sustainability and an intensifying drive to decarbonise. It is clear that FM is evolving rapidly not only to improve the places that we work and use daily, but also to tackle some of the biggest issues facing our built environment.”

PROSPECTS, PROFESSIONALISATION, PROGRESS

WFM’s vision for workplace and facilities management is one of a transformative and enabling profession. Not a cost centre but a value creator.

With its practitioners at the front line of organisations’ post-pandemic priorities - whether that’s workplace safety and optimisation, enabling flexible working, driving sustainability outcomes and delivering social value - there are many opportunities to add value, boost performance and improve the bottom line, whilst also contributing to wider society. For our profession to realise its potential, however, it needs to have more influence.

This month will see us release the fifteenth Pay and Prospects Report, setting out the key insights from the survey we ran in the spring and helping us to track the changing professional environment, conditions and prospects in the sector, including the motivators and otherwise of those who stay and those who don’t. An FM ‘state of the nation’ if you will.

Among the findings, one that spoke to this professional development ‘lifer’ was the link between formal professional development and career progression. It may seem prosaic to say so, but in this mid-pandemic context, everything counts.

Despite 2020’s turbulence, there are encouraging signs among employers on professional development where we are seeing more apprenticeships, mentoring and CPD opportunities.

The evidence is clear that qualifications increase the likelihood of advancement in organisations and better pay, the latter of which remains our profession’s primary motivator; yet indicators of wholesale professionalisation are modest with only one in two respondents qualified in facilities management. There are, of course, a number of reasons for this, with many entering FM from other occupations before specialising.

We know from our research with members that the profession wants a higher standing in the organisations it serves, with influence at board level and in decision-making. Formal professional development is not a silver bullet as we need evidence of impact on a number of fronts, but it stands to reason that the pathway to greater individual standing is likely to be smoother with a formal qualification or its equivalent.

The Institute is determined to facilitate this change. We want to see a greater profile for a distinct profession that is recognised for its ability to transform organisations and their performance. Alongside this, we want to empower and enable professionals to reach their full potential through upskilling. That is our mission and vision in a nutshell, whether by broadening the offering of formal qualifications or by introducing alternative yet equivalent routes to professional recognition.

And change is happening. Last month, the University of Bolton was approved to deliver the first dedicated FM Degree Apprenticeship. The course, starting this autumn, is the first of its kind since the Level 6 Standard was introduced and offers a direct route to IWFM Certified status.

Next year we intend to compliment the Institute’s formal qualification-based route to Certified status with a competence-based route to the same, so that those without a formal Level 6 qualification can be assessed on a par with their peers.
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Expertise built on proven experience.
This immersive digital experience brought the Facilities Management Community together online with a range of product demonstrations, insightful webinars and opportunities to network. The week featured a series of tech talks from FM suppliers; including ACCO, Denis Rawlins, Zeelo, Planon, SWG, Ellogbooks, FSI @Yourservice, CADM and Dutchview.

The programme’s online demonstrations included the opportunity to put questions to the vendors following their presentations. These sessions showcased how digital solutions can allow FMs to monitor and control assets more easily and use the data gathered to improve business processes that result in cost savings based on real time facts and figures.

Discussions revolved around the ways COVID has accelerated the tech process, as people adapt to new ways of working. For instance, we heard about the use of smart solutions such as mobile apps that allows users to scan QR codes to get straight to the information they require. This can help FMs manage increasingly agile workplace environments; from visitor and access management in buildings to supporting workers based at home.

The demos also highlighted the advantages of using smart technologies which offer FMs the ability to collect, store, analyse and distribute vast amounts of data. For FMs going forward, this kind of technology means they can not only monitor and control various processes but it can help them improve business processes to make cost savings based on real time facts and figures.

WEBINAR PROGRAMME
All of these advantages were explored in more depth in the series of panel discussions that took place during the week. These comprised insights into “The Future of the Workplace”, “How Digital FM can Accelerate your Cost Savings, Compliance and Engagement Strategies”, and the ‘Benefits of Data Driven Decision Making’.

“The Future of the Workplace – A Global Perspective”, focused on research by MRI Software in partnership with CoreNet Global. The research found that tenants and landlords were considering or implementing physical changes in the office to address social distancing and hygiene concerns and both groups intended to increase their usage of technology to help them manage the changes.

According to Andy Birch of MRI Real Estate Software, what this suggests for facilities managers is that what was often seen as reactive position prior to COVID is now a key strategic role.

“The challenge now for FMs is to work out what is available in terms of work spaces and make decisions on how to get people to return to the office. They’ve a wide remit around the preparation of workplaces, from the access to the office, i.e. entry and exits, to issues such as staggering the working day.”

The survey also revealed that landlords do not expect remote work to impact their business. This optimism extends to landlords expecting tenants back in the office sooner than tenants are reporting.

“We talk about return to work, said Nicholas Franks of MRI Real Estate Software, “but what we’re seeing is that businesses are open but they aren’t full. This is why over the past year workplace return solutions have been a focal point for many organisations and why MRI has been working to provide a knowledge base on the future of the workplace.”

During the session on digital FM, Paul Bullard of FSI noted that when we look at the latest tech it’s about taking the data it provides and applying that alongside ‘people’ factors. When we consider the use of sensors he said, we must be careful not to miss the most important sensor - the person who works in the building. Ultimately it is occupants who keep FM informed of what they like or don’t like, and areas that may be problematic. He concluded: “It’s about taking that data and overlaying that with HR factors, to produce some real outcomes.”

“This view was echoed by Alan Rose of CadM who advised that the office needs to be repurposed as a destination – where people visit to do something specific. One of the important things to consider when repurposing the workplace, he said will be adaptability, “and it is technology that will help us understand whether we’ve got the new look office right.”

During the FMJ hosted session, Data Driven Decision Making, which concentrated on how the data gathered was used, Hazel Bedson, Strategy Director of Service Works Group offered some valuable advice on getting buy-in from the senior management team.

“This includes informing them of the benefits, both operationally and financially which means build a business case and ideally include a return on investment projection.

1 Ask, you’re making this investment of X amount now but what will be the savings in five or 10 years? A good vendor will work with you to help make that business case.”

Mark Griffiths, Founder & MD of WMA Consultancy Sevices Ltd warned that it’s important to consider that organisations will use data in different ways and the key is to determine what works for you and not to be overwhelmed with the choices on hand.

And finally, offering a valuable snapshot of a real user experience, Edward Payne Chief Engineer, Kettering Hospital described how a series of basic software systems were upgraded into one seamless data-based solution which means that everyone utilising the system has access to real time data.

CONNECT 2021
Facilities Show Connect was part of a series of online events co-located with IFSEC International, FIREX, Safety & Health Expo, Intelligent Building Europe and Workplace Wellbeing Show that combined, offer delegates the chance to learn from over 70 educational sessions, hear from over 100 speakers, and network with over 300 leading industry suppliers.

All of the sessions will be available online until the end of July at www.facilitiesshow.com/en/connect-2021/what-is-connect-2021.html
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As COVID-19 restrictions lift, many businesses are starting to consider welcoming staff back into the office. These workers need to be in an environment where health and wellbeing are prioritised, but after getting used to working at home, many may find the office experience daunting, away from all that has become familiar. Alongside this, there’s no mistaking that the world is a different place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when it comes to the way we work on a daily basis.

Now that offices are cautiously beginning to reopen, it’s important to consider what employees need and expect from a post-pandemic working environment. The positive effects of workplace design on teams have been documented for a number of years. What is perhaps different now is that the various COVID-19 lockdowns have made people appreciate nature more and the health benefits that plants can bring. This is where plant displays can be a significant building block in creating a welcoming office interior.

**GARDENING LEAVE**

In fact, a report published in the Financial Times in September 2020 suggested that gardening was the second most popular lockdown activity, ahead of exercising and reading, and a second article in the Guardian reported surging sales of house plants as people strived to find a way of easing their anxieties about what was happening in the world.

To a degree, this is what makes office interior plants so important. Simply being around plants, which release oxygen, has been shown to lift mood and reduce fatigue by as much as 25 per cent, while also improving the air quality in a room by removing dust and bacteria.

More than anything, interior office plants enable workers to have a connection to nature, which may have been lacking with the amount of time they have had to spend indoors due to the nationwide lockdowns. Green, or living, walls are particularly effective at bringing a small piece of the natural world into the workplace environment, improving the visual aesthetic of the office and improving the overall wellbeing of staff in the process.

**LIVING WALLS**

Living walls have been particularly beneficial to headquarters in urban areas where it is next to impossible to take time out of the day to sit in a park on a bright day. Being in heavily urbanised or populated areas may also cause worries about being unable to maintain physical distancing and make workers more likely to want to remain inside during their lunch break. Providing refuge away from the daily grind without having to confront crowds eases these anxieties and will make the transition back into office working smoother.

Inevitably, this transition will affect each staff member differently. Some may find it an easy return, whilst others will need more support. According to Bupa, more than a quarter of employees are fearful of the better work-life balance many have had as a result of working from home. However, the adverse effect of this is burnout and fatigue, as a result of losing the separation between the two worlds.

Physical distancing measures will need to remain in place, at least for the short-term, however, using plant displays to partition desks ensures teams are suitably spaced apart yet still connected in an uplifting, vibrant setting.

**GREEN SPACE**

COVID-19 has, without question, affected how businesses use their available space. Flexible office space is becoming more of an expectation from employees, with nearly half of UK businesses planning to include greater use of coworking space. Similarly, 63 per cent expect a greater focus to be on their office designs post-COVID-19.

The right combination of office plants and open space which paves the way for agile collaboration and flexibility will be integral to adapting the workplaces of the post-pandemic world. Though remote working has its benefits, such as removing stressful commutes and not having to spend hard-earned wages on transport or fuel, 80 per cent of employees missed the daily, face-to-face interaction with colleagues.

As we at Nurture Landscapes have frequently noticed with our clients, plant displays are becoming more of an important factor in how businesses want to portray themselves to staff and customers. Demonstrating a focus on being ‘green’, sustainable, and an organisation which cares about staff wellbeing enhances reputation and staff morale, and workers who may be feeling apprehensive about a return to a physical office may feel more assured that their company is taking steps to support them.

Of course, office plants are no substitute for the COVID-19 safety measures we have been accustomed to, but they do, at least, make the workplaces of the new world areas where people can once again connect with each other, and a place that they feel proud to return to.
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CONFIRMING A POSITIVE RESULT

Positive legionella results occur in around 10–20 per cent of laboratory water samples, which take 10 days to complete and may take a further two days to confirm with traditional confirmation techniques. The laboratory will normally send a positive notification once the result is confirmed. The LCA would expect that any registered member would have a procedure to notify their client, log the result, track actions, note resolution and close out a positive legionella result.

The result should be notified to a client at the earliest opportunity, and this includes interim positive results. HTM0401 Part B gives good advice on how to interpret positive legionella results in healthcare settings. For other settings the general principles are the same, but the susceptibility of the population is likely to be lower.

The interpretation of sample results will follow directly from a well-designed sample plan. A sample is a small part of the monitoring of control measures in a system. The result should be logged on systems as a non-conformance like any other loss of control and reported in the system as a whole. When addressing issues, you must consider the whole system and not just the sample locations if the results indicate widespread contamination.

CLIENT INFORMATION

An LCA Member’s procedure should detail how they tell their client the information and how they arrive at the advice they give. This procedure should then be followed in practice and at audit the LCA will expect to see an audit trail for each positive result.

For legionella to grow there must be suitable conditions and there will be a root cause for these conditions. Actions following positive samples must address the root cause rather than just the symptom. Common factors include:

- Stagnation, areas being less used than previously thought
- Thermal gain/loss, meaning systems normally reside at growth temperature despite running below 20 degrees after two minutes or above 50 degrees within one minute
- Stagnation due to failed HWS circulation
- Unknown deadlegs
- Materials or contamination in the system that can support growth

Reviewing the assessment of the risk and addressing whatever is found must be the primary recommendation but unless very simple and straightforward to achieve, there should also be interim recommendations. Recommended actions should be appropriate for the results. This can be a difficult balance to strike but if the results indicate limited localised issues, take limited localised action, if results indicate more widespread issues, take system level actions.

LOGGING A POSITIVE LEGIONELLA RESULT

The result should be logged on systems as a non-conformance like any other loss of control and recorded as part of the process. If actions are required by you or your customer then ensure these are completed and recorded in your logging process.

RESOLVE THE POSITIVE RESULT AND CLOSE OUT

Once the root cause has been identified and resolved this action should be noted on a LCA’s member’s log and the positive result closed out. In many cases it is normal to carry out follow up sampling after remedial action to verify success.

SUMMARY

Sampling for legionella can be an important part of the monitoring of control measures in a written scheme and competent interpretation of positive results is essential. Appropriate planning, technique and interpretation is vital to ensure the information obtained by sampling is valid and useful. The LCA requires members to have in place management procedures that detail how samples are planned, carried out, non-conformances logged and dealt with and actions closed out including communication with their clients.
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Refrigerant gas is one of the most overlooked parts of any air conditioning system. If your system is not cooling your room as well as it used to or if your evaporator coils are suddenly covered in ice, it’s most likely because your unit is leaking gas.

Air conditioning units now use R32 coolants, since R22 ones were banned in the UK. Despite R32’s high efficiency in HVAC systems and its low GWP (Global Warming Potential) they are still composed of chlorofluorocarbons that pose several dangers to human life. Therefore, effort must be made to understand the dangers, the possible causes, remedies and technology to support the safe use of these systems.

UNDERSTANDING THE DANGERS

The loss of refrigerant gas can cause your system to cool inefficiently and struggle to produce adequate air conditioning, not to mention the irreversible damage to your machine’s compressor and to the health of your employees.

As coolant leaks from your system it rapidly evaporates into a lethal gas which can cause asphyxiation. More commonly, it can cause difficulty breathing, headaches, nausea and vomiting, skin and eye irritation, and coughing. If exposure to the gas is prolonged it can lead to other life-threatening medical conditions.

During a leak your system is working harder to compensate which in turn increases electricity consumption and your monthly energy bills. According to several studies, a leaking air conditioning unit consumes almost 20 per cent more electricity than a fully functioning one.

To put that into context, it has been suggested that a small continuous leak, left unrepaired for three months, could use an extra 10kW in electricity – equivalent to approximately £1,400 in energy bills – once the leak becomes critical.

LEGALISATION AND COMPLIANCE

In early 2020 the European Commission brought in fluorinated gas (F-gas) regulations as part of a policy to combat climate change. The plan is to phase down the CO2 equivalent emissions from hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 79 per cent (relative to 2015) by 2030. As the UK has now left the EU, the UK government has specified that businesses will have to apply for a new GB HFC quota while they follow the same CO2 phase down as was specified by the European Commission. As HVAC and refrigeration manufacturers commit to developing environmentally compliant products without compromising on performance they are also seeking to address health and safety concerns.

These regulations place a greater focus on carrying out regular gas leak checks on systems. Operators of stationary equipment, heat pumps and air conditioners that contain F-gases in quantities of 5 tonnes CO2 equivalent, or more, must ensure that equipment is routinely monitored. For apparatus without gas leak detection installed, the period between mandatory gas leak checks obviously lessens.

RECOGNISING THE SOURCE

Continually using an air conditioning system, even after a leak has developed, can put excessive pressure on the compressor and other components. The compressor can break and cost significantly more to replace than the cost of identifying the leak earlier on and repairing it.

Probably one of the most common leak causes is corrosion. It is a factor that has plagued the HVAC industry for many years due to the exposure to fluorides and chloride in water supplies and cleaning chemicals. Another common cause is poorly connected control valves or connectors that have not been cleaned properly before joining. Similarly, poorly soldered fittings can easily lead to a refrigerant gas leak.

It is also worth noting that mechanical damage can be a cause. The refrigerant lines in your system move the gas between the evaporator and condenser. As you may expect, refrigerant lines passing through the exterior of the unit are particularly susceptible to damage, resulting in a leak.

WORKING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Nothing can replace the accuracy and efficiency of using technology to identify a gas leak, however there are a few simple things to look out for if you suspect a leak.

If you suspect your unit is not working properly check for the pungent smell of the gas. The leak may not be in the same room as the main unit so you would have to check the whole system. Also checking all pipes for stains and listening for a ‘humming’ sound coming from your thermostat pipe are other basic checks that can be done.

These checks are time consuming and fraught with human error. The person checking may not check all the pipes, they may have impaired hearing or sense of smell resulting in it not getting detected, the leak getting worse and having drastic results.

For facilities managers, self-contained single fixed gas sensors, which are more suited to target R32 gases associated mostly with HVAC units, are quickly becoming commonplace. The clear benefits of detection sensor technology are why some leading detection systems on the market have a proven return-on-investment of just two years, and that is without taking into consideration the cost of repairs to an existing faulty system. As well as leak detectors, sophisticated refrigerant sensor equipment is available with signalling alarms, LED lights that indicate the presence and status of each sensor and also audio/visual alarms to alert staff.

As awareness of the dangers of leaks and benefits of market leading technology circulates further among facilities managers, and as businesses become more accountable in regards to health and safety, utilising the latest detection and alert technology is paramount.
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Demand for electrical energy is rising, with urbanisation and industrialisation driving an expected increase of 33 per cent by 2040. These alarming upwards trajectories are spurring governments all over the world into action, with all major economies beginning to regulate carbon emissions and energy usage more forcefully.

For most countries, new legislation places a real onus on businesses to step up and play their part in reaching Government sustainability targets by adopting the policy, technology, behavioral and business model changes needed to make both their workplace and industry zero-carbon.

There are already notable examples of how governments are actively encouraging businesses to stay competitive, compliant, and socially responsible, with over 40 countries and more than 20 cities, states and provinces already taxing companies on the amount of carbon pollution they generate. Yet alarmingly, a survey conducted by YouGov found that 40 per cent of SMEs in the UK are yet to have a sustainability plan in place and 30 per cent don’t have any intention of adopting one.

Achieving net zero is the responsibility of everyone, and enterprises are expected to play their part, no matter their turnover or business size. Even at ABB, with our 2030 Sustainability Strategy we are tackling our own carbon emissions and looking to drive impact from the inside out with a focus on achieving carbon neutrality across our own operations.

And when it comes to meeting business sustainability targets, facilities managers, even within our own operations, are right in the thick of it, and the magnitude of the task at hand can feel overwhelming. Getting to grips with technology, strategies and solutions that will support the journey to net zero, without requiring considerable financial outlay is an important first step, but where should you start?

As we approach the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in October, industry leaders are anticipating stricter legislation and binding pledges that will force businesses to begin their journey to sustainability, whether they are prepared for it, or not.

The problem is, most organisations do not have control over their energy consumption, nor an accurate methodology to inform them on how their site or building is operating. This is the first step in developing an effective sustainability strategy and the answer lies in data collection and analysis.

The early adoption of simple to use, plug-and-play energy management tools provides real time or aggregated time insight into how and where your facility is consuming energy, from the lights and the server room to energy hungry systems on a production line. Armed with accurate data, facilities managers can begin to reap the benefits of digitalisation – strategically making small but significant changes to reduce power consumption, improve operational efficiencies, drive cost reductions, and meet sustainability targets. In fact, an energy data and analysis program can often reveal patterns of energy waste that would otherwise be impossible to spot, helping you to make the most impactful changes, first time.

Improvements based on data monitoring have been shown to reduce energy consumption by as much as 45 per cent which proves that understanding where and how your business is consuming (and wasting) energy is a critical first step. Continually monitoring energy consumption and power quality, allows you to make informed and strategic decisions on the small changes you can make quickly, and the larger sustainability investments required to make your company compliant.

With data monitoring in place, the key is to start small. Make small but impactful strategic changes to your electrical systems, such as introducing digital switchgear, processes and company behaviors then monitor improvements via your data collection software.

Once you have identified larger areas for improvement, consider working with a digitalisation expert to support you in identifying the right technologies to make the most of any considerable sustainability investment.

Every journey has a destination and for businesses working towards sustainability, that destination should be the integration of renewable energy sources and independence from the grid. This may sound unachievable, but with data monitoring as the backbone of your sustainability strategy, it is completely possible.
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As organisations prepare for the widespread reopening of buildings, the need to maintain a low carbon footprint remains a priority. But with lockdown making it difficult to even produce an accurate analysis of energy management rates over the past year how can FMs help their organisations get back on track in meeting carbon cutting targets that help achieve sustainability goals?

In FMJ’s regular monthly column, our team of FM experts answer your questions about the world of facilities management

Q:

A:

ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS PROVIDER’S VIEW

GEORGE ADAMS, DIRECTOR OF ENERGY AND ENGINEERING SPIE UK

The changes in building occupancy due to the pandemic pose a number of challenges for those in facilities management. However, sustainability and efficiency remain hugely important, particularly as climate change directly affects everyone’s health. It is clear that the relationship between health, buildings, energy and climate remains a focus, with new scientific studies highlighting the impact buildings have on people. Consequently, facilities management teams will need to be better educated on how to integrate this into the way buildings are managed.

Early anecdotal evidence from offices that have already reopened is that businesses need help in optimising the use of their office space to cut carbon emissions. With changeable usage patterns, facilities managers can help to instate a flexible occupancy approach which enables organisations to only use as much of the office, and by extension the heating, lighting, and ventilation, as they need to. In order to drive significant improvements in building operations and energy management, the use of existing intelligent technology can greatly assist the FM team with data collection and analytics. In doing so, they can create a more dynamic working environment that should drive a better return on investment for the organisations they work with.

For example, by measuring the carbon per person in a building, facilities managers can establish a baseline from which the amount of energy consumption overall is reduced. A smart way to begin your carbon reduction journey is to analyse how much energy is generated by different systems, utilising the data as part of the ongoing life cycle management of the building. There are already governmental changes that are driving companies to operate more sustainably. For example, large businesses in the UK are required to publicly state their carbon emissions in their Directors’ Report. As businesses respond to ever stricter climate targets, the reality is that facilities managers and organisations have fewer easy

George Adams

Early anecdotal evidence from offices that have already reopened is that businesses need help in optimising the use of their office space to cut carbon emissions.

George Adams
buildings will present a sufficiently attractive proposition for potential tenants and occupants. In a budget constrained environment, energy efficiency savings are increasingly seen as the ideal starting point for smart buildings transformation (either as a single investment or as a series of incremental projects), with smart financing techniques playing a major role in enabling those future savings to finance the cost of conversion.

**ENERGY MANAGEMENT EXPERT’S VIEW**

CLARE HAWKINS, HEAD OF ENERGY SERVICES, EMCOR UK

In recent years, the carbon footprint of organisations has become a key focus, with companies striving to reduce or offset their carbon emissions where possible and move towards a carbon neutral or net zero position backed by measurable targets with deadlines.

The emergence of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on energy management – in terms of affecting the levels of energy used as buildings have been only partially occupied or shut completely; on the baselines on which targets were set as usage unexpectedly changed and on considering how the workplace will evolve as people return to work.

Energy management is an area where FM professionals can play a critical role, especially as many FM organisations have established specialist energy services divisions, with experts who can help their customers create energy management strategies and then also provide energy services to achieve their goals. Energy management forms a key part of a carbon reduction strategy and it is important for customers to understand the broad scope of energy services to realise the full benefits. Training and behavioural change programmes; purchasing options; guidance on how renewable generation can be financed without the need for capital investment and ensuring legislative compliance are just a small selection of the types of energy services available to customers from their FM provider and which can have an impact on energy consumption and costs.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, FM professionals were advised to review processes on how they could reduce waste and carbon emissions whilst ensuring their buildings remained fit for purpose. Experts could help analyse energy consumption data for customers to ensure that they were only using essential levels of energy and could create actions plans on how to make reductions or shut completely; partially occupied buildings remained fit for purpose. Experts could help analyse energy consumption data for customers to ensure that they were only using essential levels of energy and could create actions plans on how to make reductions and then continue to monitor and manage the on-going energy use, using SMART technology where possible. The impact of the last 18 months has accelerated the

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mandatory; and the drive across the world to reach higher environmental standards. There is now wide recognition that making buildings smarter adds value by delivering agility and flexibility in the “new normal” – whether from the perspective of hot-desking, agile changes of use, security and safety, hygiene and infection control, remote buildings management, or greater efficiency and flexibility to adapt to volatile circumstances.

The future of office occupancy is under considerable scrutiny at the moment, with many corporations reassessing their real estate needs in the light of the pandemic experience. Smart buildings have been seen to offer important benefits in terms of looking after occupant and staff safety through digital, touchless and remote capabilities. Equally, operating costs are also under the spotlight and the opportunity to save on energy costs without having to deploy capital is increasingly attractive. While there is wide consensus around the need to make buildings smart, all countries and sectors need a way of making that conversion financially sustainable. How can this be done?

The starting point is to use smart technology to reduce energy consumption in buildings. This produces hard financial savings that – through smart financing arrangements – can be harnessed to subsidize or even pay for overall smart buildings conversion. This can be done at an enterprise level, or in small incremental steps, each of which proves its return on investment. For whole building and multi-building projects, budget-neutral schemes are available from specialist financiers to enable conversion. They are increasingly becoming known as “Building Efficiency as a Service” (BEaaS) arrangements. The integrated solutions provider introduces technology and systems to create smart buildings which deliver a clearly predictable level of energy savings. The reduction in energy costs is then harnessed to effectively fund the cost of conversion. Throughout, the building’s owner has conserved their own funds for strategically important development activities – whether commercial growth or improved public services. In the post-pandemic period, where cash reserves have been used up and revenues are experiencing a downturn, the idea of self-financing smart building conversion becomes even more compelling than before the crisis.

At a time when building owners and managers are having to invest in measures to make their buildings safe and occupiable, and are also being restricted on the density of occupation, it is arguable that, only smart buildings will present a sufficiently attractive proposition.
need to reflect on the future of the workplace and to identify changes which meet employees’ new needs – such as the demand for a more hybrid way of working – while also ensuring that workplace strategies continue to deliver on sustainability goals.

As companies reconsider the future of the workplace, the emphasis on carbon footprint must remain a priority. Fewer people in offices, online meetings and less commuting will help reduce carbon emissions but other factors such as an increase in ventilation and the need for social distancing could adversely impact carbon performance.

Having supported organisations when workplace occupancy was dramatically reduced, the focus has now shifted to how FM providers can continue to provide strategic guidance and services which support new ways of working while also considering the long-term approach. In the race to net zero, the use of gas boilers for heating, the potential for renewable generation and the requirement to decarbonise are issues which organisations need to address and FM companies are ideally placed to advise. Through consideration of the asset management strategy and the whole life cost of a portfolio, FM professionals must develop a long-term strategy to ensure cost effective actions are prioritised to optimise carbon performance.

The FM industry has the expertise to act as consultants as well as to deliver services and, additionally, a growing number of FM organisations are making their own net zero commitments and, by doing so, will help to support their customers’ carbon reduction goals.

Everything we do has an impact on our carbon footprint and so it is critical that FM experts work in partnership with their customers and supply chain to support the UN Global goals and the Paris Agreement Treaty on climate change.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR’S VIEW
NATHAN GRAY, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, RECONOMY

One thing the pandemic has certainly done is to highlight both the fragility and resilience of the human race. We have seen how acting collaboratively can have a positive impact on global situations which seemed, at times, to be out of our control. Spending more time outside in parks, gardens and the countryside has also given many people an even greater appreciation for the natural world and our environment. My hope is that as we start to look to life after the pandemic, we will be able to harness these sentiments to bring about large scale and meaningful change.

So, what does this mean for retailers looking to re-engage their environmental and sustainability strategies? For many, waste, recycling and resource management has understandably not topped their list of priorities over the last year. Their focus has been on survival and finding ways to trade. As long as any waste they produced was collected and managed without incident, that was enough.

Things are starting to change however, and we are seeing businesses refocusing on leveraging the environmental and commercial benefits of developing a more sustainable business model for the future. This is perhaps unsurprising when you think a saving equivalent to one per cent of turnover can be brought about from waste minimisation alone. For many, a sensible starting point is to understand where they stand after these most challenging of times. The establishment of a new baseline underpinned by accurate and up-to-date data is a key part of this process. Whilst this may seem like a time-consuming exercise, there are tools, which can make life far easier.

These tools require some relatively simple waste management data in order to help evaluate an organisation’s baseline, CO2e and their climate impacts (Scope3) of their current waste services. They do this by classifying the waste management processes employed as either a positive figure (Renewable - reuse and recycling) or negative (Non-Renewable landfill/ energy from waste). The objective is to support companies in working towards Zero Waste and limiting climate change to 1.5°C by 2030.

As these tools are normalised, users are able to input and aggregate data for single or multiple sites to better understand performance over their entire estate. In doing so, they are able to identify areas of opportunity and develop a clear roadmap, with intermediary measurement points, to ensure progress.

This information can then be used to implement what we have identified as the five key steps to circularity:

- Analysing where you are
- Reviewing your processes
- Communicating change
- Collaborating with your supply chain
- Introduce innovations

We must not lose sight of the potentially devastating impacts of climate change and resource scarcity. Indeed, now is the time we should be trying to harness the heightened sense of awareness and save money. It is impossible to plan a route to any destination without first knowing where you are. Only by doing this will you be able to define and prioritise the actions that need to be taken and measure your progress over a period of time.

FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE’S VIEW
NICK FALCO, PRODUCT & TECHNICAL DIRECTOR AT MECHLINE DEVELOPMENTS

Disposing of food waste generated by catering operations can be costly in terms of both transportation and landfill charges—and so a sustainable approach to minimising and managing end-of-life food, which can help organisations reduce their carbon footprint, is essential.

As the Mechline Food Waste Reduction Programme outlines, the ultimate aim has to be to prevent food waste in the first place. Every catering operation will of course produce some food waste—but transporting and disposing of end-of-life food to landfill is the most costly and least environmentally friendly option. Even transporting food waste for recycling contributes to carbon emissions. Operators should always choose the best economic and environmental solution to reprocess end-of-life food for each site, factoring in numerous considerations including transportation costs, carbon emissions and pollutants.

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HOSPITABLE SURROUNDINGS
Community is at the core of The Fisheries, a co-working space in London’s Hackney. Benugo founder Hugh Warner has applied his background in hospitality to create a place where members have plenty of opportunities to interact.
When Hugo Warner (the founder of catering and hospitality brand Benugo) launched a purpose-built co-working space, The Fisheries, near Broadway Market and London Fields in Hackney at the tail end of 2019, he had no idea of the disruption a global pandemic was about to wreak. Yet a combination of a successful background in hospitality and an innate understanding of what occupiers want from their office space have helped him ride the storm and pre-empt a growing demand for flexible ‘service as a space’ workplaces.

“The Fisheries is the result of an amalgamation of many things I’ve done in the past,” explains Warner. “When I left Benugo I had to find something else to do and I’d noticed how well people got treated if they were working for a corporate player but how badly if they worked for an interesting little company but had to work in a nasty little office where the landlord didn’t care.

“I thought, maybe we could create a space where smaller companies come together and share the space to make things more affordable? I was also seeing the way younger people worked, as they’d come into our bars and restaurants and sit there all day with a cappuccino. That was the only option if you didn’t have an office and not much fun.”

The Fisheries is based in London’s Hackney area, which is home to Warner and his family and its interiors is described by Warner as ‘Hackney Heritage,’ being inspired by Hackney’s creative and eclectic reputation. Described initially as a ‘hotel for workers’ the project, which took seven years to complete joins a small Victorian warehouse to a newly constructed building on the original site of R. Green Fisheries - from which the building derives its name.

Sustainability was a big factor in the design and resulted in the Fisheries receiving a BREEAM excellent rating for building sustainability. Says Warner: “The retrofitting of these older buildings is important and as we had to underpin the whole of the old building, we created a basement underneath it to house many of the things we’d need for environmental reasons. For instance, rainwater harvest means all our toilets flush using rainwater and all our plants are watered using rainwater.

“The building is also well insulated. We use Photovoltaic PV Panels to provide electricity from the sun and air source heat pumps and locally sourced produce for our weekly workers lunch to the coffee we provide.”

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The finished site comprises 32 flats above a work space which is flooded with light and filled with greenery. There is a wide choice of work spaces, along with a variety of differently styled break out areas scattered all around the building. There are two communal kitchens, bathroom and shower facilities, indoor bike storage, a podcast studio, a photo studio and an events space called The Green Room, offering a fully equipped kitchen to host supper clubs, charity events, members gatherings, training and presentations.

The workspaces are spread over three floors with each area layered to feel like you are walking into a different room, making it easy for occupants to find the right space to suit their mood. Talking to some of the occupants it’s clear they take advantage of these options. I spoke to one occupant who said that after they’d completed some necessary admin work they had moved to a different space to help with their creative process.

This approach is no accident. Warner’s background in creating award-winning high street stores, concessions for public spaces such as The British Museum, BFI and Edinburgh Castle and some of the world’s largest and most respected corporate organisations has taught him quite a few things about creating a welcoming space.

He says: “The workplace has always been changing and the open plan office is fine but it is still incredibly formal and regimented and the idea of sticking in a plant and funky furniture isn’t the answer. Here, the look and feel is because I like this design, but what makes the Fisheries what it is – is the culture around what we believe what work really is.

“My understanding of this business is that it’s not about the management of facilities, it’s more about taking care of people. The only purpose of any facilities is to make you feel good and happy and if you don’t deliver those things, what’s the point? This space is not about ping pong and joy slides, it’s more about creating a hubbub of a space and actually creating an environment where people want to be here.”

Occupation is based on desk bookings with a choice of community or ‘hot desks’ available as a monthly rolling contract or as a shoal of 10 days. Dedicated desks are aimed at those looking for a more permanent workspace and offer users a large desk, free meeting rooms and a locker. For companies which want to base their people in a team setting, there is a range of customisable office spaces which can accommodate two to 20 people.

Given that the spaces are fully booked at the moment, workers do indeed want to be there, and apart from the early days of the first lockdown, Warner reports that many occupants preferred coming to the Fisheries as they feel safe and comfortable.
CASE STUDY

THE FISHERIES

“We’ve 400 desks, but don’t ever expect to have 400 people booked at one time, so we work on 80 per cent which is our target. You get turnaround, but my view is we’re very happy with 80 per cent and you may go up and down a bit or get a crossover month. I’d have the same view in a restaurant, you never want full occupancy as you might not be able to provide the highest level of service.”

OCCUPANCY LIST

The list of companies which utilise the space is eclectic; and includes a small number from the banking industry, a number of media companies and social enterprises, a vegan baker, a bread station, a company which provides online learning for children, plus creatives such as architects and graphic designers.

Says Warner: “We were never going to be just a space for tech or creatives, everyone is welcome. We care about what sparks your imagination and we know by moving around and working with other disciplines is stimulating. We should all be interested in other people’s industries because if you’re not, you’re missing out on a huge opportunity.”

“This idea has shaped the way we operate, which is why 50 per cent of our space is common space, which is quite a big area for a flexi office.”

Aside from the window cleaner who is an ex Michelin chef and the cleaner who run their company from the Fisheries, facilities are provided exclusively in house.

“If you’re taking on big contractors you’re essentially paying them to pay a sub-contractor to do the work” argues Warner. “Our front desk is our in-house team, as that is the nerve centre of our business. We’re in hospitality so we know we’re not needed at the front desk all time, so we’re people on a rota to walk the building and pick up cups.

“Those other things are easy. Of course, the place should be clean, the windows should be clean, that’s obvious. Part of our job is to talk to members, say hello, walk around and engage with them if they’re free to talk. The things that matter are the bits you don’t see and take place.”

COMMUNITY FEEL

The other key element for the Fisheries is creating a sense of community. The Fisheries hosts weekly Wednesday lunches, free to all members as a way to socialise and get involved. Monthly members drinks in the event space are organised to help people get to know others and help encourage cross-creativity. Other members are encouraged to use the Green Room to run their own events, and if it’s for a good cause it comes free. This sense of community extends to the wider Hackney environs.

Says Warner: “We don’t have a café on site which was deliberate, as we wanted to support local business and acknowledge we are a community and part of a larger community.

“It sounds trite but mental health has always been high on my agenda so the wellness aspect at work is important. Many organisations talk a good game but I believe it’s about impregnating this into your footprint so it becomes routine.

“For instance, we have a personal trainer, who holds two sessions a week and we’ve got 25 people going to each session. We try and programme it into their routine so they are encouraged to get away from their desk. We also run regular yoga sessions.”

Warner’s background in hospitality shines through this project, as he’s begun with the hospitality side and extended it to the knowledge worker, not the other way around. He is happy to bring his winning ingredients to other flexible spaces.

“We’ve been talking to lots of people and there are many routes we can pursue. However, the way in which we expand is tricky, as some get it some still don’t, as there is a strong belief by developers and landlords that these massive off ice blocks will continue.

“My view is that there will be an element of that but things were changing anyway. Our expansion model is those companies who are discovering they need something like us, because we’re better at running a flexible working space which delights users. That is because the workplace is now essentially about good hospitality. If you want them to come to work then you better damn well ensure they want to come to work.”
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SUSTAINABLE CORE

Sunil Shah, Director at Acclaro Advisory & SFMI says the latest FM progress report on sustainability illustrates why the sector must adopt a progressive business model with sustainability at its centre.

The sudden, catastrophic emergence of COVID-19 generated the most significant disruption to life in the post-war era. The pandemic dealt a harsh blow, forcing organisations across the public and private sector to make drastic changes to their operations, commercial models, workplace strategies, employee engagement efforts, health and safety procedures, and more. The SFMI, running since 2013, is a sustainability roadmap for the FM sector, helping to benchmark an organisation’s performance against peers and providing a tailored programme of measures that need improvement.

The latest findings provide some guidance on how FM has progressed in meeting sustainability targets during the disruption, but what is clear is that organisations have relied on the facilities management sector to guide them through the pandemic. As existing contracts were torn up, FM demonstrated its responsiveness, flexibility and ability to gain trust, and it has often been the people in low-paid facilities roles that have borne the brunt, risking their health during the crisis.

Investors are also looking at how organisations have responded to the pandemic; in particular their engagement with staff, the resilience of service offerings and the adaptability of the management team. The rise of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) measures now require a greater level of public disclosure, based upon the collection and analysis of data and a clear forward strategy. With many of these impacts, including supply chain diversity, carbon emissions, and waste efficiency affecting the facilities operations, a robustness over data, risks and decision making is a necessary part of the role.

VIEW FROM THE SUSTAINABLE FM INDEX

Looking ahead to the long-term view, the pandemic has accelerated a shift in working habits, forced organisations to undertake...
home working and enabled discussions about remote working to take place. While organisations will all have their specific requirements, an increased level of flexibility in working patterns is expected, with the role of the office becoming increasingly a place to meet and connect - exemplifying the brand and relationships of the business. So, what does this mean for FM and its long-term approach to sustainability? Its newfound responsibilities during the pandemic enabled the sector to assume a strategic position that it struggled to attain in the past. Our 2020 SFMI audits found evidence of FM service providers integrating sustainability into their service offering and working in partnership with customers to transform their sustainable outcomes. However, while leaders are progressing, the audits revealed that a significant number of the FM sector remain desperately unequipped to meet the increasingly critical sustainability challenges. Ultimately, this will pose a problem for organisations who need to meet these public targets, from reducing carbon to building a more equal society.

FM organisations must maintain the high level of engagement they now enjoy with leadership teams and cement this new business normal. The pandemic, together with climate change, rising economic inequality and a growing social justice movement, represents the perfect storm for FM to reinforce its status as an agent for change. The alternative is a reversion back to the Cinderella profession that does the dirty work and never goes to the ball.

SFMI 23 CRITERIA
The role of FM in sustainability is an important one, so a key discussion point should be around how FMs can measure customer benefits and the added value they provide. This includes identifying the opportunities raised and the achievements delivered from both a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. The SFMI assessment is made against 23 criteria, captured under broad Environmental, Social and Governance headings, which are updated annually. Together with the assessment, a number of forums and knowledge sharing activities between FM providers and end users takes place to better understand how services can be shaped and delivered.

All the SFMI criteria are interlinked and can be grouped in various ways. It is vital to understand the links between criterion as they are not completely independent of each other. Managing criteria in a holistic way is crucial to embedding sustainability throughout an organisation. Some examples of these groupings are Zero Carbon, Social Value, and Supply Chain GHG emissions (see box), all of which are key sustainability topics for FM.

FORWARD DRIVERS
In 2021, there are a few key themes that we are seeing progress on within the facilities sector.

Zero Carbon is often seen through the eyes of energy management; however, involvement should also come through other criterion such as ecology and the Circular Economy. Biodiversity in particular has a significant role to play in meeting Zero Carbon targets, and its management in relation to low and zero carbon buildings and sites. Ecology remains a low priority, but we have seen an increase in the awareness of its importance to Zero Carbon strategies. The Circular Economy can be utilised to reduce carbon emissions through waste reduction, reuse and recycling of products and materials.

Social Value incorporates many criteria including, but not limited to, Contracts, Supply Chain Management, Sustainable Communities and Employment. It saw significant development throughout 2020 and was partly driven by the

GREEN HOUSE GAS (GHG) PROTOCOL EMISSIONS

Scope 1 emissions - direct emissions from owned or controlled sources such as fleet vehicles, gas and diesel consumption and refrigerant gas leakage.

Scope 2 emissions - indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy and will include primarily electricity, including from certified renewable sources.

Scope 3 emissions - all other indirect emissions that occur in a company’s value chain particularly operations and services on client sites.

For the Facilities sector, the majority of emissions will sit in Scope 3 - typically between 60 per cent to 92 per cent of total emissions. Inclusion of the whole value chain is therefore important to measure accurately the impacts and define a forward strategy to reduce.

Unfortunately, there is a fair bit of noise being made about Zero Carbon or Net Zero emissions, but there is a lack in firstly measuring and reporting of scope 3 emissions to align with the targets. This is an area which must be improved because of the increase in the number of published zero carbon targets.

There are three key maturity levels for reporting emissions:
1. Reporting just scope 1 & 2 emissions
2. Reporting scope 1-3 emissions, scope 3 does not include the supply chain
3. Reporting scope 1-3 emissions, scope 3 includes the supply chain

Stage 3 shows best practice and is the level that the leaders of zero carbon targets report to. This is the hardest as it includes the supply chain, which requires significantly more time and effort to report, and it requires the supply chain to go net zero for the company to also achieve zero emissions. Unless the company is willing to pay the offsetting value of the supply chain emissions when they do not have control.
Growing emphasis on social value within government frameworks and public sector contracts (PPN06/20). Many companies are able to provide individual examples of social value delivery but integrating and embedding it across standardised contracts and ways of working, as well as capturing data which demonstrates its benefits, is still a considerable challenge across the sector.

Supply Chain GHG emissions (Scope 3, see box out on Pg 29) fall under several criteria including Energy, Transport, Supply Chain Management, and Disclosure. Many companies which have embedded Zero Carbon targets only include Scope 1 and 2 emissions and rely heavily on carbon offsetting. It is paramount that companies include Scope 3 emissions in their reporting and targets, as well as reduce reliance on offsetting to achieve their reduction targets.

**WHERE DOES FM GO FROM HERE?**

In 2020, FM saw its status grow as a critical function and strategic advisor to the board, as the pandemic forced organisations into unchartered territory. Nevertheless, if the sector is to capitalise on this opportunity and truly establish itself as a global leader, it will need to adopt a progressive business model with sustainability at the centre.

To achieve this, sustainability must be aligned to the values of the organisation and based upon accurate and robust data. This lack of data is hampering the ability to make decisions.

- Understand the ESG / Sustainability drivers affecting the organisations
- Define what this means for the services being provided, the risks and the opportunities, and the value that FM can provide
- What are the measures and metrics that are necessary to demonstrate value, as both lagging and leading measures
- Understand what data exists to help meet these measures and the level of accuracy. To free up resources, understand if some data is no longer necessary for collation.
- Provide reporting on the measures, its interpretation and how the FM strategy is delivering on the sustainability values of the organisation
- Over time increase the level of data that is measured and improve the accuracy

A sustainable future depends on every stakeholder, including the FM service providers, corporates and the government, working in unison to realise not just the stakes in securing a sustainable future but also the commercial opportunities it holds.

**REFERENCE NOTES**

(i) www.acclaro-advisory.com/sfi-fm-providers/
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Focus Front of House

Front of house has long been seen as reflecting the brand and ethos of an organisation, but now more than ever, is crucial in protecting building occupants. As organisations welcome staff and visitors back into buildings, ensuring safe and secure reception services mean that, as with other areas of FM during the pandemic, technology solutions are gaining credence. Research carried out by Swiss Post Solutions (SPS) found that half (50 per cent) of UK companies are planning to introduce digital technologies to help them maintain ‘front of house’ (FoH) services in the future. Does that mean that the traditional security guard and reception staff model is now redundant?

“No, I don’t think it is. In fact, I think it’s quite the opposite,” says Lauren Cooper of SmartSec Solutions. “While there is a demand for technology solutions such as virtual receptionists and an automated front of house check-in service, I personally can’t see any of our clients demanding that our receptionists work virtually, especially when the majority of our front of house and reception staff have continued to be physically.

Faced with so much disruption to traditional working patterns, what provisions can front of house specialists make to support new ways of welcoming people into the workplace? FMJ reports
present within empty buildings throughout the pandemic. “We find that the presence of someone on front of house makes the office experience what it is. Occupants of the buildings get to know the staff on a personal footing, they ask each other about their weekends, and they have someone to approach if they have any questions or concerns. I’m not saying it’s not a good idea, but you simply don’t get that level of interaction virtually.”

Bianca Angelico, Chief DayMaker at Churchill Group’s brand-new front of house guest services offering, On Verve, believes that the interaction of people and technology is more a reflection on what was already happening with reception services prior to COVID-19.

“Pre-pandemic, the traditional role of a receptionist was moving away from being stationed behind a desk and transitioning to more of a host role; someone in front of the desk greeting guests and employees and being visibly more accessible. Now, I believe that we’ll see technology enabling people to check themselves in, elevating the host role in providing the human touch. This will include accompanying them to their meeting room or hot desking space, and ensuring everything is sorted and that the guest or employee feels safe and comfortable in the environment.”

Jess Pritchard, Head of Corporate Sector at Moneypenny agrees that front of house staff do not need to be physically front of house all the time, as the way organisations manage visitors and calls may need to change to suit hybrid working which could mean changes to ways space is assigned within a building.

She says: “I think it’s certain that FoH will morph into something more akin to a concierge service, as, with a hybrid model, employees are essentially visitors too. We know from recent research that 49 per cent of businesses already rely on reception or front-of-house teams to manage switchboards while juggling other duties so it seems likely this scope will increase further. Interestingly, 66 per cent of businesses feel their FoH teams answer switchboard calls to a higher standard when they have a more varied and interesting role, so there seems to be a real pay-off from expanding their scope.”

RE-ENTRY GUIDE

A myriad of reports suggest that workers are understandably nervous about returning to the office, which means front of house teams may play a huge role in helping smooth the transition for staff and visitors back into the workplace. According to Liz Cummins, Director, Perception, Mitie Security, by showing a friendly face and welcoming visitors, front of house staff will play a vital role here.

“The importance of providing reassurance and helping people orientate around the space or use technology should not be underestimated, particularly for employees who may have spent many months working from home.”

To support this, many of our front of house colleagues have attended emotional intelligence training to help them identify people that might be anxious about returning to their workplace. Using this training, they can then approach these visitors and explain to them the different COVID solutions that have been introduced, giving them some peace of mind that the business has done everything it can to keep them safe.”

Oliver Hiner, Director, Operations at Portico acknowledges the key role FoH have in helping ensure safety. He believes the use of stark safety posters and airport-style queueing in reception may feel very alien, which is where a FoH can help ensure everyone is compliant in a friendly, human way.

“We’re working with customers right now on ‘surprise and delight moments’ ahead of their employees’ return, creating new opportunities for FoH to engage with their people. This could be anything from a huge bunch of daffodils in reception in the spring, to an ice-cream truck handing out free ice creams on a hot day.”

Bianca Angelico points out that it’s important to differentiate too between employee and guest (visitor) requirements. Now that employees have more options where they work, employers need to make the workplace a destination, and the FoH team can be charged with welcoming employees back, greeting new starters, sharing safety updates, explaining workplace policies, introducing new team members to others and organising small get-togethers in the office.

She says: “These social aspects are essential, as one of the biggest drivers for employees to return to the workplace is for engagement and connection. FoH teams should be the eyes and ears around a building, checking in and getting feedback on how things are working and solving any pain points for clients.

“For visitors, it’s about sending pre-visitor information and giving them reassurance that the workplace is doing everything to keep them safe. A friendly welcome from a well-informed FoH team member can make the world of difference and help put a potentially anxious visitor at ease.”

VIRTUAL VRS REALITY

Digital solutions for FoH services have been evolving over the years and the pandemic has only escalated the process by allowing employees and guests to self-check in to help support social distancing. For example, at Mitie’s Head Office in The Shard, a virtual receptionist ‘Gloria’ allows colleagues that
are familiar with the new COVID processes to check themselves in. With Gloria supporting frequent visitors, front of house colleagues can have more time to focus on explaining the COVID solutions and procedures in place and answer questions for any new visitors.

Angelico of On Verve also believes that digital technology will also enable integration with other facilities services, i.e. supporting temperature checks, connecting with security gate systems, and giving employees access to different parts of the workplace.

She says: “Scheduling systems have also been around for some time and will grow in popularity. Now it’s not just about booking rooms or desks, it’s about visibility of who’s in the office to ensure employees won’t be alone in the office or unable to connect with team members. Everything being scheduled helps with booking AV, catering, and cleaning schedules to ensure safety and a seamless experience in the workplace.”

According to Pritchard of Moneypenny, there’s now a huge amount of technology available to speed up and make the physical ‘check in’ experience more efficient for visitors, such as contactless video concierge. Alongside this, asset management systems can allocate parking spaces, meeting rooms, desks and refreshments seamlessly. But she says, “technology will never replace the importance of the personal touch. For us, technology and people must have a symbiotic relationship.”

Cooper of SmartSec argues that from a wellbeing and mental health perspective, you can’t put a price on actually seeing and speaking to someone.

“We are lucky that our front of house staff are seen as part of our clients’ teams. The office experience goes way beyond collaborating with colleagues. It’s picking up your takeaway coffee on the way in to work, it’s acknowledging the regular commuter you see most mornings, and it’s also the conversations you have with front of house staff.”

**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**

If, as has been predicted the workplace moves towards being more of a destination place, for a social, team building experience, the front of house offering will need to emulate a hotelier’s concierge/reception environment. Cummins of Mitie says this is a trend which has been developing over recent years as employers focus on creating workplaces that promote employee safety and wellbeing.

She says: “This has resulted in front of house teams going beyond their traditional tasks – booking meeting rooms and welcoming customers to taking responsibility for managing new activities, such as mindfulness and yoga classes. As more businesses move to a hybrid model of working, we expect front of house colleagues to play an even bigger role helping deliver wellbeing initiatives for colleagues with flexible working schedules.”

For Pritchard, a more agile workplace means more people coming and going, with some people very familiar with things such as the technology, facilities and etiquette, but others less so, making that concierge offering even more important.

“Hybrid working makes employees become visitors themselves. Issues with accessing Wi-Fi, how to book spaces, organising lunch, where to access IT help and how to locate other visiting colleagues will be best resolved with a central point of contact. FoH teams are well placed to do this, and I see their contribution only growing in importance and value. FoH professionals will be integral to the employee and client experience and will embody an organisation’s culture.”

Taking a hotelier approach adds Hiner that: “FoH can become a friendly source of knowledge on a range of social aspects; from travel plans and weather challenges to the latest pub and restaurant reviews and offers, even a guide to what is happening in their postcode and special offers from local retailers and food outlets.”

But Angelico thinks the workplace will need to provide more than just a hotel experience to service a mix of employees / guests working in the office or virtually anywhere else, home, coffee shops or travel hubs.

“I believe we need inspiration from other industries that are going through similar experience while [still] delivering phenomenal service, such as the fitness industry. I think the future of front of house is about creating energy in the workplace and helping to support our clients by building one community. No matter where you work, you get the same support as if you were in the office.

“We need to go beyond offering to emulate a hotelier’s concierge/reception environment. By this I mean focussing on the characteristics of the different demographics of the building users. A hotelier approach offers one type of service but in my opinion the modern workplace FoH teams should deliver services that connects at all levels and that means looking broader and going outside traditional approaches.”

**FUTURE OF FOH**

The SPS research suggests a boom in front of house services over the coming months, with the majority (91 per cent) of businesses saying they will manage front of house services will change as a result of the crisis and 95 per cent stating their entire strategy has been impacted.

Jess Prichard predicts this boom will extend from the use of new front of house software tools to outsourced partnerships and aligned FM technologies.

“Knowing where staff are to transfer calls, improving the client experience and making sure all systems support hybrid working (for clients and employees’ benefit) will present a new set of considerations for FMs and their FoH teams,” she says.

Hiner believes that with some offices seeing higher volumes of workers for longer hours on certain days and on other days an almost skeletal occupancy, outsourcing solutions help ensure a high quality of FoH service every single day.

For Cooper there is also the question of servicing the growing number of start-ups that shot up throughout the pandemic.

She says: “These businesses will soon need office space, even if it is shared co-working facilities. That’s exactly what I believe will be occupying the floors that have been left behind by large corporates who have embraced the hybrid working model.”

While for the moment, the prime purpose of FoH is on welcoming employees back, as we come further out of the pandemic and confidence in workplace safety grows, the focus will mature to ensuring that employees and guests have the best possible workplace experience.

**While for the moment, the prime purpose of FoH is on welcoming employees back, as we come further out of the pandemic and confidence in workplace safety grows, the focus will mature to ensuring that employees and guests have the best possible workplace experience.**
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PRIORITISE PEST CONTROL

Dee Ward-Thompson from the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) explains to FMJ why the trade body is urging FMs to focus on pest control as they bring workplaces back into use.
One of the biggest threats to commercial buildings that have been left unoccupied as a result of pandemic lockdowns is the possibility of a serious pest infestation, according to the national trade body representing pest control operators.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of buildings from office and call centres to non-essential shops and educational establishments were left empty, either as the workforce operated remotely or because they were instructed to close by the government.

BPCA has produced guidance for businesses reopening after pandemic lockdowns and offers advice on establishing pest control maintenance cycles, to help avoid seasonal pest problems.

Dee Ward-Thompson, Technical Manager at BPCA, said: “Pest control is a key issue for anyone working in the facilities management sector. Empty premises – particularly those that have not benefited from regular pest control inspections during the months of lockdown – can attract a variety of pests.

“A serious infestation may result in contaminated product, damage to equipment or the building and a tarnished reputation, incurring increased costs and potentially delaying the reopening of the business.

“Professional pest protection is a crucial component for pest-free premises. BPCA members have the credentials, experience and knowledge to help FMs establish and maintain robust pest management systems.

“Facilities managers that have retained pest control maintenance throughout the lockdowns and performed their own checks on their buildings, are best-placed to reopen quickly.”

PEST CONTROL CHECKS

Pest control needs to be included in any plan to reopen a building, particularly if the usual monitoring and checks have not continued while the property has been empty.

Ward-Thompson said: “It’s clear that many buildings have not been regularly monitored by professionals while lockdown restrictions were in place.

“An impact survey conducted by BPCA in April 2020 found 74 per cent of pest management companies had seen contracts suspended or cancelled.

“Our members also reported a rise in pest activity throughout the year, with 78 per cent of respondents noticing an increase in rat activity and 67 per cent reporting more mice-related incidents during the course of the pandemic.”

As the country entered lockdown, BPCA recommended a series of basic precautions to help prevent pests entering empty buildings as restrictions were introduced.

These included a thorough clean down of all surfaces, with bungs fitted to bins and waste collection arrangements confirmed. It was advised that Electric Fly Killers be serviced annually and potential pest entry points such as gaps under external doors, as well as pipes, vents and shutters, were all plugged where possible.

Also, an inspection by a qualified pest professional should be completed before reopening the building.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

Signs of pest activity can include droppings, the smell of urine from rodents, eggs or shed skin from insects, damage to the exterior of the property near entry points such as drains and vents, or damage to internal fixings or equipment.

Ward-Thompson said: “The most obvious sign of a problem is spotting the pest itself. And while some pests can leave very obvious traces, others, like Stored Product Insects (SPIs) can be difficult to identify.

“If there is any indication of activity, we recommend an inspection and advice from a professional pest control company.”

Rats and mice have rapid breeding cycles, with one breeding pair potentially multiplying into hundreds within just a few months. They will seek out safe shelter with a food source and, if they find it, will bring their friends. Both species can carry diseases and will contaminate areas with urine and faeces.

They also need to gnaw to care for their teeth and have been known to chew through wood, cables and soft metals. Their gnawing activities can cause serious
damage to plumbing and electrics, so damage to the building, or products and equipment within, could be a sign of an infestation.

“Squirrels can also pose a problem, with cold water tanks in attics sometimes contaminated by urine and droppings. And for those businesses involved in the food industry, including catering, SPIs, (Stored Product Insects) should be on the radar.

“SPIs are considered to be the world’s most expensive pest due to the fact they cost the food industry billions each year in lost product and additional operating costs, but the early stages of an infestation can be difficult to spot, so a thorough inspection by a pest professional is recommended.

“Indications of SPI infestation include seeing adult beetles or moths, damage to packaging and products, ‘tainted’ (discoloured) food and track marks in dust or flour as well as damp or mould in grain, which tends to be warmer if infected.

“Moth larvae will leave webbing which they spin as they feed and move. It contaminates food products and can cause considerable damage to machinery and equipment.

“Insect larvae excrement, known as ‘frass’ is another common sign of an infestation.

“If the presence of pests – or a serious infestation – is identified, BPCA recommends seeking professional help and advice to tackle the problem. Premises should be pest-free before reopening.”

ESTABLISH A MAINTENANCE CYCLE

Choosing a professional pest controller is key to establishing a maintenance cycle that will help prevent pests and avoid seasonal pest issues.

Regular visits should be arranged, with a professional pest controller who can offer a knowledge of current issues and holds the appropriate insurances, accreditations and memberships.

Action between visits should be agreed upon and prioritised, with recommendations implemented as is reasonably practicable.

All staff on site should understand the importance of reporting any issues into a logbook and the process for seeking additional visits from the pest management company for any issues considered urgent.

Ward-Thompson said: “Effective pest management is varied and touches on vital operational elements that support the provision of a safe and healthy facility.

“The most effective method to ensure protection and compliance is to introduce a maintenance cycle programme, with regular, targeted activity undertaken by a BPCA member who will build a complete picture of controls designed to prevent an infestation before it can occur.

“The pest control maintenance cycle should slot into an organisation’s scheduled operations to offer value and peace of mind.”

A GUIDE TO THE ROLE OF PEST CONTROL

Specific guidance on the importance of pest control in reopening commercial premises following the COVID-19 lockdowns has been produced by BPCA and is free to download from the Association’s website.

Ward-Thompson said: “BPCA was quick to produce guidance for businesses planning to reopen after COVID-19 lockdowns, and we recommend anyone with a commercial building that has not been in use due to the pandemic restrictions read the guide and follow the advice it contains.” Further guidance on safely reopening businesses is available from Gov.uk.

SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROLLER

When choosing a contractor understanding their credentials, experience and the services they offer is key. As the largest and most effective pest control initiative in the UK, BPCA operates strict membership criteria designed to deliver peace of mind to end-users and drive excellence in pest management. BPCA is on hand to help thousands of businesses find a trusted pest control contractor. BPCA members will only send out qualified technicians, have the correct insurances and work legally to the Association’s strict codes of conduct.

REFERENCE NOTES

(2) www.bpca.org.uk/pestready
(3) www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19
To find a BPCA member near you visit: www.bpca.org.uk/find
How empty have your commercial premises been during lockdown?

SEARCH ‘CLEANKILL’ FOR
FAST & EFFECTIVE PEST CONTROL
In spring 2020, as people settled into working from home, the idea of working in an office started to look obsolete, but as the novelty passed, workers feel stuck in an ‘endless day’ and want some balance in their lives.

The forced adoption of remote working has created opportunities, but is also exposing new social risks, according to JLL, which has been avidly measuring the effects of the disruption over the past year as workers adapted to homeworking in compliance with guidelines. The research reveals an appetite for greater flexibility and new hybrid ways of working.

Mark Caskey, JLL’s CEO, EMEA Corporate Solutions has over 20 years of experience in corporate real estate, including a stint at flexible office provider Regus, so he’s well placed to ponder the direction of travel for the workplace and how the traditional corporate office could coexist in future with that of flexible and coworking offerings.

His career has included working at Barclays Capital, globally responsible for the real estate portfolio decisions for the investment bank. He then joined and led CBRE’s corporate solutions business in EMEA, during which they acquired Norland Managed Services, which represented for the first time in Europe a traditional real estate player moving into the FM space.

He explains: “I then went to work for Regus as Global Head of Network Development, responsible for the growth of their business networks around the world, where the focus on the expansion of flex as an offer actually is a trend we’re talking about so much more post-COVID. In many instances, creating a network of flexible offices for companies and people to work really holds true now.

“Since joining JLL in 2016, I have seen increasing outsourced portfolios and a trend towards the design and build of workplaces that inspire companies and their employees to thrive. I’ve been CEO of our corporate solutions for over the last two years and our core remit is to provide end to end real estate services for occupiers. This includes managing their portfolio strategies wherever they are based, including the acquisition of lease space, organisational change, the design of their office to be fit for the future, and ultimately the facilities management aspect of managing buildings.”
FUTURE OF THE OFFICE

The big question of the moment is the future of the office, which from the CRE perspective Caskey explains is difficult to predict because corporate business models and the economic future is now much more volatile.

“Many corporate occupiers have huge owned assets, and therefore can explore the opportunity to monetise those assets, through a sale and leaseback (i.e. leasing back the space after the sale). Corporate real estate sales has been a trend over the past 10 years and 2020 reached a peak of €27 billion, as it is a way that corporates can monetise the values of their asset portfolios in a way that enables capital raised to be reinvested to support post-pandemic recovery and growth strategies.”

Longer term he adds, “it is difficult to predict how much space will be needed. With today’s focus on experience, agility and flexibility, the future of real estate will continue to be defined by flexible space and a flexible component will take up more of a corporate occupier’s portfolio in the future. We predict that 30 per cent of all office space will be flexible in some way by 2030.”

“The latest trend is around lease lengths. We’re seeing in some of the secondary markets the requirement to have more flexibility with shorter lease terms and options for expansion/retraction coming into the lease negotiations.”

The question that companies are facing at the moment is on how much space they will actually need in the future.

“Pre-COVID that was 1.2 days per week on average but now we’re seeing it as being two days a week on average. Our latest research shows that 63 per cent of the workforce want to keep the possibility to alternate between different places of work in the future.”

“The reality is companies have a lot to consider when assessing if their real estate portfolio is suitable for their changing needs. The question of how much space their businesses require has become a complex, multi-layered question which many corporates are still grappling with. But real estate occupancy will remain in line with pre-pandemic levels, with usage adapting to changes such as decreased density and increased space for collaboration and socialisation.”

Caskey also believes that flexible working will go beyond working from home to working from anywhere, as alongside a mix of home and head offices, companies are considering the hub and spoke concept to give staff the alternative of working nearer home, rather than commuting long distances.

“The interesting choice for CRE will be whether they go to a flex operator or choose their own leased property? It depends on how much space they’d require, and whether they have the option of dedicated spaces within business centres.”

CULTURAL NEEDS

We all saw the headlines over the past year, when some of the big corporates announced plans to scale back their real estate, but according to Caskey, that stance has dramatically softened as we’ve gone through the pandemic.

“Most have reflected that the office is a core part of their business model and a way of bringing the culture of an organisation to life. Attitudes have shifted from an initial view, when some clients were talking about reducing space by 50/60 per cent at the start of the pandemic to realising the office is a critical part of their business models and plans for the future.”

Compared to surveys JLL carried out in Q3 and Q4 last year1), they’re now finding that approximately 80 per cent of employees want to be back in the office at least once as part of their working week, productive at home than in the office today, compared with 48 per cent in April 2020. As a result, JLL is seeing an increasing demand from clients to have hybrid working as part of their business models.

Says Caskey: “Companies are also thinking about making the re-entry back into the workplace a memorable experience and asking ‘how can it be different?’ If we listen to those people who want to come back into the office there’s going to be a proportion of them who are going to require desking facilities. Others are going to come into the office for knowledge points, sharing and engaging with their peers; all of which is incredibly difficult to do for a sustained period when not being in a physical environment such as the office.

“A year after the start of COVID-19, some signals of homeworking fatigue stand out. We are also seeing a deterioration around productivity, with more concerns around health and wellbeing. These factors are very much top of the mind now and it’s a C suite conversation. A lot of that comes back to the importance of the office for their brand, their culture and ultimately the health and wellness of their employees.”

DESIGN AND TECH CHANGE

According to Caskey, changing work patterns will inevitably influence the design of the workplace, most notably, while desking accounted for 60 to 70 per cent of space pre-COVID, that’s gone into reverse,
Sustainability is another priority factor for today’s companies. It is one of the long-lasting trends to come out of the last decade, as more companies commit to net zero carbon.

with desking estimated to make up a third to 40 per cent. The remainder he estimates will be taken up with collaboration space, places for teams to gather and better-quality meeting rooms for team events.

“Sustainability is another priority factor for today’s companies. It is one of the long-lasting trends to come out of the last decade, as more companies commit to net zero carbon. When you consider that the built environment is estimated to account for approximately 36 per cent of global final energy consumption and nearly 40 per cent of total direct and indirect CO2 emissions, the role of corporate real estate in helping companies achieve net zero ambitions is crucial.

“As office design becomes more sustainable, better air quality, the measurement of carbon particles, a greater use of biophilia and improved lighting, will be a continuing trend in office design.”

Technology he adds will play an important part in the revisionist workplace. For instance, meeting rooms will be designed to engage teams in a virtual setting, and apps will be employed that can order services within buildings based on a touchless environment.

“The evolution of technology will continue as the built environment gets smarter and a more attractive place for people to come and work” says Caskey. “For example, there is a lot of thinking around how to design and manage the reception and security aspects of the workplace. We’re seeing a lot of the tech companies adopt a digital experience around registrations and notifications, but a human welcome is also fundamental to add to the experience, which is why I think there’ll be a mix of digital with the personal touch.”

Caskey also feels that with social distancing, occupant’s previous nervousness around the use of sensors has dissipated, as people embrace flexible workspace and desking.

“The innovation we’re seeing around sensors, and the amount of data they can gather gives us much more information than ever before. Sensors tracking occupancy levels has become less of an issue, and the innovation we’re now seeing around this technology and the data it can capture gives us far more information around the performance of a building. For example, JLL’s collaboration with GoSpace’s Artificially Intelligent Dynamic Resource Allocation engine (AIDRAT) helps us create a dynamic occupancy planning and management offering.”

NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Despite research suggesting the home is now competing with the workplace in terms of the quality of experience, Caskey believes that it’s more important for FMs to ensure that those at home feel engaged and part of the company.

“At JLL we’ve released a new offering ‘Experience / Anywhere’ to enhance employee connectivity across the office, at home or anywhere that work happens, which includes health, wellness and engagement tools that help our corporates engage with employees wherever they work. There is access to an array of tools and techniques in the app. This illustrates how the level of innovation in technology has accelerated as we’ve gone through COVID.”

Brand new global JLL research has investigated the link between happiness, fulfilment and productivity, with a recent study finding that 24 per cent of employees now value ‘feeling connected to my colleagues’ as a top workforce priority, while 61 per cent of the workforce are craving ‘real’ human interactions with their co-workers.

The research also found that employees are now deprioritising aspects of work like salary and visibility for wellbeing support, work-life balance and colleague connection, which have all risen incrementally in importance since before the pandemic.

Explains Caskey: “In partnership with ART Health Solutions, we released findings of a four-month home working study which examined employee health and productivity since the start of lockdown in mid-March 2020. The key data findings underlined the relationship between homeworking environments and employee productivity and wellbeing. The data has also shown how important environment and mental health is for performance.”

The good news for FM he adds is that it is increasingly recognised by corporate leaders as a core element in the performance of businesses. If workplace is seen as a service, it marks a professional change from FMs being viewed only as site managers to that of creators of workplace experience.

Concludes Caskey: “Facilities managers, as directors and leaders are now responsible for the experience within the workplace that they manage. As offices reopen, organisations need to determine ‘what is the purpose of coming into the office?’ This will link to how organisations engage and lead their businesses into the future, which is as much of a leadership/business challenge as how corporate real estate and FM evolves to provide great experiences for their employees into the future.”

REFERENCE NOTES

3. www.jll.co.uk/en/products/dynamic-space
A fire risk assessment covers all the essential aspects of fire safety and will identify the fire hazards within a building, determining how a fire could start and spread, and the people who would be put at risk if there was a fire. It will allow you to consider how these risks can be reduced or eliminated, and how the building would be evacuated in the event of an emergency. There are a number of key areas to include in your assessment.

MEANS OF ESCAPE
Everyone in your premises should be able to escape to a place of ultimate safety in a reasonable time. The suitability of the means of escape is crucial to the safety of the building’s occupants.

EMERGENCY LIGHTING
Adequate lighting helps occupants reach a place of safety in the event of power failure during a fire. Emergency lighting is also required to illuminate the means of raising the alarm and any fire-fighting equipment.

FIRE DETECTION AND WARNING
The extent of a fire detection and warning system will depend on the nature and use of your premises. If a fire could develop undetected then a fire alarm system is required. One of the key elements of your FRA will be considering how a fire in your building would be identified and the alarm raised. For most buildings this will mean having a suitable fire alarm system, with automatic smoke detection and sounders to alert all building users in the event of fire. You must ensure that everyone in your building can raise an alert and hear the alarm no matter where they are in the building, giving special consideration to those with physical needs such as hearing impairment or mobility issues. Detection should be fitted to give the earliest possible warning of fire, particularly in areas where there is a high risk of fire starting or spreading unnoticed.

FIREHAZARDS
For a fire to start, three things are needed: a source of ignition, fuel and oxygen. If any one of these are missing, a fire cannot start. These are more likely to occur in manufacturing sites but if you can avoid these occurring together it will reduce the chances of a fire occurring.

FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT
Firefighting equipment can reduce the risk of a small fire - such as a fire in a wastepaper bin - developing into a large one. The amount and type of portable extinguishers on your premises must be suitable for the risk.

MANAGEMENT
Good management of fire safety in your premises is essential to ensure that any fire safety matters that arise are always effectively addressed. It is also your responsibility to ensure that everyone within your organisation, including any visitors, understand their responsibilities. Clear instructions should be provided to all members of staff and visitors (including contractors working on site) regarding the emergency plan and any controls required such as permits for hot work. This should be relevant and easily understood, and should consider any shift patterns, language, and learning difficulties. Depending on the size of your business and building type you may need to appoint colleagues to specific roles such as Fire Warden or Fire Marshal. As the Responsible Person it is your responsibility to ensure that anyone with a defined role has relevant training so that they clearly understand what their responsibilities are. You may also want to consider training for the use of portable extinguishers and other firefighting equipment on site. Finally, you should ensure that your emergency plan is tested with a fire drill on a regular basis. Fire safety will require regular on-going management, to ensure fire exits remain clear and that combustible materials are safely stored.

PERSONS AT RISK
As part of your fire risk assessment, you need to identify those at risk if there is a fire. Persons requiring assistance to evacuate will need to be appropriately considered and catered for.

SIGNS AND NOTICES
Signs must be used, where necessary, to help people identify escape routes, find firefighting equipment and emergency fire telephones.

COMPARTMENTATION
How a building has been constructed plays a key part in protecting the means of escape and preventing unseen spread of fire within the premises. Take a good look at your building, how it is constructed and how it is used.

WHAT NEXT?
Once the FRA has been prepared and recorded you will be able to identify the points where action is required. These should be prioritised, and each given a target completion date. These actions may include providing your staff with training, installing fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and signage, and conducting regular fire drills. The FRA shouldn’t just be consigned to a dusty shelf once it is complete. It requires regular review and update to keep the document ‘live’. Some certified Fire Risk Assessors will provide an online document, making it easier to post updates as each item on your checklist is actioned. So, you’ve met all your obligations and achieved compliance for your business, how do you ensure you stay compliant?

Like an MOT for a car, regular maintenance is essential to ensure your fire safety systems remain fit for purpose. As an employer you have a legal responsibility to ensure that maintenance is carried out correctly. This can be assured by choosing a company that has achieved third party certification such as the BAFE SP203 Scheme or BRE LPS 1014. Certified companies are subject to regular third-party audit to ensure they meet the required technical and quality standards, and their staff are competent.

As well as the routine maintenance, your FRA will promote weekly fire alarm system tests. This check of the system is made by testing a different manual call point each week to make sure that the alarms sound. If you don’t feel confident to complete this check yourself, you should ask your fire alarm maintenance provider for training or alternatively add the weekly tests to their maintenance regime.

FURTHER INFORMATION
(i) www.bafe.org.uk/bafe-fire-safety-services
(ii) www.bafe.org.uk/become-bafe-registered/
NEW AIR PURIFIERS LAUNCHED BY S&P TO IMPROVE INDOOR AIR QUALITY AS LOCKDOWN EASES

Ventilation specialists S&P UK has launched a new range of highly-efficient air purifiers to help minimise the spread of airborne infections amid growing concerns over the long-term impact of indoor air quality as the pandemic eases.

Air purifiers are widely viewed as ideal for premises that do not have adequate ventilation systems, or companies with facilities or spaces that lack advanced ventilation systems. The units continuously scrub the air and remove any harmful particles through constant filtration.

S&P UK has developed a new range of portable HEPA filter air purifiers which have a filtration efficiency of up to 99.5%.

Lee Page, Sales Director at S&P UK, said: “Before COVID, air pollution was identified as one of our greatest public health threats, but a silver lining of the pandemic is that indoor air quality – where we spend 80% of our time – has now become a major national talking point.

“It’s also been proven that poor indoor air quality encourages the transmission of infectious diseases and so in response to the pandemic, we have developed a new range of stand-alone air purifiers which are highly efficient at trapping viruses and bacteria to significantly improve levels of indoor air quality in many settings to help keep customers and staff safe.”

S&P’s Airpur range includes: PAP 850, PAP 650, PAP 420, PAP 350, and UP.

www.solerpalau.co.uk

SPIROTECH INTRODUCES ‘WHISPER’ QUIET VACUUM DEGASSER FOR SMALLER COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

Spirotech has added to its range of powerful vacuum degassers, introducing the SpiroVent Superior S250 for smaller commercial closed heating and cooling systems.

The S250 has been created in response to increased demand for low-temperature systems, such as in underfloor heating where it is difficult to detect where air can be released from.

Air in a system leads to corrosion and a destructive sludge, also creating noise from components such as pumps, which would cease to work efficiently.

Vacuum degassers play an important role in helping to keep systems operating at optimum levels. They work by decreasing the pressure in the vacuum vessel that sits within the unit, liberating dissolved gases from the system liquid in the vessel, which accumulate at the top and can then be expelled.

The S250 processes up to 74 litres of liquid each hour and operates at just 41 decibels.

Spirotech UK Business Director Rob Jacques said: “With locations such as restaurants, hotels and people’s homes it is important the unit operates as silently and smoothly as possible. For the S250, this is barely a whisper.

“With locations such as restaurants, hotels and people’s homes it is important the unit operates as silently and smoothly as possible. For the S250, this is barely a whisper.

“This is achieved by the unit’s patented Venturi loop, a speed-controlled centrifugal pump with a Venturi tube that creates low pressure in the vacuum tank to degass the system water. A sensor continuously monitors vessel pressure, adjusting the pump speed as necessary.”

www.spirotech.co.uk/s250

TYDE LAUNCHES ITS Brand-NEW WEBSITE

TYDE, a Thomas Dudley Business is proud to announce the launch of their brand-new website! Designed with the customer in mind, TYDE’s new website provides easy access to their vast range of plumbing fittings and spares.

TYDE’s new website makes finding a product from one of their extensive product ranges as simple as 1-2-3. One: use the handy search function to search by product code, description, brand or product name. Two: select the product you need from the quick access menu system. And Three: click on any product as you see them featured across the site.

If you need to access technical information such as specification sheets, instructions or install and maintenance videos then you will find the ‘How To’ and FAQ sections of the TYDE website a great resource.

Visitors to the TYDE website will be able to create, send or download a quote request with the new Quote Builder function. Website visitors will also be able to download and print off their quote list should they wish to take it to a local stockist.

If a visitor to the website needs help locating a TYDE stockist then they can simply enter their postcode and let the website do the rest. Keeping the customer at the heart of their activities, it’s what TYDE does best.

www.thomasdudley.co.uk/tyde

SNICKERS LITEWORK WORKWEAR – MAKING LIGHT WORK OF WARM WEATHER

Snickers Workwear = Comfort = Wellbeing and Improved Performance. The 2021 LITEWork clothing range delivers great thermal comfort in warmer months with light, quick drying fabrics that will keep you cool and comfortable all day.

The new range of ‘Rip Stop’ shirts are stretchy and breathable, offering UPF50+ sun protection – great for craftsmen who work long hours outdoors. While 37.5© fabric technology in the mid and base-layer garments has features for efficient ventilation and moisture transport to keep you comfortable all day.

The ergonomic, body-mapping Trousers, Shirts, Shorts, Jackets and Windproofers have all the comfort and functionality of other Snickers Workwear stretch garments delivering extra freedom of movement and improved performance on site.

Just like high performance sportswear, they’ll also keep you feeling cool and looking smart whatever you’re doing and wherever you are on site this summer.

So, to make sure you get the right protection, flexibility, durability and ventilation, check out the Snickers Workwear LiteWork range for precisely the right garments to fit your workday.

www.snickersworkwear.co.uk

DANNY.GRANGE@KPMMEDIA.CO.UK OR CALL 01322 476811 TO ADVERTISE IN MONTH IN FM PLEASE CONTACT
FELLOWES AERAMAX PRO AIR PURIFIERS CERTIFIED TO REMOVE 99.9% OF AIRBORNE CORONAVIRUS AND H1N1 FLU

Leading commercial air purification manufacturer, Fellowes, is pleased to announce its AeraMax Pro air purifiers have shown a 99.99% airborne reduction of a coronavirus surrogate within 60 minutes of operation.

With the recent, intensified focus on the reduction of airborne transmission of viruses, a number of worldwide bodies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ASHRAE, as well as ‘healthy building’ scientific advocates, have recommended that portable air cleaners using HEPA filtration can help in the protection against SARS-CoV-2.

In response to this, air purification expert, Fellowes recently arranged for its AeraMax Pro purifier, which has a four-stage TRUE HEPA filtration system, to be independently tested for efficacy in the reduction of two of the most health-threatening airborne-transmitted contaminants seen in recent times – Coronavirus and the H1N1 virus.

Certified by Shanghai WEIPU Chemical Technology Service Company, Fellowes AeraMax Pro air purifiers demonstrated effectiveness in reducing the aerosolised airborne concentration of Human Coronavirus 229E in a test chamber, reaching 99.99% airborne reduction within one hour of operation. As it is not yet possible, or ethically responsible to aerosolise Sars-CoV-2 for airborne testing in the current climate, the Coronavirus 229E was used as a surrogate to Sars-CoV-2.

Furthermore, AeraMax Pro air purifiers have also been proven to remove 99.9% of the H1N1 virus within 35 minutes of operation, as certified by Airmid Health Group Limited in Dublin, Ireland.

Darryl Brunt, Country Head - UK & Ireland at Fellowes Brands said: “With hygiene and health so high on the nation’s agenda, many will be seeking solutions that can help reduce the risk of the spread of infection, so that the public can safely return to, and go about their daily lives, whether it be in the workplace, leisure space or in education and healthcare establishments.”

“I’m delighted that the results of these tests offer the reassurance that Fellowes AeraMax Pro air purifiers are indeed effective in removing forms of coronavirus from indoor air.”

For over a decade, Fellowes AeraMax air purifiers have been a leading choice for localised air purification. Fellowes is the only solution that combines True HEPA filtration with EnviroSmart™ and PureView™ Technologies. EnviroSmart utilises multiple sensors to monitor contaminants and room occupancy continuously and adjusts automatically to provide maximum protection – on demand. PureView makes the invisible, visible with real-time screen updates on air quality and machine performance. This immediate feedback instils peace of mind for room occupants.

www.aeramaxpro.com/uk

ERGOTRON OFFERS IMMERSIVE VIEWING EXPERIENCE FOR OFFICE WORKERS AND GAMERS WITH NEW HX DESK MONITOR ARM WITH HD PIVOT

Ergotron, a global company focused on improving how people work, learn, play and care for others, has today launched its HX Desk Monitor Arm with HD Pivot, a monitor arm designed specifically for deep, ultra-wide curved monitors, in the EMEA region. With more people working and gaming from home than ever, demand for monitor arms has increased exponentially, and the latest offering from Ergotron provides a fully immersive viewing experience.

Based on user feedback, Ergotron combined its popular HX Desk Monitor Arm with its HX Heavy-Duty Tilt Pivot accessory into one product specifically for large, curved monitors. Currently, this is one of the only monitor arms available for the premium Samsung® Odyssey G9 monitor—a 49” wide, 12” deep curved screen popular in the gaming community.

“For gamers and remote workers who prefer large, immersive monitors, enhancing their setup with a monitor arm is essential for optimal performance and viewing,” said Paul Zuiderma, MD at Ergotron in EMEA. “The HX Monitor Arm with HD Pivot gives back valuable desk space and provides flexibility to adjust heavier displays with a deep curve. It brings a gaming or remote working setup to the next level.”

The solid, durable design allows users to easily tilt and move their screen while protecting the investment of a large, quality monitor.

Without the addition of the HX Desk Monitor Arm with HD Pivot, the Samsung Odyssey G9 monitor can take up to three feet of valuable desk space—this addition enables users to reclaim their space and lift the screen above the desktop. A wide range of motion and easy adjustment allows for precise screen positioning throughout the workday or gaming session.

The HX Desk Monitor Arm with HD Pivot fits large monitors with a curve 6” to 12” (15.2 to 30.4 cm) deep and weighing 28 to 42 lbs (12.7 to 19.1 kg).

FM EQUIPMENT HIRE BUSINESS AIMS TO WOW WITH NEW NAME

One of the UK’s leading providers of hire equipment, waste services, temporary accommodation and tools to the Facilities Management industry has changed its name from Nationwide Hire to WowNow Hire.

The commercial hire company, which supplies everything from heavy plant to handheld tools says the new WowNow Hire name reflects its focus on providing its many FM customers with exceptional choice and service - the “Wow” - and same day or last-minute delivery - the “Now”.

In addition to better reflecting the customer experience, the new name is also tied to the company’s future aspirations and distinguishes the brand from the many other companies using ‘Nationwide’ in their names.

Speaking about the rebranding, WowNow Hire’s CEO Jonathan Holley said: “Changing our name makes perfect sense. We still cover the entire United Kingdom and the new name amplifies what we are all about, our WowNow DNA.

“Our ongoing business development includes digital transformation that will bring the benefits of digital services to our customers and suppliers. Access to all our products and personal support is now just a fast click away at www.wownowhire.co.uk, order updates are more frequent, more information is available and the accounts process is being further streamlined.”

Established 26 years ago, the company has built a network of 9,000 locations capable of supporting any size FM operation across the UK, Ireland and Europe and offers five million items of equipment from five main product areas – namely Powered Access Hire, Plant Hire, Tool Hire, Temporary Accommodation Hire and Waste Services.

Alongside its broad range and geographical coverage, WowNow Hire says it is popular with the FM industry because of its ability to provide both reliable support working with customers’ pre-planned maintenance schedules and to react quickly to provide last-minute solutions to deal with unforeseen FM issues. Another important factor is the company’s off-hire guarantee with which it strives to protect customers from off-hire losses while helping them stay focussed on their core job. Without such a guarantee, less scrupulous lenders can easily take advantage of a hirer being too busy or distracted to inform them they have finished with the equipment and if they then cannot collect in a timely fashion, hire time continues to add up.

www.wownowhire.co.uk

PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD CHOOSES WPS PAY-ON-FOOT TECHNOLOGY

A sophisticated pay-on-foot ticketed parking system from WPS, one of the UK’s leading parking equipment providers, is being installed at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to deliver seamless access, with revenue generated going to support investment in the curation of 500 years of naval history.

Patrick Holmes, Deputy Chief Executive of the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, says with 90,000 cars arriving each year, it is important to provide a well-presented, modern and reliable parking facility: “We chose the WPS pay-on-foot system because we had already been convinced it is an efficient alternative to pay & display requiring fewer staff and not having to rely on enforcement – which is vital for the customer experience. It is also completely self-service, supporting COVID safety.”

Supporting the business in providing its visitors with a COVID-safe experience, the system includes touchless entry sensors and ticket scanners.

High-performing automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras will be installed at the entry and exit barriers, enabling the use of parking payment apps. RFID proximity readers will provide straight-forward access to residents.

“Setting up different access for various users, local hotel guests and residents, for example, is very straightforward,” Patrick says. “And future-proofing our investment, we can add functionality as and when required – for example when feasible, we may introduce loyalty promotions such as discounted parking for customers that eat in restaurants in the Dockyard.”

www.historicdockyard.co.uk

FIRESTOPPING SOLUTIONS START WITH SIKA

Navigating the often-complex process of choosing the correct passive fire protection system for a project can be a challenge but thanks to leading speciality chemical manufacturer Sika, specifiers can take advantage of a range of in-house support services including product guidance and technical support.

Sika’s comprehensive range of passive fire protection solutions can restore the fire resistance of walls and floors disrupted by linear seals, cavity barriers or penetration services, helping to contain and control the spread of fire. Sika’s experienced and qualified technical team are also on hand to help specifiers and specialist installers identify a clear and compliant passive firestopping strategy, including offering detailed technical evaluations for more complicated joint specifications.

These technical evaluations are offered free of charge, and can usually be completed within a working week, providing all the necessary information is supplied. These legal documents can then provide building owners with the reassurance of knowing that not only are the specified passive fire protection products fit for purpose, but they are also fully compliant with the relevant building regulations.

Sika’s extensive range comprises fire-resistant sealants, coatings, wraps, collars, fire boards, compounds and ablative pads for both linear and penetration seals.

www.sika.co.uk/passivefire
TRUST WATER DISPENSERS IN THE WORKPLACE

The importance of remaining hydrated is essential to the well-being of any workforce, and particularly when good health is critical as we continue to move forward and overcome the impact of COVID-19.

Hydration helps to keep the immune system and cognitive functions strong, and the use of a water dispenser is a simple and convenient way to provide workplace hydration safely and hygienically.

The Water-Dispenser and Hydration Association (WHA) sets high quality standards for its Members and provides them with industry specific training, information and guidance. Members are also audited annually to ensure consumers can trust that they are sourcing high quality and sustainable products from a WHA approved supplier.

Returning staff may fear contracting Coronavirus from touching communal surfaces including those of the water dispenser. However, there is no more risk of cross contamination from a water dispenser than from doors, light switches, toilet fittings, and communal kitchens. In fact, it could be claimed that as the water dispenser has a clearly identifiable water dispensing touch point (the tap, lever or button), simple cleaning of this area before or after use, and/or washing hands after use ensures that the dispenser is one of the least risk items in a work area.

To limit the number of people using any one particular machine, providing additional areas of hydration for staff is something to be considered.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Members of the WHA have benefited from specific information relating to re-commissioning dispensers that have been unused during lockdown to ensure that Quality, Trust and Standards are maintained. This information covers company delivery vehicles, general housekeeping, safety during site visits and use of PPE. Mandatory hygiene and operational training and the annual audit process have continued throughout, but of course remotely, in line with Government guidelines.

Clients have their part to play to ensure that water dispensers remain as safe as possible.

- Staff should be made aware of social distancing around the dispenser.
- Clients could consider having additional dispensers to allow for even safer social distancing and to encourage hydration.
- Review of the location of dispensers to ensure they are in the best place for our “new” world.
- Other offerings such as hot water taps/boilers, to reduce the number of people gathering in kitchens awaiting the kettle to boil.
- Social distancing could be made clear with use of signs or floor markings by the dispensers. Barriers could be placed around the dispenser area to help with this.
- Simple regular cleaning of the water dispenser with fragrance-free food grade sanitiser as used on other office equipment is recommended.

The WHA has produced Customer Factsheets to assist your clients restart and maintain their water dispensers. These can be found on our website www.twha.co.uk/hydration.

Notwithstanding dispensers remain safe while using sensible hygiene practices, WHA manufacturer Members have been quick to develop new products which give added safety measures. These include touch-free dispensers, models with foot pedals and retro-fit foot pedals, contactless “hover” buttons, sensor activated dispense and UVC-LED technology. There are even coolers that can be activated via an app, using smart bottles to manage water preferences and track hydration levels. To view these products, available through WHA Distributor Members, visit our website https://twha.co.uk/find-a-member/ for links to manufacturer websites.

We strongly recommend that when looking for hydration solutions for your clients, you place membership of the WHA as an accreditation body on your checklist of requirements in your tender documents. Quality. Trust. Standards. We are the WHA – the advantage is clear.

www.twha.co.uk  info@twha.co.uk  01707 656 382
SNICKERS WORKWEAR - SUPERIOR, ERGONOMIC KNEE PROTECTION WITH KNEEGUARD

Snickers Workwear’s Kneeguard is a fully certified, trademarked system for knee protection against kneeling injuries and everyday knocks at work. The combination of Kneeguard™ pads and the Kneeguard PRO positioning system in Snickers workwear trousers is a crucial combination for reliable knee protection.

In Snickers Workwear trousers kneepad pockets, you can adjust the kneepads to different heights to ensure correct positioning - for you - for maximum protection. There’s also different types of Kneepads to fit different types of trousers to suit different jobs on site. Such as the specialist kneepads for the Floorlayer trousers and the slim-fit Kneepads specially for the slim-fit trousers.

The unique design features also make the kneepads extremely flexible when you walk, yet they close around your knees when you kneel down — without your knees sliding off when you move around.

With superb impact protection, the market-leading D30 Ergo kneepads are made of a unique material that moulds around your knee to provide enhanced impact protection and are great for tradesmen and women who spend a lot of time working on their knees.

OVER 10,000 NEW LEAFIELD BINS AT CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

Leaffield Environmental, a leading manufacturer, designer and supplier of plastic recycling bins are proud to have installed over 10,000 recycling bins at Cardiff University in March 2021 aimed at increasing university recycling targets of 70% by 2025.

Leaffield’s Envirobin Midi recycling bins were installed alongside their AquaPod unit for liquids in academic and administration buildings. Each Envirobin Midi 82-litre unit formed part of a recycling station featuring clear signage and WRAP compliant colour coded labels and lids.

Leaffield’s EnviroStack stacking bins were installed in halls of residence kitchens achieving a reduced footprint and flexibility to recycle either 32 or 52 litres of segregated waste, consistent with the bins installed in academic and administration buildings. The new Envirobank 310-litre unit is the latest new addition to the Envirobank collection and was designed for Cardiff University for their external environments. The 310-litre unit features a dual aperture to collect segregated waste streams in its two 155-litre wheeled bins.

All the new recycling bins installed at Cardiff University are clearly labelled with WRAP compliant colour coded bi-lingual labels to avoid contamination.

BW: WORKPLACE EXPERTS CREATES A MODERN WORKSPACE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

BW: Workplace Experts has recently completed the strip out, Cat B fit out and refurbishment works on a Government project in Westminster, London. The project involved the internal refurbishment and fitting out of the basement, first, second, third, fourth and fifth floors, together with some selected major plant refurbishments and renovations.

Whilst looking at how to introduce new technology and environmental standards, the client used the disruptive period during the pandemic to create a more efficient and modern workspace that has also resulted in the resequencing of the floorplates. This government building is a seven-storey Edwardian building with magnificent traditional features, but its infrastructure required a modern update which would also result in an improvement to associated operational and repair costs. The strip out, fit out and refurbishment works undertaken by BW resulted in a more inclusive workspace for the client, finished with a refreshing, modern design, restoring the space to its former glory.

The refurbishment works were divided into three phases. Phase 1 consisted of the refurbishment and fitting out of the internal and external flexible meeting and conference floor, and one floor of team workspace. Phase 2 saw the same done to the additional main leadership suite including collaboration board rooms, an open workplace, and a breakout space. Phase 3 involved the installation of the additional new canteen with full catering kitchen.

WATERBLADE OFFERS THE UNIQUE COMBINATION OF GREAT HANDWASHING WITH LOW WATER CONSUMPTION. NOW FITTED TO 10’S OF THOUSANDS OF TAPS IN THE UK

Waterblade offers the unique combination of great handwashing with low water consumption.

Now fitted to 10’s of thousands of taps in the UK.

Saving Water - Typically halving water consumption (5,200 Litres/Tap/Year)

Saving Energy - Reducing water heating requirement (240 Kwh/Tap/Year)

Under 6 Months Payback- Compatible with most washroom taps, fitted in minutes.

UK manufactured to high environmental standard (ISO 14001)

Easy to assess for yourself, just ask us for a free (If you have 10+ basins) sample to fit. Happy to share savings/monitored trial information.

TO ADVERTISE IN MONTH IN FM PLEASE CONTACT
DANNY.GRANGE@KPMMEDIA.CO.UK OR CALL 01322 476811

www.snickersworkwear.co.uk
sales@hultaforsgroup.co.uk

www.leaffieldrecycle.com
recycle@leaffieldenv.com
01225 816541

www.thewaterblade.com
nigel@thewaterblade.com
Having trouble isolating water supply to service TMVs? Are your isolation valves seized or passing?

Over time isolation valves can become seized or continue to pass water when fully closed, or there may be no isolation at all in place. When any of these situations arise, there are various options available:

- Reach for the pipe freezing kit.
- Call a pipe freezing specialist.
- Call the local water authority to isolate the mains supply.
- Conduct a full system drain down.
- Go to the pub and leave it to someone else.

But there is a much better, cheaper, and quicker solution developed by the innovative team at Aladdin Products which will stop flowing water in its tracks, isolating hot or cold water in under 3 minutes, allowing completion of works quickly and safely despite the potential problems posed by lack of isolation.

Aladdin EasyFit Isolator

The unique design of the Aladdin EasyFit Isolator allows an isolation valve to be fitted externally to a live pressurised pipe up to 85°C, using only an 18v cordless drill and tools provided.

Aladdin EasyFit Isolators are not saddle valves – See how they work at: https://aladdin-products.co.uk/animations

Aladdin EasyFit Isolators offer a patented dual seal technology, installing a full-flow quarter turn isolation valve into a pressurised pipe in minutes, reducing water damage, labour times and water wastage, maintenance can be completed with little or no disruption to other users.

Only isolate where works are to be completed, maintenance which would have ordinarily taken a full day can be completed in no time.

Aladdin EasyFit Isolators are WRAS approved quarter turn valves which are serviceable and come with a 10-year guarantee - 16 Bar rated.

Aladdin EasyFit Isolators install on 15mm, 22mm & 28mm copper and plastic pipe (Cu, PEX, PB, & Hep2O).

Unsure which schedule of copper pipe you are installing into, take that doubt away, use the NEW ½” EasyFit Pro 15. The Aladdin EasyFit Isolator Pro 15 provides quick isolation of pre 1972 none schedule ½” Cu pipes, suitable for both metric 15mm and 1/2”Cu pipes internal or external applications.

These fully automatic radiator deaeration valves are loved by landlords, homeowners, and heating engineers and have a 5-year guarantee.

Who are Aladdin Products?

Aladdin Products are developed and sold by NLB Engineering Ltd which was formed in January 2002 to commercially exploit the original range of automatic radiator deaeration valves sold under the trademark: Aladdin® - the first and only failsafe automatic radiator deaeration valve.

Aladdin Autovents were further developed with the second-generation design enabling the valve to be fitted to all radiators.

In 2013 Aladdin Products launched the 15mm Aladdin EasyFit Isolator, allowing for isolation of hot or cold pressurised pipes.

Following further development, and the success of the 15mm Aladdin EasyFit Isolator, came the 22mm and 28mm versions.

Visit aladdin-products.co.uk for more information on the Aladdin EasyFit Isolator and the Aladdin Autovent.
EXPANSION FOR COMPLIANCE EXPERTS OHS

Under a new management team, compliance consultancy OHS has expanded with new offices and a laboratory in Manchester, and new software that offers facilities managers and duty holders improved asbestos, water and fire services.

OHS recently achieved UKAS ISO1725 accreditation for asbestos testing and analysis, and four stage clearance, which complements its ISO1720 certification for asbestos surveying and inspection. The company has commissioned a new, bespoke software platform to further streamline services for facilities managers and duty holders, allowing greater visibility and transparency, plus real time benefits so they can see what is happening across their whole portfolio. Alongside the usual asbestos module, the new software – designed by OHS and developed by Shine Vision – has been expanded to include air testing, fire, water, health and safety and asset management tools, offering a real time data stream, live dashboards and interactive CAD drawings.

Headed by Managing Director, Andy Fowler, working alongside director, Aaron Dodd, OHS has moved into a new Manchester office and has added a purpose-built laboratory for asbestos sample analysis. OHS will have a recruitment drive in 2021 and aims to grow revenues of up to £5m in the next five years with new acquisitions and winning more work in the education, healthcare and manufacturing sectors. The compliance consultancy also has offices in Yorkshire, with its loyal client base.

OHS Managing Director, Andy Fowler said: “In just year one of our five-year plane we’ve added new accreditations, services and software to our offering and invested in new offices and lab facilities in Manchester. It will ensure clients receive the highest quality service and have peace of mind that their portfolios are ticking over smoothly.”

WELCOME TO THE UK’S PREMIER DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR ALL CLEANING SERVICES!

Find My Cleaner is a Marketplace for cleaning companies looking to increase their bookings and online visibility. The NEW advanced electronic directory that has been designed to help cleaning businesses find thousands of more potential customers, is set to change the way cleaners are booked throughout the UK.

Find My Cleaner shows the availability of each service provider, taking the hassle out of googling, asking for recommendations, and having to call for quotes and availability. Customers can find all types of services such as Domestic & Commercial Cleaning, Waste & Removal, Valeting, Laundry, Carpet, Windows, plus many more...

This digital platform offers members a unique subscription service, providing them with additional leads and enquiries through Digital Marketing, brand awareness via Social Media, and website traffic from blog articles.

Monthly subscriptions cost £120 Platinum, £60 Gold, £40 Silver. Each package features a selection of services to suit all sized businesses. The Platinum package is designed for larger companies with multiple locations throughout the UK. Gold is great for growing companies looking to increase weekly bookings. Silver is ideal for smaller independents looking to increase online exposure.

Unlike other directories, Find My Cleaner does not take data from google and uses the business’ details as part of a listing. Members can reap the rewards of extra bookings through Find My Cleaner by zero commission and no extra charge for leads, just a small one-off annual fee that can start from less than £2 per day! What’s more, customers can book cleaning services directly, with ease, through an advanced voice recognition tool.

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GO HANDS-FREE FOR HYGIENE

Since the start of the pandemic, hygiene has become more important than ever, and will play a significant role after COVID. As facilities managers in businesses search for ways to reduce Coronavirus risks in the workplace, and with staff starting to return to the office, going contactless is another step to prevent the spread of infection. Hands-free solutions are becoming ever more integrated in our day-to-day world, from payments to access, voice activation and now hygiene.

Make touching waste a thing of the past!

DURABLE’s new NO TOUCH Sensor Bins are the contactless solution for offices and communal spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms. Simply wave your hand to open the bin and the lid automatically closes 5 seconds after use. In four different sizes, with capacities from 6 to 35 litres, you are sure to find the perfect size for every environment!

Hands off!

Have you placed sanitising stations around your building to encourage good hygiene and keep everyone safe? Washing and sanitising hands regularly and thoroughly is important, especially when returning to working in close proximity to one another and using the same shared spaces. Ideally choose a dispenser with a lever arm or foot pedal, meaning you don’t have to dirty your hands to disinfect!

Durable’s range of 3 dispensers offer the perfect solution for your business. Choose between floor-standing and wall-mounted dispensers which can be used with soap or hand sanitiser. The hygienic long lever arm can be operated using the forearm and elbow to prevent the need to use hands!

https://www.durable-uk.com/homepage.html

RETAIL SECURITY DILEMMAS SOLVED WITH SHOPSHIELD FROM CLEARWAY

This summer, countless retail, hospitality and entertainment properties across the whole country are standing closed and forlorn as a consequence of lockdown destroying their business one way or another. And, no matter what it says in their lease, tenants who have run out of the wherewithal to pay rent, arrears and monthly outgoings, won’t worry about security for their abandoned premises.

The responsibility, therefore, inevitably falls back on the sometimes-beleaguered landlord who has his own finance issues to deal with. Unfortunately, these empty units are like an open invitation to thieves, vandals, arsonists or squatters, even fly-tippers if there is an inviting forecourt to dump on. Landlords can well live without all this in terms of time and further cost.

Commercial security specialists, Clearway, have stepped into the breach with exactly what’s needed to stop both criminals and mindless vandals: ShopShield, a fixed-price, retail security solution that is simple, affordable and ticks all the necessary boxes to keep the premises safe and secure until new tenants can move in.

Like an easy to understand and buy, one-stop-shop solution, ShopShield One will cover replacement locks, a temporary letterbox seal, key safe and flammable waste removal. A comprehensive risk assessment is also carried out to highlight any other issues, for which a set of bolt-on services is available to provide additional security measures tailored to the individual needs of the premises. These include a wireless, monitored alarm system, utilities drain down, and regular property inspections. Clearway’s prompt and personal service will do whatever is necessary or appropriate for each individual retail unit, big or small.

Deterrent is the word, affordability the key, and peace of mind the result. Why wait? One call to the specialists and we can solve your empty retail property security problem straight away.

www.clearway.co.uk/shopshield
FLOWFRESH URINAL TREATMENT SOLUTION

URINAL ISSUES? NO PROBLEM. WE HAVE THE SOLUTION

With UrineFREE™ and FlowFresh™ you will have no more blockages from uric acid, and if you follow our recommendations urine odours will be a thing of the past too.

Is your facility struggling with Urine issues in restrooms, affecting your customers toilet experience? Common products used to eliminate odours and unblock pipes just don’t WORK! The answer is urineFREE & Flow Fresh - Simply works!!

How it works

Removes uric crystal build up in urinals and drain lines, removes mineral build ups on the porcelain surfaces and deodorizes at the same time.

Flow Fresh™ softens and removes uric crystals from the urinals and drain line, therefore preventing blockages, backups and odours.

Used in conjunction with UrineFREE™ you can stop urine odours and blocked urinal drains permanently, be it watered urinals or waterless urinals.

UrineFREE™ works through a natural bio-enzymatic process.

Containing billions of natural microbes, this cleaning army of mother nature, treats the urine crystals as a food source and consumes them through a completely natural and safe process known as bio-remediation. Results will be apparent within 36-48 hours – Make this part of your cleaning routine, every 1 or 2 hours or whatever you program is.

How FLOW FRESH™ Gel works

Flow Fresh™ Gel is made to cling to the inside of drains and pipes so that it may continue working around the clock. Flow Fresh™ Gel is FAST ACTING and extremely effective at breaking down and digesting organic material – uric acid, (proteins, starches and sugars) from hard to reach drains and and also areas where drain flies breed.

Flow Fresh™ and Flow Fresh™ Gel are designed to keep urinals clean and helps eliminate odours from drains and improve flow in slow drains. Safe for all types of plumbing. Non-pathogenic and non-caustic. It eats the uric acid which is the source of the blockage in restroom urinals and their associated pipework. Also ideal for keeping commodes clean and fresh as its clings to the bowl.

Kitchen, Soda Fountain & Bar Drains

FLY TREATMENT: apply to each drain. Apply around edge of drain, attempting to coat sides of drain, twice a week. This will eliminate the food source and breeding areas for drain flies.

SODA FOUNTAINS: Apply to the outside edge of drain, attempting to coat sides of drain. Ideal for keeping the system clean of sugar and keeping it smelling fresh.

Urinal treatment program – watered and waterless urinals

1. Spray UrineFREE™ liberally all over the urinal surface area in and under and into the drain. This will clean all urine and leave a shine on the unit. Wipe down outside if needed.

2. Spray UrineFREE™ over the wall and surface area around the urinal to remove the oversplash and also spray the floor. Once done, you can mop the floor without spreading urine all over. The more contact time the better the result. You can leave the walls or wipe down if required.

3. Remove cap of Flow Fresh™ Gel and pour around the drain and urinal base. As the urinal is used the gel will dilute. Flow Fresh™ Gel goes into pipes freshening the odours by keeping the pipework clear of uric acid.

4. If you are using gel screens put them over the Flow Fresh™ Gel that was spread earlier. When re-applying Flow Fresh™ Gel, pour it under the screen.

Save water – reduce flushes 50, 75 or even 100%. A typical urinal uses 100,000 litre of water per year. Imagine 2 urinals = 200,000, 4 urinals= 400,000! Etc Start the program and stop the water after 72 hours.

URINE FREE & FLOW FRESH

Environmental Biotech International is the research company behind UrineFREE™ with over 21 years invested in technologies, techniques and services which provide environmentally friendly solutions to facility maintenance and hygiene problems.

Contact us, we can set up the program for you for best results.

For wholesale or retail enquires contact us on tel: 0203 997 0066 or email: sales@ebiorg.com

www.urinefree.com sales@ebiorg.com 0203 997 0066
Boutique facilities management provider, Anabas, has strengthened its senior leadership team with the appointment of Simon Whitehead as its new Business Development Director.

Reporting directly to Managing Director, Alistair Craig, Whitehead’s remit will include managing the entire Anabas sales function. He will also be responsible for delivering the company growth strategy by developing a pipeline of potential clients and winning new contracts, and will be focused on expanding Anabas’ service offering to customers and delivering the highest standards of service, using his considerable experience to nurture top-level relationships.

Having previously worked at Mitie, Compass Group and Interserve, Whitehead brings more than 18 years of national and international business development experience in private sector facilities management. As part of the senior leadership team, Whitehead will contribute to the strategic direction of the business, playing a crucial role in the future success of the company.

Bidvest Noonan has strengthened its senior management team with the appointment of Simon Giles as Chief Finance Officer for its business in Great Britain.

Having previously served as Chief Operating Officer for Axis Cleaning and Finance Director for the Axis Group, which was recently acquired by Bidvest Noonan, Giles will take on a leadership role for the wider Bidvest Noonan group across Great Britain.

A qualified chartered accountant, Giles has more than 20 years of experience and a proven track record for driving company performance.

Integrated facilities solutions provider, ABM, has appointed an Environment and Sustainability Manager to drive delivery of sustainable initiatives and reporting, across its business and industry and aviation divisions, in the UK. Katrina Hazell joins ABM after spending almost three decades of her career in the construction industry, most recently as Sustainability and Social Value Manager at Balfour Beatty. A Chartered Civil Engineer and a Postgraduate in Sustainable Business Leadership, Hazell brings a wealth of experience and expertise to ABM, specialising in sustainability and social value outcome.

Reporting to ABM UK Quality, Health, Safety and Environment Director Andrew Lewinton, Hazell will be responsible for aligning the sustainability, social value and climate change strategy to the UK marketplace. Through data management and reporting, provision of case studies, supporting teams, systems management and driving collaboration and innovation, Hazell has strong credentials in the delivery of sustainability programmes.

We have surveyed our UK database to get their experiences of the previous year and their expectations for the year ahead. Use the link below to download the guide. For a free CV review, Salary Benchmark or a chat about the market, please get in touch with us on 0203 176 4790 or info@buildrec.com.

Find the guide here: www.buildrec.com/salary-guide-2021

For more information about how we can help your organisation, please visit buildrec.com or contact the team on 0203 176 4790

www.buildrec.com

info@buildrec.com
REKINDLING THAT WORKPLACE SPARK

Will Richards, Head of Workplace Experience at ISS UK says research proves that a new approach will be required to enrich the post-COVID workplace experience.

Our relationship with the office has changed fundamentally since Q1 2020. Prior to March 2020 we learnt together, we collaborated together, we socialised together, and we did that day-to-day stuff. We then had a very abrupt separation and for the vast majority of corporate workers we’ve not really seen a great deal of each other. The time has come to start thinking about how we can rekindle that relationship and how it can be mutually beneficial to all parties.

WORKPLACE, WE MISSED YOU

As we return to our offices in some shape or form but we know that to truly make this relationship work there will need to be some changes. There has been much written on workplace design and its use as a tool to attract and retain talent but here, I want to focus on the ‘workplace experience’.

Over the past few years, we have heard the term ‘workplace experience’ pop up in conversation more and more; what does it mean, who is responsible for it and how important is it?

Over the last 10 years we have seen a significant change in the design of workplaces. Traditional desks are being drawn down and replaced with collaboration zones, touch-down spaces and amenities that do more than just provide a place to eat and drink. This ‘trend’ will continue post-pandemic and more will be done to integrate the digital and physical workplaces. However, your workplace experience is far more than the digital and physical aspects. It needs to connect with the employee on a human level too. Your workplace needs to be centred around employees wants and needs. Just because the workplace looks great, and you have the latest digital technology, it isn’t a guarantee for a positive experience.

FIND THE ELUSIVE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

You need to have the right culture, the right processes, and policies in place for your employees to really get the most out of their environment. Look at the experience you would expect when going to a restaurant, where the eating element is only one component of the experience; the welcome, ambience, décor and service all add or detract from the overall experience. Why should your workplace not take on this approach and provide a similar experience?

The pandemic has led to a meteoric shift in the way we work and our relationship with the physical workplace has changed. There have been noticeable benefits from working remotely; 80 per cent of respondents to a poll cited the advantages of an improved work/life balance and reduced commuting so it’s important to listen to the data when making decisions.

As we start the return to office it will also allow us to reset our offerings and better define how colleagues use and interact with their workplace. Industry data published by the BBC suggests the majority of corporate employees will look to frequent the office two to three days a week with the remaining time spent working from home or third spaces. Digital tools will be key to seamlessly traverse the spaces and maintain productivity and engagement.

When colleagues attend the office, they need to ensure they have access to the right spaces, the right technology, the right resources, and the right people. They will want spaces to not only be functional, but also inspiring and consider their mental and physical wellbeing. Indeed, 41 per cent of poll respondents cited that they are likely to be more productive and happier in their workplace if they are better supported from a wellbeing perspective. They also want to know that basics are done brilliantly (cleaning, building access, wayfinding, catering etc.) so they can focus on being productive and delivering against the task in hand.

KEEP THE SPARK ALIGHT

Creating the right experience is a team effort; it is not just the responsibility of the workplace professionals. It needs your people, real estate, finance, communications and technology teams but most importantly it needs the voice of the colleague to be front and centre to ensure they are really being heard.

But it doesn’t stop there; the workplace experience will evolve and the constant feedback and input from colleagues will be crucial in ensuring the journey is one that works for both parties. A positive workplace experience does not just happen; you cannot leave it to chance. It needs to be curated and tailored to each organisation, it needs people to believe in it and it needs leaders to invest in it mentally and financially. But with the right experience, and a bit of effort, you can rekindle the desire for the workplace and have highly engaged employees - which will only have positive outcomes for your business.

LATEST JOBS ON FMJ

- **PFI CONTRACT MANAGER**
  - Salary: £45,000 per year
  - Location: London

- **HEAD OF ESTATES MANAGEMENT**
  - Salary: £65,238 - £71,172 per annum
  - Location: West Midlands

- **ESTATE & FACILITIES MANAGER**
  - Salary: £33,000 - £40,000 per annum (FTF)
  - Location: Salford

[jobs.fmj.co.uk](jobs.fmj.co.uk)

Over 250 jobs live on site
ABM UK recently introduced an innovative mental first aid training programme for its front line staff. Here, Chris Townsend, Senior HR Director at ABM UK explains why the rest of the FM industry needs to follow suit.

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE**

As we emerge from an extremely challenging time and enter into a phased return to normality, we believe that this initiative has never been more important because our business has been, and continues to be, at the forefront of fighting COVID-19.

Since the global pandemic prompted a national lockdown in March last year we have been operating reactively across our facilities management and aviation divisions. The nature of our business means that our teams are working amongst the public every single day and we’re seeing first-hand the effect that the pandemic has had, and continues to have, on mental health.

Mental health is our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It can present lots of difficult moments of crisis and unfortunately, suicide and self-harm are big problems and they must be treated carefully and compassionately.

Day-to-day, our teams on the ground should be able to identify those who are struggling with poor mental health; who may be dealing with critical, life-changing situations; who may be at risk of harm to themselves. We have a duty to support our teams and provide them with the right skills and the necessary knowledge they need to manage these very difficult and sensitive situations.

**TRAINING SUPPORT**

The training programme we have introduced will not only prepare ABM teams for the difficult situations they may experience while working, but it also affords us the infrastructure to support our own people to process those difficult experiences and help with any other mental health challenges that they may be experiencing personally.

Our people have faced significant challenges of their own over the past year and the aviation sector in particular has been hit hard, which has meant that some team members have been on extended periods of furlough and may find returning to work difficult, which may fuel feelings of anxiety and worry.

Being a business that is knowledgeable in mental health awareness with trained mental health first aiders means we can offer the right support and tools.

We have been working with TalkOut a market-leading change and development platform to create the training programme. With the support of our clients, we will be training more team members across our client’s sites and across all job roles. By the summer, 75 team members across our UK businesses will be trained in mental health first aid.

As our industry and the UK economy works towards recovery, we want our teams, our clients and the public to feel fully supported and ready to come back. We hope that by introducing this initiative we can lead by example and demonstrate a progressive step forward.

We’d love to see our peers follow suit and widen the access to support across the industry. Now, more than ever is the time to come together, help our people and recover from this past year stronger than ever, together.
What first attracted you to working in FM, did you have much awareness of the profession?

I started out as an Assistant FM working with a team of Senior FMs and seasoned Management Surveyors. This gave me a broad understanding of the property management sector and exposed me to an array of property portfolios and clients. I was promoted up the ranks to a Regional FM. Eventually the time came for me to spread my wings and explore new ventures. I went on to manage multi-let premier properties. I figured all the problems would be under one roof, reducing travel times and allowing me to get familiar with every nut and bolt of the building. It was great being able to apply myself to one project at a time and develop expert knowledge of the plant and equipment. During this time I was also able to complete a number of training & development courses, including NEBOSH. With this and my recently honed technical knowledge, I was seen as a front runner to manage a diverse mix of residential, retail and commercial. This was my first real taste of managing within public spaces and I worked very closely with local and government agencies to deliver events and initiatives. After a couple of years, I was presented with an opportunity to manage the Covent Garden Estate which sits within the ‘Destination & Heritage’ sector at Incentive FM. This was an area I had walked through regularly in the 12 years prior and always wondered who managed it and if I would be capable of doing so one day. Being able to draw on my wealth of knowledge and experience, the interview process was successful, and I have worked here ever since.

What have you found most satisfying experiences working in FM?

I think we can all agree that the day-to-day life of an FM is generally fast paced and high pressured, but when a major crisis occurs, such as the 2008 credit crunch, domestic terror attacks and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, landlords and occupiers rely heavily on their FM companies to remain composed and deliver strategies to minimise the impact on their businesses. Incentive FM are always well prepared which is the key but this does take a lot of planning and forethought to ensure when the worst happens, we are ready to take control and ride the storm.

What have you found most satisfying about working in the sector?

Incentive FM looks after many heritage sites and having delivered projects and services to some of the most prestigious areas in our nation’s Capital, I feel a genuine sense of pride and a contribution to history that my children can be proud of.

What qualities do you think are most needed for a successful career in FM?

It is absolutely vital that you remain flexible within your role and able to adapt to the environment and changes in requirements. We spend more time with our work colleagues than we do with our families and friends, so managing these relationships is essential. If we remain friendly and helpful it cultivates a positive and productive environment for everyone. Incentive FM has always had a great work hard play hard ethos.

What has changed about your job role since the COVID-19 crisis?

E.g. home working, furloughed, redeployed?

Covent Garden is a mixed-use portfolio comprising of approximately 500, commercial, residential and retail units, with vast public spaces open 24hrs a day. This meant that throughout lockdown and phased reopening there was always a job to be done. We encountered operational difficulties in the early stages, with the majority of the management team having to work from home and a number of the site operatives having to shield. Rostering and planning became a moving feast, and the development of new protocols and training became common place.

What is your organisation doing to ensure the wellbeing of staff – whether working at home or returning to the workplace?

Incentive FM are a very altruistic organisation, the people are seen as the most important part of the business so great lengths have been taken to ensure we have remained cared for and made safe throughout the pandemic. This has included wellbeing checks for our vulnerable people, increased training & mental health awareness as well as a dedicated support service for any personal difficulties we may be experiencing.

Do you believe the pandemic has highlighted the important role of the FM sector and what areas do you see as most key?

If no one noticed before how important the role of the FM sector was before, they have now. Our courageous frontline colleagues’ commuted into the fold each day, amid fears and anxiety to deliver critical services whilst the vast majority of the nation were sat at home in relative safety.

What advice would you give to someone coming into the profession now?

My advice for anyone starting out in FM, is to grasp every learning and development opportunity with both hands. Attend as many workshops and seminars as possible and read around the key subjects to build upon your knowledge base. Having solid core skills will enable an FM to support their team effectively and will inspire confidence with your peers and clients, leading to further opportunities.

Which of your achievements are you most proud of during your career?

Managing Covent Garden was always a dream of mine. So to not only now managing it but to be awarded the Incentive FM Contract of the year 2020 (pictured) is a dream come true.

What do you predict could be the main changes to the FM sector post pandemic?

The big difference will be the ability to deliver services remotely and with greater flexibility. New technologies are emerging which provide the ability to monitor plant and equipment remotely. These technologies can be used in multiple applications, to improve productivity and reduce the environmental impact through reduced vehicle movement. Video calling is now common-place and is enabling employers to offer more flexibility for those with childcare commitments. This in-turn will no doubt improve staff retention and attract a new market of potential employees to the FM sector.

Would you, or someone you know, like to be featured in our career ladder column? If you’re an operational FM with more than 10 years’ experience in the sector, then email sara.bean@kpmmedia.co.uk
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