

From waste to wonder: How phs is revolutionising washroom sustainability

4 months ago



FM Director recently caught up with Amanda Haywood, Head of Product Development at [phs Group](#), to discuss the company's pioneering approach to product innovation, sustainability, and how they address previously overlooked market needs.

Amanda Haywood's four-decade journey through the washroom services industry has culminated in her spearheading phs's most ambitious product innovation programme to date. With sustainability at its core and genuine market needs driving development, Amanda's team is reshaping how the industry thinks about washroom solutions.

"We have an in-house product development team and we believe that's exclusive in washroom," Amanda explained. "We have our own product designers who see to everything from concept to delivery. Everything is within our control, and that really enables us to react quickly to market needs and market changes."

This customer-centric approach has proven invaluable as the industry grapples with increasing ESG demands. Amanda explained that every tender now includes substantial sections questioning suppliers about their carbon footprint reduction efforts and how they can help customers achieve their own sustainability goals.

The ReVive Revolution

phs's most significant innovation launch is the ReVive range, set to debut in October. This comprehensive collection of everyday washroom products manufactured from recycled plastic represents a watershed moment for the industry.

"The ReVive range enables customers to completely kit out a washroom in recycled plastic products, but it will still all match and have that great family look and feel that we've created," Amanda said. "Most washroom companies buy their paper products and soap from one supplier, and their air fresheners and bins from another supplier, so they never get that family connection throughout the range."

The range includes nappy bins, sanitary bins, hand dryers, air fresheners, paper dispensers, urinal products and soap dispensers. The bins will be available in black using 100% recycled plastic or in grey using 61% recycled content, whilst dispensers will maintain their white appearance with distinctive grey speckles to differentiate them from standard products.

Crucially, all products will carry recycled and recyclable logos, enabling customers to demonstrate their ESG commitments to their own stakeholders. Amanda emphasised that customer demand for such solutions has been overwhelming: "Customers are screaming for ESG."

Closing the Loop

What sets phs apart in the recycled products space is their commitment to circular economy principles. Rather than simply purchasing recycled materials, the company has established a closed-loop system for their larger items.

"All of our old used bins go back to our manufacturer to be ground down and used to make our new bins," Amanda explained.

This approach extends beyond manufacturing to waste management. Every item returned from phs's 22 depots nationwide is processed through their recycling centre, with everything segregated and disposed of responsibly. Additionally, over 95% of waste collected from customer sanitary bins is processed through energy-from-waste facilities, converting it into reusable energy.

The company's commitment to transparency is evident through their customer portal, which allows clients to track the carbon footprint of their servicing processes, providing valuable data for their own ESG reporting.

Addressing Overlooked Needs

Perhaps Amanda's most impactful innovation addresses a significant gap in provision for male washroom users. Working in partnership with Prostate Cancer UK, phs developed the industry's first purpose-designed male incontinence bin.

"Through our work with Prostate Cancer UK, we learned that their male patients and survivors have to carry a carrier bag with them to dispose of incontinence waste, put it back in their backpack and take it home," Amanda revealed. "One of the biggest problems they have when they go out is that they've got nowhere to dispose of their incontinence waste."

The specially designed bin features a larger opening and double-flap mechanism to accommodate larger dressings whilst maintaining discretion. Clear labelling identifies it as designed for men and carries the Prostate Cancer UK logo, reinforcing the partnership approach.

The initiative has expanded beyond disposal to include wall-mounted hoppers containing emergency

incontinence shields, mirroring the free period products increasingly provided for women. Major sporting venues, including Manchester United's ground, have adopted the solution, recognising that incontinence issues often prevent men from attending sporting events or participating in physical activities.

Future Focus

Looking ahead, Amanda's team continues to respond to evolving market needs. A nano hand dryer designed for smaller spaces reflects changing washroom design trends, particularly in educational settings where individual cubicles are replacing traditional communal facilities for anti-bullying and security reasons.

"These cubicles are small and you've got to put everything in there, so small, neat cubicle-sized products are becoming the order of the day," Amanda said.

Additional products in development include a new urinal sanitiser and automatic soap dispensers for both liquid and foam applications, all scheduled for launch within the current financial year. The global reach of phs's operations means these innovations will benefit markets across South Africa, Australia, Singapore, Canada, the US, Spain and Ireland.

A Personal Journey

Amanda's path to product development leadership began 40 years ago as a washroom service driver, spending a decade emptying bins and refilling dispensers before progressing through service management and operations roles. Her experience includes eight years in South Africa as managing director for Newell Brands, where she established operations for the company's portfolio of global brands.

This operational background proved invaluable when she joined phs five years ago to find a disparate collection of products from multiple suppliers. "We used to buy six different paper dispensers from six different companies in six different shades of white, and they didn't look as if they belonged together at all," she recalled.

Her systematic approach to creating cohesive product families has transformed phs's offering whilst ensuring practical considerations, such as service frequencies, align across the range. The company has actively replaced legacy products throughout their customer base, ensuring no one remains with outdated solutions.

Sustainable Leadership

Central to Amanda's approach is authentic sustainability rather than greenwashing. phs employs a dedicated Head of Sustainability who validates all environmental claims, whilst product packaging has been completely redesigned using recycled cardboard boxes with no plastic packaging.

As the industry faces increasing pressure to demonstrate genuine environmental responsibility, Amanda's leadership at phs exemplifies how innovation, sustainability and market responsiveness can align to create meaningful change. From addressing previously ignored needs to pioneering circular economy approaches, her work is setting new standards for what's possible in washroom services.

"We're not just doing what we think is right," Amanda said. "We need to do what the customer wants us to



do. That's really important."