

Carlisle Innovation Lab 2026 Highlights the Power of Innovation in Modern Facilities Management

2 months ago



More than 700 senior leaders from across the UK's facilities management, security, and transport sectors gathered on 5 March in Liverpool for [Carlisle Support Services](#)' Innovation Lab 2026, a leading industry forum designed to spark new thinking around service delivery, safety and operational excellence.

Hosted at ACC Liverpool, the event brought together over 40 exhibitors alongside policymakers and frontline professionals to explore the evolving challenges facing organisations responsible for managing and protecting complex public environments. Now firmly established as one of the sector's most anticipated gatherings, the Innovation Lab reflects Carlisle's growing role in helping set the right direction for the industry, bringing together operational insight, technology, and leadership to address real-world challenges facing modern FM and security services. The exhibition creatively highlighted practical FM innovations, from robotics and automated cleaning machines to smart solutions improving efficiency across modern facilities.



Opening the event, Carlisle's Chief Executive Officer, Paul Evans, reflected on how the Innovation Lab has grown from a modest internal forum into a major industry platform.

"What started as a small group of people sharing ideas has grown into an event bringing more than 700 people under one roof," he addressed attendees.

Evans emphasised that collaboration and continuous improvement remain central to Carlisle's long-term strategy. Looking ahead, he outlined the company's ambition to expand its capabilities further across the FM sector, including developing Hard FM services and business consulting, while continuing to maintain Carlisle's 99% client retention rate through consistently high standards of service delivery.

Innovation and mindset formed a central theme of the day, reinforced by keynote speaker Jason Bevan, whose keynote *Rocketfuel Your Innovation and Creativity* explored how the principles behind creative leadership can unlock new thinking in operational industries. Drawing on decades of experience shaping global film franchises at Warner Bros. Studios, Bevan demonstrated how creativity, culture and environment drive high-performing teams.

The event also addressed key responsibilities facing organisations that manage public spaces with a wide range panel discussions focusing on both FM and security spaces, reinforcing the shared responsibility to create greener, safer, and high-tech environments.

A highlight of the day was Carlisle's Challenge Innovation session, where their employees pitched frontline-driven ideas to improve safety, efficiency, and customer experience. Cheered by 700 audience and industry peers, Gemma Barry and Ashley Hulse won £50,000 in innovation funding for their Virtual Reality Training Hub concept, designed to deliver immersive training scenarios and help bring the idea to life.

Alongside innovation and operational excellence, the event also demonstrated Carlisle's commitment to sustainability and social value. The Innovation Lab itself is sustainably produced, reflecting the company's wider environmental commitments, while charitable initiatives formed an important part of the day.



Through its social value programme, Carlisle initially donated £7,500, with the charity auction generating an additional £2,750 taking the grand total to over £10,000 which will be split between Mind and The Railway Children.

As the day concluded with Carlisle's annual recognition of frontline excellence at the evening Superstar Awards Ceremony, the Innovation Lab 2026 has set a clear message that the future of the FM and security sectors will be shaped not only by technology, but by organisations willing to lead conversations, empower their people and collaborate across the industry to raise standards for everyone.