

Social Entrepreneur Calls for Reusable Gloves to be Widely Used in Cleaning Sector

17 hours ago



Sam Worden is Chief Operating Officer of London-based [NGB CLEAN](#), a cleaning and support services social enterprise focused on changing lives and delivering social value with a commitment towards sustainability. Here, Sam explains how she has successfully implemented the use of reusable, eco-friendly gloves which she thinks could be a game-changer and slash the mountain of waste in the cleaning sector caused by widely used disposable single use gloves.

Since entering the commercial cleaning sector I have always felt a compulsion to do everything I could to protect the environment. But it was during the challenging period of COVID-19 and Lockdowns that it struck me how much PPE was being wasted after minimal use.

I started researching about gloves and came across Polyco's reusable Pura gloves which to date have been largely used in the food processing sector and are little known about in cleaning and FM circles.

Working collaboratively with our supply partner, The Maintenance Supply Company, and Lorraine Larmen – a Health & Safety leader in the cleaning sector, I challenged the availability of suitable reusable gloves that we could use in our daily cleaning operations. Since using the Polyco gloves across NGB CLEAN sites, we have cut the annual consumption from 2400 disposable gloves to just 24 pairs of reusable gloves per cleaner, per year.

These flocklined gloves will also last between two to three months for our fulltime janitors under typical daily cleaning conditions. The gloves also feature handy colour coding (red, green, blue and yellow) which

align well with different cleaning zones, and make it easier to manage contamination risks.

We have had such an overwhelming success with these gloves that I have been in discussions with several large cleaning and FM companies who fully appreciate how our sector needs to find further ways of tackling waste, including a move towards the widespread use of a more sustainable type of cleaning glove.

Cleaning protocols ensure the Polyco gloves are washed and stored appropriately and in line with health and safety guidelines. Our teams at NGB CLEAN have the option to change their gloves at least once or twice per month – however some have found them lasting for 2 to 3 months.

Whilst engaging with several companies who have shown a keen interest in trialling these gloves I have also spoken to several others who have little knowledge of reusable options, highlighting an ongoing opportunity to educate and disrupt. There is no room for complacency when it comes to continuing the fight against waste.

Polyco Pura gloves meet the required standards to protect cleaning operatives' hands, they are chemical safe and their colour-coded availability offers a competitive edge in contamination control, which is not widely practiced with single use gloves, which are generally made from one of three unrecyclable materials: nitrile, latex or vinyl.

Elsewhere there is a significant and growing drive to reduce the amount of disposable gloves used during cleaning tasks in the NHS and social care environments, driven by sustainability goals, environmental concerns, and skin health awareness.

This initiative is often referred to as the “Gloves Off” or “Glove Awareness” campaign, which has gained momentum following a surge in plastic glove usage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several NHS Trusts across the UK have implemented “Gloves Off” campaigns to encourage staff to critically assess whether gloves are necessary for a task. The NHS is working towards net-zero carbon goals, and the reduction of single-use plastics—including billions of non-sterile gloves—is a key priority.

I know there is a growing clamour in the cleaning sector to tackle the huge amount of waste generated by disposable gloves and I hope I'm playing a key role in finding a solution that works and can be developed further.