

Westminster Kingsway College - National Cleaning Academy to drive up standards

A new National Cleaning Academy, just opened at Westminster Kingsway College in central London includes training facilities with the most modern hand dryers so that students get a thorough grounding of current and future industry requirements.

The Academy, run in partnership with commercial cleaning service provider, Not Just Cleaning (NJC), aims to raise the standards of cleaning and support service training and offers apprenticeships in Cleaning Services training programmes for the facilities management industry. The cleaning sector is increasingly seen as a dynamic career with clear and fast progression routes from entry level operatives through to supervisory positions and senior management.

The hand dryers representing the future are Jet Towels from Mitsubishi Electric. Unlike conventional hot air dryers, Jet Towels use high speed jets of air to blow moisture off the hands rather than evaporate it. This has many advantages, such as reducing drying time to 10 seconds, using only about 10 per cent of the energy and improving microbial management by orders of magnitude.

A cohort of 18 cleaning operatives from NJC will be the first to undertake the Apprenticeship in Cleaning Services at the Academy, with 30 plus to follow over the next month. Peter Heppelthwaite, NJC Director London Services said: "We are raising industry training standards through the National Cleaning Academy. It will provide the conduit to meaningful, recognised qualifications that can lead to further career progression."

Jet Towels are designed to offer the highest level of hygiene yet be easy to maintain. In use moisture from the hands are blown straight down into a drain, preventing bacteria from being blown around the room. Its no-touch operation is enhanced by the fact that all surfaces have an anti-microbial material to kill off any free floating bacteria.

“Cleaning is a simple matter of wiping down the surfaces and emptying the drain reservoir,” explains Fawn Litchfield, a Jet Towel specialist with Mitsubishi. “Everything is designed so that cleaning and maintenance is as easy as possible and requires no unpleasant operations.

“In places like colleges and offices, the bathrooms are heavily used, so hygiene has to be top notch to prevent illnesses spreading. Similarly, the constant use of a hand dryer can add up to a hefty electricity bill; Jet Towel’s frugality with power from only 550 watts makes it very popular with Facilities Managers trying to keep a tight rein on budgets.”

NJC’s Katie Thornton is delighted with Mitsubishi’s involvement in fitting out the Academy.

“The days of grubby public bathrooms are drawing to an end. Nobody likes using them and facilities managers know how a smart washroom drives up buildings’ reputations. Jet Towel hand dryers are resetting the standards for user-appreciation, hygiene, and energy efficiency – you rarely see people use them and not smile a little.”

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