



Case Study: Sheffield Council

Sheffield City Council had been keen to fit thermostatic electric showers in its housing stock for many years, however the increased unit price had always been prohibitive for the organisation, which manages more than 42,000 properties. But in 2020, Bristan approached the Council with a competitive offer on its Joy Thermostatic shower, providing enhanced safety features but with a minimal uplift in cost.

Background

Sheffield City Council has one of the largest social housing portfolios in the UK. To successfully maintain so many properties, the Council employs its own installation, repair and maintenance teams who can replace up to 140 showers a month. The choice of new and replacement units was a standard, PAT tested electric shower, but when Andy Hill joined the Sheffield City Council team in 2006, he was keen to upgrade the specification to a thermostatic alternative.

Senior Housing Officer Andy Hill said: "We provide homes for a diverse population including some of the most vulnerable people in our community – older people and people with disabilities or additional needs, as well as very young children. While there is no legal requirement to fit thermostatic showers, the health and

wellbeing of our tenants is our primary concern and we know that it is much safer for these to be installed in our properties."

Safety comes first

The HSE has identified a number of groups who are more susceptible to scalding; children, older people, people with reduced mental capacity, mobility or temperature sensitivity, and people who cannot react appropriately, or quickly enough, to prevent injury. The same groups are also susceptible to cold shock, which can increase the risk of a heart attack.

For Sheffield City Council, the need to install thermostatic showers gathered momentum following a scalding incident at one of the Council's properties a few years ago. The tenant had changed the manufacturer's showerhead for an LED light up alternative, but it had blocked causing hot water to build up in the head which then scalded a young child. While the Council was not liable as the tenant had altered the installation without permission, it was a call to action to ensure it did not happen again.

The main stumbling block for the rollout of thermostatic showers, however, was the price. The cost of a thermostatic electric shower from the Council's then supplier was quoted

at more than double the price of the regular electric shower.

Andy continues: "Sadly, we couldn't justify the huge uplift in costs, no matter how much we wanted the showers installed. I asked a number of suppliers if they could do anything on the price, but the answer was always no – until I met with Bristan. They appreciated the volumes we were talking about and came forward with a sensible unit price."

As Sheffield City Council changes 140 showers each month, Bristan offered its Joy Thermostatic 8.5kW electric shower at a discounted cost knowing that the organisation would be fitting over a thousand units a year. With just a £10 uplift in price on the Council's previous shower specification with another manufacturer, Andy was able to get the business case approved for the Joy shower to be fitted on all new and replacement jobs.

The Joy Thermostatic 8.5kW electric shower has built-in thermostatic technology to ensure the user's water temperature stays at a constant for the duration of their shower. The modern-designed shower draws water directly from the mains supply, at working pressures of between 0.7 bar and 10 bar. Importantly, the thermostatic feature controls temperature fluctuations even when a

different type of showerhead has been attached – so the scalding incident which happened previously would be prevented in the future.

Andy added: “I was delighted to finally be fitting thermostatic showers into our housing stock. Sheffield City Council has a duty of care to its tenants and the Joy showers not only guarantee safer showering and the prevention of harm or injury from water that is too hot or too cold, but its also compliant with the Building Regulations (Part G), it’s A-rated for its energy efficiency and its WRAS approved for its water use. It’s even BEAB approved. It ticks so many boxes for us as an operator.”

Ease of Installation

When the Sheffield City Council team fit so many showers each month, ease of installation is a must. The Joy shower uses 15mm push-fit inlet connections to make it simple to fit, and thanks to its universal footprint and multiple water and cable entry points, it can be retrofitted with ease – neatly covering the space left by the previous shower so retiling is not needed.

To further ensure the Council’s installation team are confident and efficient at fitting the Joy showers,

Bristan has run a number of training seminars with installers at their premises in Sheffield.

To help the Council maintain the showers in good working order, the Joy Thermostatic electric shower has an anti-limescale feature to reduce build up and a rub clean handset. It also has a performance indicator, which provides a visual reminder when the handset and external filter need to be cleaned.

The Joy Thermostatic electric shower has a number of features that tenants will like too. It has a modern design with digital display and push on/off button, and separate flow and temperature dials which are very easy to operate. It has a large soap dish so tenants can keep their toiletries to hand, and an extra large shower head for an invigorating showering experience. It also has a warm up mode to give users a visual confirmation of when the shower reaches their desired temperature.’

Peace of Mind

Andy concluded: “As well as offering a great product which our team are happy to fit, Bristan provides great levels of customer service too. If I have any questions, I just pick up the phone and I can speak to someone who’ll help

me out. Its so important to have that kind of relationship with a supplier.”

Bill Johnson, Regional Sales Manager at Bristan said: “While they may not be a regulatory requirement yet, thermostatic showers are ideal for social housing installations as these properties are often occupied by the most ‘at risk’ groups from scalding and cold shock. We’re so glad that after years of campaigning, we could provide Andy with a thermostatic shower option which is both affordable and offers the safer showering standards he’s been looking to deliver for Sheffield City Council’s tenants.”

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t: 0330 026 6273 e: contractenquiry@bristan.com w: thebristangroup.com