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Leading Healthcare Architect Mobilises Antimicrobial Copper Product Supply Chain

Mark Barker of Race Cottam Associates called upon the bathroom fitting and architectural ironmongery supply chain to meet the demand for hygienic antimicrobial healthcare touch surfaces at a meeting of the Antimicrobial Copper Interest Group this week.

Mark addressed an audience of antimicrobial copper suppliers, product manufacturers and healthcare suppliers to relate his experience of seeking to source antimicrobial copper items for healthcare refurbishment projects. Commenting on his client's decision to opt for antimicrobial copper door handles, push plates, taps, toilet seats etc. Mark explained:

'A paradigm shift is needed in the way people think. Common materials such as plastics and stainless steel may look clean, but they have no inherent antimicrobial efficacy. Copper alloys can help to fight infection, so people's perception of materials needs to change'.

While Mark, a Regional Director at the Sheffield architectural practice, managed to source products such as door handles and push plates quite easily, his search for other products was hampered by a lack of information on manufacturers' websites regarding their antimicrobial copper ranges. Following a tour of the associated exhibition, where a wide range of new products was on display, many of the gaps were filled and manufacturers certainly took on board the message for developing and marketing new ranges of products to meet the growing demand.

Mark also highlighted the need for colour-matched products, not only for touch surfaces but for other fixtures and fittings to provide a harmonious scheme, adding 'I think this use of copper will cross over from healthcare into other sorts of applications and we could see it in schools, shopping centres, gyms; anywhere people gather with the potential for infections to spread via touch surfaces.'

The meeting, held at the BRE Building Innovation Park, Watford, was organised by Copper Development Association following a visit by Mark to the CDA stand at the Healthcare Estates event in Harrogate.

Angela Vessey, CDA Director, summed up the importance of the event, saying: “The scientific evidence supporting the use of antimicrobial copper touch surfaces is well established, and now the practical implementation is starting to take off. The message being taken away from today’s meeting is that this is a global opportunity for manufacturers, and it’s here now. The supply chain needs to be in a position to supply the full range of products needed, to make them available in a range of colours and to go out and market them. While our online product catalogue is a good starting point for specifiers, this needs to be backed up by comprehensive product information on the linking company websites. I am convinced that following this meeting there will be a significant increase in marketing of these products to help architects, like Mark, deliver what their clients want.’

	
<p>Antimicrobial copper pull handle</p>	<p>Antimicrobial copper door furniture and dressing trolley</p>

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