

UK hygiene sector shines on coronavirus outbreak

March 20 2020

From makers of toilet paper to firms offering deep cleans for offices and homes—Britain's hygiene sector is facing unprecedented demand fuelled by the coronavirus outbreak.

"We have not known anything like this for as long as I can recall," Paul Thrupp, chairman of the British Cleaning Council (BCC), told AFP.

"It's a challenge but it's one the cleaning sector can really respond to and there is an opportunity we can influence and slow down the spread by adopting good [hygiene](#) practices."

Fantastic Services, which also carries out house and office repairs, said clients were looking to have maintenance jobs completed before the UK government potentially orders stricter restrictions on the population's movement.

'New normal'

"We saw a small increase in people wanting to have home decoration last week like painting. They're getting ready," its founder Rune Sovndahl told AFP.

"I think that every industry is going to have to change... What this means is that everyone realises that hygiene is more important—having the [door handles](#) wiped down every hour in the office and things like

that—this is the new normal," he added.

Sovndahl said customers have been seeking advice from his company on good cleaning techniques in the event of lockdown, which could hurt his business and a new antiviral cleaning service he is offering.

Companies making cleaning and hygiene products, such as toilet [paper](#), detergents and [face masks](#), are meanwhile having to work round the clock to meet enormous increases in demand.

"It has been absolutely manic. It's unbelievably busy. The company and the industry have been pushed to their absolute limit," noted Khurram Iqbal, who runs toilet paper factory Nova Tissue in Oldham, northwest England.

Speaking to the Daily Mirror newspaper, Iqbal urged people not to stockpile, while the Confederation of Paper Industries said people should not panic.

However the situation could change should imports be hit, with half of Britain's annual [toilet](#) and tissue paper consumption totalling 1.25 million tonnes coming from produce made overseas.

"Our paper supplying members are certainly seeing increased sales, not just of [toilet paper](#) but also hand towels and boxed tissues as customers aim to provide adequate hygiene facilities for employees and visitors," said Lorcan Mekitarian, chair of the Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association.

"The situation is fluid and our members are being flexible, reviewing stocks and adjusting production, to make sure their customers have no need for concern," he added.

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Citation: UK hygiene sector shines on coronavirus outbreak (2020, March 20) retrieved 11 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-uk-hygiene-sector-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

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