

No noise aloud

With its new noise reduction ratings the BFRC seeks to do for the acoustic performance of windows and doors what it has achieved with energy ratings

Although at times this year even the busiest roads have been deathly quiet, such times have also served to highlight the severe noise problems experienced by many homeowners. For these people, the desire to reduce noise pollution in their homes far outweighs any other benefits, including thermal performance.

Turn it down!

Noise pollution is proven to be far more than just a nuisance, with severe psychological and physical health issues well researched and established outcomes of repeated and continuous exposure. However, rather than sonic booms it may be the sounds that we are not even aware that we are hearing that affect us the most, especially those that we hear when we are asleep. So even though people may become 'immune' to road noise outside their home for example, ears continue to work when we are asleep, picking up and transmitting sounds to the brain.

Bad vibrations

The body reacts to the background noise and often responds negatively even though we are not immediately aware of the effects, which may include stress. Stress can raise blood pressure and heart rate, which may lead to cardiovascular disease and other health issues.

Homeowners experiencing such issues will approach replacement window companies and only a handful of highly specialised contractors will have any form of measurement or comparison by which homeowners may understand what they may be offered to counter or reduce noise in and around their home.

To provide a solution for this, the British Fenestration Ratings Council (BFRC) has launched a new rating scheme. The independently verified BFRC noise reduction scheme will allow manufacturers to show homeowners how their windows and doors compare with other brands. With ratings displayed on labels, the acoustic performance of each window that is tested through the scheme will be easily compared. Marketing materials have also been designed and will be made available for customers.

Sound-proofing

"Noise pollution increases stress levels which can have a serious impact on our health," says Lis Clarke, operations director at the BFRC. "Most of us have anecdotes about incidences of excessive noise, perhaps on holiday for example. But many people must live with it on a daily basis. The correct windows may provide a solution but we emphasise that for more serious issues with noise pollution homeowners should look at all parts of the structure of



Lis Clarke

their home.

"However, few homeowners have any real idea where to start and we recognised the need for a simplified rating system by which window and door manufacturers and installers can measure and demonstrate the noise reduction performance of their products and by which homeowners may compare products for their properties. So after extensive research, we decided to develop the scheme and through the BFRC brand to incorporate noise in addition to energy.

Testing the acoustics

"BFRC determines the rating band by verifying the technical evidence provided by the manufacture," says Clarke. "BFRC accepts an approved acoustic test report produced in accordance with BS EN 10140 or tabulated values from EN 14351-1. Installers do not need to provide BFRC with any technical information as this will have already been obtained from the manufacturer. They can

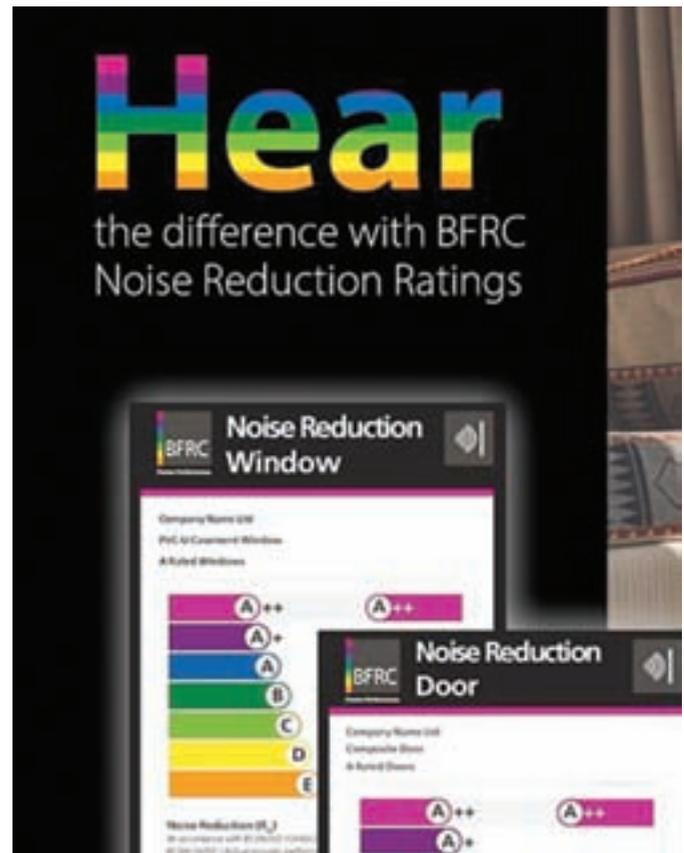
receive a rating from A++ to E. The only difference for doors is an approved acoustic test report must be provided for us to verify the performance and provide a rating. There are no tabulated values in EN 14351-1 for doors.”

According to Clarke the scheme is aimed at residential and commercial installations: “Window and door manufacturers may provide proof and clarity around the quality of their products, whilst both homeowners and specifiers can use the labels as proof of performance.”

She does urge caution, however: “It is important to recognise that replacing or upgrading the windows and doors may not provide the entire solution to noise entering the building. Noise reducing windows and doors are often requested by consumers and specifiers who are looking to combat external noise intrusion and we are encouraging our customers to advise what other measures may be required to meet their expectations in addition to our scheme.”

NHS got one, now you do too!

“Installers receive their own BFRC ‘Rainbow’ noise reduction labels that they can use in their marketing materials and provide to the consumer in the form of a certificate. Rainbow rating labels are easy to understand and are familiar to both consumer and industry. This gives installers and homeowners the evidence they need to make the right choice for each home’s window and door performance requirements. Installers can also use the BFRC branding and labels on their website to advertise they are a BFRC Approved Installer.” □



www.bfrc.org/noise-reduction





As we are now all too familiar, modern day living creates the perfect environment for a wide variety of microbes to successfully grow on almost every surface we touch. Doors and windows, equipment, stationery and work surfaces can all be affected by microbial growth. Dewsbury based Alutech Systems has a range of anti-microbial products to protect users

The growth of microbes such as bacteria and mould can affect the functioning of a product, leading to deterioration, odours and stains. Cleaning will help prevent microbial growth on products, however, between cleaning cycles microbes will once again multiply on surfaces. Alutech antimicrobial BIO-coating works between cleans to protect the profile surface (e.g. windows/doors) against microbial growth.

Quality controlled antimicrobial technology

An Alutech spokesperson says that its profile systems and hardware with Bio-coating look great and that AkzoNobel powder coatings give an additional level of protection against microbial growth on the coatings' surface. This makes it easier to keep hygienically clean and helps to prevent odours and stains, with 24-hour protection, seven days a week.

According to Steve Hudson, MD at Alutech Systems, its profile systems are safe and durable, stylish and constantly evolving. He says: "The high quality of our profile powder is certified by European standards. We offer a wide choice of colour options for aluminium profile systems with AkzoNobel antimicrobial technology. These include standard RAL colours, Alutech brand colours, as well as special colours at the customer's request. An extensive range of textures and special finishes are also available.



Our exclusive range of colours and finishes is provided by our own cutting-edge powder coating and anodizing facilities."

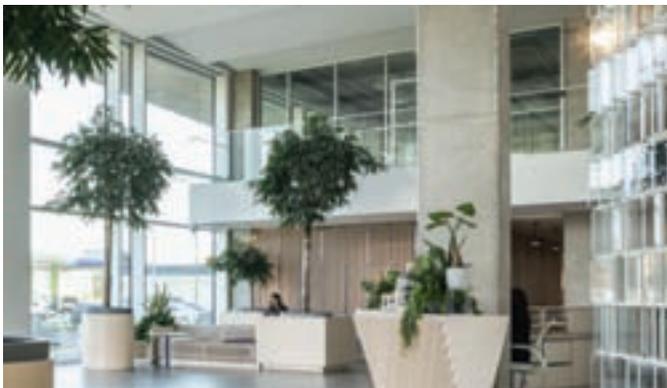
Alutech and AkzoNobel working together

"As an innovative company, Alutech regularly launches new solutions in order to respond to market trends and improve systems performances, usability and design. We care about the health and wellbeing of our consumers, so we've teamed up with AkzoNobel to ensure that the powder coating of our profiles performs to the very highest antimicrobial standards.

"In the current climate, hygiene is at the forefront of everyone's minds, the bio-coating on our profile provides that extra level of protection, and is perfect in spaces with a high volume of traffic, such as schools, shopping centres, hospitals and more.

"We are pleased to bring this partnership with AkzoNobel to market, in addition to our already strong offering with our quality product range.

"Alutech offers complete solutions for architectural and interior projects of any kind, including facade systems, entrances, office and interior partition walls and structural glazed facades. □



www.alutechsystems.co.uk