



City of Edinburgh Council Kitchen & Bathroom 'Upgrade' to Griptex

Cost savings found underfoot

Thanks to a switch to Griptex®, a textile backed residential vinyl flooring by Gerflor that reduces subfloor preparation and installation time, Edinburgh City Council has been able to make cost savings to its kitchen and bathroom housing improvements programme.

Begun in 2003, the City of Edinburgh Council is now moving into the final seven years of its kitchen and bathroom improvements programme to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) involving a total of 10,000 housing upgrades.

With the age of a property the criteria used to determine the timetabling of the refurbishment work, the council is now targeting homes built between the mid 1950s and the late 1960s and

estimates that improvements to 1,500 houses per year must be undertaken to meet SHQS targets on time.

The kitchen refurbishment is a particularly high profile, long term project with the emphasis on customer care says Edinburgh City Council's Housing Property Services department. New kitchens in particular are much sought after by tenants, and given that a kitchen will be in place for up to 30 years, it must be well specified, well planned, well designed and extremely well installed.



Kitchen units, worktops and accessories, bathroom suites, showers and fittings, internal decorations and floorcoverings have therefore been thoroughly considered by Edinburgh City Council before options are presented to tenants in portable kitchen and bathroom sample display units.

It is against this backdrop that the Council has recently looked into making cost savings that will not jeopardise the high standards of the upgrading programme that it has so carefully established.

One such cost saving has come about through a flooring 'upgrade,' which has eliminated lengthy subfloor preparation, making installation far quicker and much more cost effective. Stephen Whitehead, Senior Architect, Housing Property Services for Edinburgh City Council, explains:

"Since 2003 the Council has specified a variety of sheet vinyl manufacturers and received feed-back from tenants as part of the customer satisfaction survey at the end of each contract. Rather than the usual plain contract materials, tenants asked for flooring with a more domestic appearance. A selection of designs and colours from Gerflor's Agrippa flooring range fitted this need in the kitchen and bathroom areas. More recently however, in an effort to make cost savings, the Council upgraded the specification to Gerflor's Griptex range to try to avoid ply lining or screeding to every floor."

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Gerflor Social Housing Case Study

It is the recent evolution of high performance, R10 slip resistant rated, residential sheet vinyl floorcoverings in designs and colours developed for domestic environments, such as Agrippa by Gerflor, which have provided housing product specifiers with a more suitable alternative to contract quality floorings in kitchen and bathroom applications.

Technology has now moved on a further step with textile backed residential vinyl floorcoverings that have revolutionised installation by eliminating complex subfloor preparation as well as the need for adhesive and specialist fitting, whilst also providing an aesthetically pleasing floor.

It was leading vinyl flooring manufacturer, Gerflor Limited, which developed and patented the original polyester backing system: Griptex, which features this backing system, also has a multi-layer construction, which makes it unique to other vinyls and highly suitable for Edinburgh City Councils' housing programme.

Even though the square metre cost of Griptex is slightly higher than Agrippa, the installed cost can be lower.

It is the textile backing system combined with a dimensionally stable interlayer that permits up to 22 square metres of Griptex to be loose laid without adhesive, while the backing absorbs any irregularities in the subfloor. Because glue degradation can significantly effect the life cycle of vinyl sheet flooring, longer term costs savings can be factored into replacement budgets.

Griptex has multi-installation options: it can be loose laid, fully adhered or secured with hook tape. Edinburgh City Council has opted to apply hooked tape around edges and where heavy domestic appliances are positioned.

"Griptex is installed strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and instructions. We chose to apply hooked tape around the perimeter of the room, doubled up at

appliance recesses. This allows easy lifting and relaying for later maintenance of under floor services. Only in bathrooms do we use a polysulphide sealant applied between floorings and skirtings, ducts and bath panels," says Stephen Whitehead.

"At present, tenants are offered Griptex in a choice of six colours and patterns for kitchens and for bathrooms to complement the other materials on offer," he concludes.

Griptex is available in realistic wood and ceramics designs, contemporary overall patterns and a wide colour palette. Its polyester textile backing system, with anti-mildew properties, not only provides easy installation but also makes Griptex 50% warmer and more comfortable underfoot than traditional 3mm vinyl. It is also waterproof from above and below, tolerant of up to 90% residual damp and has an R10 rated slip resistant, hygienic and easy to clean GripX surface wear layer, which will not trap dirt or become ineffective over time. The availability of 2,3 and 4 metre widths generally avoids the need to weld on site.



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