

September 2023: Material Health

Thursday 28 September 2023 AllSfär / Lavoro showroom

Core Team:

Harsha Kotak, WOD; Joanna Knight, WOD; Ella Fathi, Oktra;

Collective Members:

Rebecca Poll, Grimshaw; Laura Wardrope, JLL; Asif Din, Perkins & Will;
Rhiannon Laurie, Gensler; May Fawzy, MF Studio / BIID;
Dicky Lewis, White Red Architects; Lucy Bagshaw, TP Bennett; Emily King, BDP;
Gurvinder Khurana, M Moser; Natasha Hewlett, Peldon Rose;
Ana Rita Martins, Woodalls Design; Nigel Tresise, Align; Deepak Parmar, MCM;
Jennie GreenWalker, MAA Architects; Dom Pegram, Salt & Pegram;
Jennifer Russell, Bureau Group; Matt Davies, The Furniture Practice;
Anja Schellenbauer, Conran and Partners; Fiona Edwards, JPA Workspaces;
Sarah Audsley, Knight Frank; Alison Grant: HLW; Simah Aslam, Abrdn;
Ruth Marsh, Sheppard Robson; Lydia Randall, BDG A+D; Sam Allen, M Moser; Deborah Allen,
DouglasJane Studio; Jenna Monteith, Unispace; Mathew Freeman, Freeman Studio.

Supporters: Lavoro; AllSfär; Shaw Contract; Steelcase; Sedus UK; Solus Ceramics; Milliken;
Orluna LED; Teknion; Workplace Insight; Design Insider..

Purpose:

A 'think tank' group committed to acting as a collective within the workplace design community to identify developments and 'best practice' relating to sustainability.
This report highlights some of the points raised during the discussion.

Discussion: *How can we gain better understanding of the various 'ingredients' within the products we specify? Self-declarations vs Certification (and the cost implications)*

"Manufacturers need to be open and transparent so that we can gain a better understanding of the material content."

"There is rarely time to undertake a complete 'deep dive' into the individual ingredients."

"We have to trust what the suppliers and manufacturers are saying."

"We want to be supportive of manufacturers and suppliers and help them to understand the relevance and importance of the information. Equally, we have a responsibility to provide feedback so they understand the issues."

"Sometimes it is necessary to make company representatives feel 'uncomfortable' if they are unable to answer questions. Generally it encourages them to go and research to find the answers."

"Surely 'ingredient' labelling should be mandatory, like with food?"





**Labelling:
HPDs (Health Product Declarations)**

HPDs are overseen by the Health Product Declaration Collaborative. “As a not-for-profit, member organization, the Health Product Declaration® Collaborative (HPDC) can only succeed with the active support of the community committed to making transparency the norm in the building industry. Becoming a member of HPDC signals your organization’s commitment to the continuous improvement of the building industry’s performance – through transparency, openness and innovation in the practices of reporting, disclosure, specification and selection of building products.” - <https://members.hpd-collaborative.org/>

HPDs require manufacturers to report all of the substances in a given product down to 100 ppm.

Declare Label

Operated by the International Living Future Institute, Declare is a platform to share and find healthy building products. Manufacturers voluntarily disclose product information on Declare labels, which are accessible on the database.

Declare is a nutrition label for building products. It is designed to help specifiers quickly identify products that meet their project requirements. Declare labels disclose all intentionally-added ingredients and residuals at or above 100ppm (0.01%) present in the final product by weight. Each ingredient must be reported with a chemical name, CAS number, and percentage or percentage range. (<https://declare.living-future.org/>)

CAS number / registry

A CAS Registry Number is a unique and unambiguous identifier for a specific substance that allows clear communication and, with the help of CAS scientists, links together all available data and research about that substance. (<https://www.cas.org/cas-data/cas-registry>)

Discussions were also held around the current Government consultation on Fire safety for domestic upholstered furniture. Whilst it is currently only being considered for retail / domestic furniture and bedding, it is likely to subsequently impact on the contract sector too.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/smarter-regulation-fire-safety-of-domestic-upholstered-furniture>

Discussion: Preventing Waste Defra published the update to the Waste Prevention Programme for England in July. It prioritises seven sectors with construction, textiles and furniture being the top 3!

“It is clear that we will have to move forward without legislation.”

“There is pressure on manufacturers and suppliers to do more in terms of circularity but surely the client has a responsibility too?”



“Is there sufficient incentive for manufacturers to do more unless there is an associated carbon cost?”

“Are some companies using charity donations as an opportunity to negate their obligations?”

“Displacement must a consideration when considering charity donations – in other words, the potential for economic loss for other suppliers.”

Update from AII Sfär and Lavoro Design

AII Sfär has recently opened its new showroom (shared with Lavoro Design) in Clerkenwell (14 Baltic St E, London EC1Y 0UJ). As part of its range of acoustic furniture and surfaces, the company has developed FIKA wall tiles made from mycelium and hemp. Mycelium is a natural root-like structure of a fungus and industrial hemp and is increasingly being grown as a more sustainable material option. FIKA tiles have been designed by AII Sfär’s in-house designers and are grown exclusively for them by leading mushroom packaging manufacturer, Magical Mushroom Company® in the UK. The tiles are 100% biodegradable and completely safe for use across all commercial settings.

Lavoro offers a comprehensive range of height adjustable furniture products. All components are made in the UK and Europe with metal-to-metal fixings from the company’s own specialist CNC machinery – “our builds balance simplicity with sturdy construction”.

OUTCOMES:

SD Magazine:

As part of its mission is to work collaboratively to share knowledge and ‘best practice’ to inspire and influence the workplace design sector, SDC has launched a digital publication. The ambition is to provide a platform for views, opinions, and projects within the office workplace sector.

SD Academy:

SDC is launching the first of a series of online courses specifically designed for designers working within the workplace environment.

SDC Forum and Awards:

The next forum and awards was held on 25th April 2024. It is designed as an interactive event for workplace designers, manufacturers, and suppliers to share knowledge and learn about efforts towards greater sustainability.



FOOTNOTE:

The Sustainable Design Collective meets every two months. Each meeting addresses different initiatives designed to tackle the impact on our environment.

A summary document will be published after each meeting which is hosted on the Sustainable Design Collective's web site – an example of knowledge sharing.

We welcome comment and contributions from the office design sector.

<https://thesustainabledesigncollective.co.uk/>