

Press Release
9th November 2009

Local Manufacturer speaks at key National Conference in Sheffield

Nigel Harrison of Sheffield manufacturing company Kingkraft Ltd has spoken at an important national conference that took place in Sheffield on 27th October to discuss the best mechanisms for ensuring people with disabilities get the right assistive technologies to support their needs.

The conference was convened by leading academics in the field from Sheffield University and took place at St Mary's Conference Centre in Bramall Lane. Nigel, the Kingkraft Managing Director, took the platform with academics, civil servants and other commercial organisations to discuss the issues facing manufacturers of assistive technology equipment.

Nigel explains, "There are enormous challenges facing funders and providers of this type of equipment in the future. The increase in life expectancy is placing enormous strain on the system and new ways have to be found to effectively distribute equipment to enable users to enjoy an independent home life. The trend in health and social service provision is to promote individual purchasing of equipment. I passionately believe that equipment for use in the home by elderly and disabled persons should be designed to look good as well as to function correctly and that it should be available in mainstream retail outlets if demand is attractive to this sector. In other words, products for use by this user group are not differentiated from any other household item. This presents huge opportunities for our company but clearly we have to ensure that the voice of the small manufacturer is heard in the coming years and that choice is genuinely provided for consumers in the move to retail selling.



Kingkraft supplies a wide range of assistive technology products including bathroom and moving and handling equipment and, as well as outlining his views on the issue, Nigel was interested to hear from the other speakers who represent different parts of the supply chain.

Nigel says, "The whole structure of the route by which assistive technology products are provided from suppliers to users is changing. All of us who are involved need a good understanding of how purchasing will work in the future and the transition mechanisms involved. This meeting provides a superb opportunity for so many representatives of different elements of the industry to come together in an open forum to explore these issues. The organisers deserve credit for drawing us all together. It is a very useful day and ideally all involved will leave with some new ideas and perspectives."

Ends

Notes for Editors

The conference "Assistive Technologies: what is their place in the mainstream market?" takes place on the 27th October 2009 at the St Mary's Conference Centre, Bramall Lane, Sheffield. The conference has been organised by Event organisers:

Professor Gail Mountain, Director KT-EQUAL, Sheffield University

Ms Verity Smith, Coordinator KT-EQUAL

Barbara Keally, Sheffield University

The conference programme can be found at:

<http://www.sparc.ac.uk/workshops/2009-10-27-mainstream-markets-for-at/index.asp>

Kingkraft began by manufacturing specialist bathing equipment in 1984. The company is now established as one of the foremost suppliers in the assistive technology market. The company produces stylish, beautiful yet functional products that can be used in homes, hospitals and residential environments and which help provide invaluable assistance and independence. In addition, we have now grown into a substantial supplier of paediatric products that help to promote inclusivity in the home or school environment; including Sensory, Seating, Mobility and Moving & Handling.

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Photography of Nigel Harrison is available from

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