

Excellence in Award winners enjoy further success

Innohome, winners of *FIRE* magazine's Excellence in Fire and Emergency Award for Innovation 2014, has enjoyed further successes with its Stove Guard system installed in university halls of residence. Unicook's **Peter Holland** reports

In 2013, 750 cooking related fires were reported in UK halls of residences, not to mention false alarms and unnecessary call-outs to fire services. Stove Guard prevents stove top fires by utilising sophisticated heat analysis combined with wireless technology to provide a solution which is safe, easy to retrofit and unobtrusive for residents.

Innohome's Managing Director Pertti Haavisto visited the University of Brighton in April to meet with members of staff from the University and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

In 2012, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Innohome conducted a live test with Stove Guard in a flat in Eastbourne. A pan was deliberately set to overheat and Stove Guard was shown to cut the power and prevent a fire. A subsequent test with the same stove without Stove Guard resulted in a fire. University of Brighton fire safety officers, Phil Thompson and Nick Greenwood, were present to observe the tests. Thanks to Phil

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and Nick who are both experienced fire safety professionals, having previously worked in the Fire Service, opted to run an in-house trial within the University Halls of Residence.

Forty-five Stove Guard systems were fitted to newly refurbished student kitchens at the university in 2014. After this successful trial period, an additional 115 units were added this year with more to be installed during the summer recess. The university has made Stove Guard a requirement for their existing residential kitchens. Future halls of residence being planned and developed will incorporate a Stove Guard system in all their kitchens.

Nick Greenwood, Fire Safety Adviser at the University of Brighton, said: "The health and safety department, together with the university accommodations and hospitality department, have initiated the purchase of this ground breaking safety system for our residential halls.

"The Stove Guard system is a smart way to

guard student accommodation against kitchen fires because it responds before the formation of toxic gases and before a fire is ignited.

"The University of Brighton has been supported throughout the trial period by the product manufacturer Innohome, a Finnish company and Unicook, Innohome's UK partner. We felt it important to have the product fitted by an accredited professional company, that has able to provide both technical and training support."

During the trial period the residential kitchens involved had just one false alarm activation. In the same period in the previous year, these premises had 11 false alarms. So the early intervention of the Stove Guard has contributed to a substantial reduction of unwanted false alarm activations.

The University of Brighton Fire Safety Manager, Phil Thompson, said: "As part of our overall fire strategy for residential accommodation and reducing the risk to life and property and also to reducing the number of unwanted fire alarm activations, Stove Guard was an integral part of a three-stage plan.

"For some time we have had a strategy of charging students for deliberate acts of causing fire alarm activations or interfering with equipment. More recently we have been fitting warning devices to kitchen doors to prevent them from being held open, and now the third part of our strategy is the fitting of Stove Guard devices to every cooker to prevent cooker top fires. These elements now form part of our design specification for new build halls."

Pertti Haavisto was asked about Stove Guard and its background. "Stove Guard was conceived by a noted Finnish Innovator Matti Myllymäki. Matti is the only person to have twice been awarded the InnoFinland Prize by the President of Finland.

"It took us two years to develop the first version of the product. We have since developed two more generations to incorporate more advanced sensing technology and to meet demands from across Europe and beyond.

"We now have a single electronics design that can work with all country phases and voltages and have a user base of 120,000 Stove Guard installations, which is now growing at over 100 a day.

"We are working closely with our UK partner Unicook to understand the needs of universities and similar institutions in the UK and we have already made a number of changes to the software to better reflect the nature of student cooking. We have also developed an additional feature to allow accommodation managers to take control of the resetting of Stove Guard when they feel there is a need.

"I'm sure there will be other developments as we and Unicook learn from our customers with further feedback. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Brighton and Unicook for their cooperation and dedication to proving and improving Stove



The Hub building at the centre of Varley Park

"We are now planning to work with other organisations, such as assisted living homes, to help them identify where this life saving technology can make a real difference"

A kitchen with two hobs protected by Stove Guard.



Guard for our university customers."

Andy Reynolds, Director of Protection and Prevention from East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, said: "This technology is relatively new in the UK and we are very pleased the University of Brighton is working in partnership with us to help cut the number of fires and indeed false alarms on campus.

"People being distracted while cooking is a big problem; these devices mean that the chances of having a serious fire are reduced, without having to rely on someone being in the room to do something. They can also be particularly useful in homes where using the hob becomes high risk due to a person's advanced age, Alzheimer's or dementia, disability or learning difficulties.

"We are now planning to work with other organisations, such as assisted living homes, to help them identify where this life saving technology can make a real difference."

Unicook would like to thank the University of Brighton and East Sussex Fire and Rescue for their work in trialling Stove Guard.



Pertti Haavisto, Managing Director at Innohome talks to Julie Barker – Director of Accommodation and Hospitality Department at the University of Brighton, Phil Thompson – University of Brighton Fire Safety Manager, Andy Reynolds – Director of Protection and Prevention at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and Andrew Knight – University of Brighton Deputy Director of Health & Safety