



**Clean living**

Best practice cleaning regimes and their effect on workplace wellbeing

**Safety in lights**

Making sure smart lighting systems are protected from hackers

# Head for heights

Providing a wide choice of options for high level cleaning works well for PTSG



# A head for heights that's helping PTSG to clean-up

Solving the issue of exterior maintenance of buildings of all shapes and sizes

**T**he impressive architecture and height of many buildings, old and new, is creating increasing challenges for the specialists who are called upon to clean their exteriors. Premier Technical Services Group PLC (PTSG) employs a multi-pronged approach to ensure these projects are no tall order.

The specialist safety and access equipment needed to maintain hard-to-reach areas, along with the skills required to execute this work safely and properly, means that striking high-rise buildings can often be neglected. Interesting design features, such as intricate roofs and elevators made of glass, are constantly creating new challenges for high level cleaning teams, but avoiding these problems can lead to serious

structural damage.

Far from simply affecting a passer-by's opinion of a building, improper building maintenance can create further problems down the line, such as water ingress, infestation and contamination. This not only reduces the building's performance, affecting insulation, for example, but can also pose a serious health and safety risk to building users.

Regular cleaning and maintenance is a vital part of restoring, enhancing and protecting the exterior of any building, and though it can be much more difficult with these exposed, high-rise buildings, it is even more important.

This month, PTSG celebrates its tenth anniversary and today the company's high level cleaning division is a central

part of the Group's operation.

The organisation's team of highly trained professionals are regularly called upon to attend a wide variety of sites across the UK, covering airports, hotels, shopping centres, sporting venues, high-rise flats and office buildings and universities, among many others.

The high level cleaning division is able to clean all external parts of buildings, such as gutters, roofs, windows and brickwork, and achieves this by using a variety of access equipment, including rope access, building maintenance units (BMUs), mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs) and ladders.

The skills within the division naturally lend themselves to other specialist at-height work, and the team's capability

has extended far beyond just cleaning in recent years. They are regularly called upon to carry out important at height maintenance and conservation work, such as glass, steel and brick replacement, painting and refurbishment.

PTSG's success in providing high level cleaning services goes hand in hand with its commitment to a service that is safe, reliable and cost-effective. The Group's engineers receive extensive training and support, which allows them to carry out the same high quality work for every client, whether that involves working on a centuries-old historic monument, or one of the capital's most recognisable skyscrapers.

PTSG's expertise across so many disciplines is what allows it to provide such a cost-effective service, being able to call in its own teams to provide solutions to any problems faced, rather than having to rely on an external provider.

Something that makes PTSG

different is its ability to offer a bundled service provision. For example, its rope access teams can clean all aspects of a building's façade, as well as undertaking painting, where needed. In addition, there is the Group's core specialism in cradle installation and maintenance, as well as a full complement of electrical services. By calling on PTSG for all niche specialist services, customers can save considerable amounts of time, effort and money.

The Group is also renowned for having an outstanding safety record, and last year was awarded its fifth consecutive RoSPA award. When working at height, it is of the utmost importance that safety is at the forefront of the team's mind, to ensure not only their safety, but the safety of all building users. It is here that PTSG's motto comes into play: "if it can't be done safely, we don't do it".

### St. Paul's City Lofts

At a towering 330ft high, St. Paul's City Lofts is the tallest building in one of the UK's hilliest cities: Sheffield. Buffeted by high winds all year round, the building had become incredibly challenging to clean, especially using a Building Maintenance Unit (BMU) which can be too large and heavy to be used in such interchangeable weather conditions.

Past attempts to clean the development's tallest tower had faced incredible challenges, sometimes leaving residents with no tangible results. More than just a blight on the building's appearance, failing to keep windows clean can affect structural integrity, as glass is porous. This in turn negatively affects insulation, and means windows will have to be prematurely replaced.



### An innovative approach

In order to avoid making the BMU completely redundant, PTSG's engineers sought an innovative solution, which built on the existing facilities, rather than aiming to completely replace them.

By installing new anchor points and refitting the BMU's rail, PTSG's design team was able to transform it into an abseil rig, increasing the team's access options. Abseiling is one of the most efficient methods of access on tall buildings, and can be used even in fairly strong winds. It also allows the high level cleaning team to carry out their work to the high standard the Group's clients have come to expect, unimpeded by cumbersome equipment.

This approach is already paying off. Having completed the building's first full clean in a long time at the end of last year, PTSG's team will return this month to continue to deliver a service that shines. Having found

a solution to its growing cleaning problems, the site's facilities management team can now run a normal operation, carrying out full cleans at much more regular intervals.

### Collaboration

Over the last ten years, PTSG has built a reputation for delivering an outstanding service across several specialist disciplines, and when it comes to challenging projects like this one, a wide-ranging expertise is invaluable.

The ability of PTSG's four divisions to collaborate and share their skills and expertise gives the company a unique advantage, allowing its teams to approach their work from a very distinctive perspective, with a broad range of complementary skills across other group companies enabling them to deliver innovative solutions.

The Group's Access and Safety division was called in for the St. Paul's City Lofts contract to install over 90 abseil points to the parapet wall, allowing the high

level cleaning division to access difficult-to-reach areas, without being unsightly or getting in the way of the BMU's operations when it was required.

These abseil points will be useful for other maintenance services in the future too, when inspecting the building for wear and tear, or checking warranted items such as mastic joints.

With their many years of experience cleaning the nooks and crannies of some of the UK's most difficult-to-access buildings, PTSG's high level cleaning team has an unrivalled skillset when it comes to access.

For this reason, high level cleaning specialists are often called in to assist other areas of the Group, whether this is installing a lightning protection system to an old church spire, or helping to lift and position heavy safety equipment on the roof of a multi-storey building.

Many of the Group's clients make the most of this cross-disciplinary skill, contracting PTSG for multiple specialist services. This approach to delivering niche services has been at the heart of the organisation's provision since it was founded, aiming to provide the most cost-effective and comprehensive solution possible for its 15,000 clients across 150,000 assets across the world.

This has proven incredibly successful, with PTSG sustaining an impressive contract renewal rate, highlighting the success of this approach in providing the company's global client base with an unrivalled first-class service.

The first 10 years in PTSG's brief history have been very impressive, but with this incredibly innovative team caring for some of the UK's most challenging buildings, the future promises to be absolutely superb. ■