



NEWS RELEASE

The Microfibre Consortium and James Heal team up to present first public demonstration of fibre fragmentation test

London, October 2023 - The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) has teamed up with specialist test instrument manufacturer James Heal to hold the first public demonstration of a test method for fibre fragmentation from fabric. The event took place during the Textile Exchange Conference, when delegates embarked on a field trip to King's College, London, where they were shown the [TMC Test Method](#) in action, which utilises James Heal's Gyrowash to assist in measuring microfibres released from simulated domestic laundering.

The TMC Test Method was developed through a collaborative relationship between The University of Leeds, the European Outdoor Group and The Microfibre Consortium, as well as the larger stakeholder network, following many rounds of testing and validation within the industry.

PhD student Alice Hazlehurst, a researcher at The University of Leeds, who worked on an award-winning paper '[Quantification of microfibre release from textiles during domestic laundering](#)', published in January 2023, demonstrated the TMC Test Method for over 40 delegates who were keen to learn more about fibre fragmentation testing and measurement.

Fibre fragmentation refers to the process where small quantities of fibres, often referred to as microfibres, are lost from textiles at various stages of a product's lifecycle. Estimates suggest that between 6,490 tonnes to 87,165 tonnes of tiny fibres from natural and man-made textile sources, such as cotton and polyester, are released from UK domestic washing machines into the environment each year. These microfibres enter the environment through a number of pathways, such as through wastewater, soil and air.

Microfibres have a persistent nature and whilst their impacts are not yet fully understood, evidence is growing. Due to their shape and/or added chemicals, fibre fragments can cause harm when ingested by organisms, and have been found in humans. Academics from the IMPACT+ Network shared with delegates how the environmental impact of microfibres go under the radar as they are not currently considered in any life cycle assessments.



Created originally for testing colour fastness in laundering fabrics and leather, the James Heal GyroWash was used in controlled laboratory testing throughout the research that led to the final TMC Test Method. This instrument is used in textile testing laboratories worldwide.

In attendance at the event, James Heal technical textiles specialist Helen Warburton commented, “As a company focused on innovation, we are delighted that a James Heal instrument, in this case the GyroWash, continues to be used in this groundbreaking research. We hope it will make a difference in helping the textile industry to recognise and reduce their impact on environmental pollution through relevant testing.”

Dr Kelly Sheridan, research director of The Microfibre Consortium added, “It is fantastic to see so many delegates of Textile Exchange Conference 2023 actively engaged in the topic of fibre fragmentation. The Microfibre Consortium bridge the gap between academia and the industry. It is only through such science-led, industry aligned action that together we will be able to combat microfibre pollution to the environment.”

A short video summary of the event is now available to view [here](#).

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Media Contacts:

James Heal

Sarah Philp, Marketing Manager

Tel: 07512 302662

Email: sarah.philp@pptgroup.com

The Microfibre Consortium

Chris Lines, Right Lines Communications

Tel: +44 (0)7971 868329

Email: chris@rightlines.info



About James Heal / PPT Group:

Established in 1872, James Heal is renowned worldwide for delivering premium quality, reliable and innovative materials testing solutions. From its core manufacturing and commercial headquarters in the United Kingdom, James Heal specialises in the design and production of testing instruments and test materials (consumables) for textiles along with other materials, supported by industry-leading service and support.

At the core of the brand is the seamless interaction between high quality, precision, reproducibility and reliability combined with innovation, imagination and industry-leading technical expertise. This combination has resulted in James Heal becoming one of the most trusted and valued materials testing brands in the world.

James Heal designs its testing instruments with the users in mind, offering the most intuitive and innovative solutions in textile testing. The brand also works closely with some of the biggest names in the automotive, paper, wood, plastics and glass industries to develop first-rate materials testing solutions.

James Heal is part of the PPT Group. The PPT Group is a family of brands, expert in the design and production of solutions for testing a range of physical properties. For more information visit www.jamesheal.com www.pptgroup.com

About The Microfibre Consortium:

The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) is a research-led sustainable textiles NGO, working to convene the global textiles sector through [The Microfibre 2030 Commitment and Roadmap](#). It is the first and only organisation whole-heartedly focused on this topic and works on behalf of its signatories which comprises of brands and retailers, researchers and affiliated organisations. TMC's signatory base represents the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, amongst others. Its global remit ensures that the clothing industry delivering to a wide and diverse consumer base, can be consistent with its implementation of mitigation measures relating to unintentional fibre fragmentation and microfibre pollution (both synthetic and natural) through actions such as:

- developing root cause understanding and solutions
- driving an aligned commitment
- delivering sustained action and measurable impact.

Its work is managed by a dedicated UK based team that is led by founding director Sophie Mather.

The full list of TMC signatories to the Microfibre 2030 Commitment are listed at <https://www.microfibreconsortium.com/signatories>