

New HQ for Breathe Easy as start-up announces further expansion

Breathe Easy is delighted to announce it is opening a new Scottish headquarters in Edinburgh to cope with demand for its face masks.

The innovative face covering manufacturer will now be based in St John's Road, relocating from nearby Corstorphine High Street after securing a lease on a much larger facility.

The new premises measures 500 square metres over two levels and will house a team of tailors and seamstresses, the retail department and management staff all under the one roof. The previous facility measured 100 square metres.

The expansion comes after the business successfully applied to Scottish Enterprise's Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund (PERF).

The grant award of £50,000 from the Scottish Government will help with the ongoing development of ground-breaking lip-reading face masks, which have been a real boost to the deaf community amid the Covid-19 crisis.

The funding will also help accelerate production of quality face coverings for various sectors including care organisations, NHS trusts and the medical environment.

Having struck a partnership with a local supplier able to provide large quantities of high-quality medical grade 100%

supima cotton, Breathe Easy is focused on taking the product quality to the next level assisted by the exciting move to the new facility.

With production levels sitting at around 50,000 since the business began three months ago, owner Gavin McAdam is now looking to substantially increase volumes as demand continues to rise with face masks now mandatory in shops and on public transport in Scotland.

He said: "We have exciting times ahead of us as a growing organisation, everyone has worked extremely hard to make this happen.

"This move will not only give the design team dedicated space to develop our pipeline of new products but also provide much-needed visibility for the retail team with the premises being located in a prime spot on the very busy St John's Road.

"We are proud to be part of a recovering Scottish economy and are firmly looking to the future and want to build on our success to date."

Rodney Mountain is an ear, nose and throat consultant at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee and NHS Tayside's Lead for Healthcare Design and Innovation.

He has been working closely with Breathe Easy on the latest advances in face masks for the deaf community and said: "Face coverings are an essential part of the fight to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

"They do, however, make communication between people more difficult. People's voice volumes are reduced and become rather muffled. The face coverings also prevent the ability to lip read, an essential need for people who are hard of hearing.

"This is where the see-through face coverings can make a big

difference. They improve the way we communicate with each other, particularly with people who are disabled by a loss of hearing.”

Economy Secretary **Fiona Hyslop** praised Breathe Easy for its development of the face masks for lip-readers, saying: “This is an excellent example of a local business driving forward with a ground-breaking product and playing a key role helping keep people safe.”

Breathe Easy has been working with charities such as Deaf Action, National Deaf Children’s Society (Scotland), Steps To Hope, Visualise Scotland and Positive Pathways. Many charities in England have also been in touch enquiring about potential partnerships.

Philip Gerrard, CEO at Deaf Action, said: “We are pleased to see initiatives set up to provide clear masks to those who need them. Many deaf people rely on lipreading to communicate, and normal face coverings can create many barriers in everyday conversation.

“We’re now calling on the Scottish Government to commission clear masks for all and make these coverings available for use in medical settings and by members of the public as soon as possible.”

