

6<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## **Nelson Place enhances its Student Facilities with comprehensive high-performance flooring solutions from Gerflor**

The Nelson Place development, Belfast's largest purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), has specified Gerflor flooring for its iconic new build, that services the growing needs of Ulster University and Student Roost. This 774-bedroom prestigious project includes high-quality accommodation, with ground floor amenities elevated to incorporate a mezzanine level. These spaces also support a state-of-the-art 4-court sports hall, gym, fitness suite, and training facilities.

Central to the success of the project was the specification of 2,600 m<sup>2</sup> of flooring products supplied by international interiors specialists, Gerflor. The flooring solutions included PowerShock 300 rubber tiles and GTI Max Technical Tiles for the gym areas, Tarasafe Impression slip resistant safety flooring in the main reception and walkway, Tarasafe Ultra and Tarasafe Ultra H<sup>2</sup>O slip resistant safety vinyl flooring for the changing rooms and WC's, alongside their world-renowned Olympic pedigree Taraflex<sup>®</sup> sports flooring for the main sports hall. These products were chosen for their world class durability, safety, and superior performance in high-traffic environments.

The sports hall at Nelson Place featuring Gerflor's Taraflex<sup>®</sup> sports indoor vinyl flooring, is known for its use in Olympic and other international and national sporting and leisure venues. It was carefully selected for its outstanding shock absorption properties and high slip resistance performance. It was also specified because of its outstanding safety, comfort and performance for both the casual users and competitive athletes that utilise the facilities, making it a standout and natural choice for this multipurpose recreational space.

Gerflor's PowerShock 300 rubber tile flooring, installed in the gym, delivers exceptional impact resistance and acoustic performance, making it ideal for heavy-duty fitness environments. Complementing this was the GTI Max collection, used across the key training areas for its exceptional durability and resistance to wear in high-traffic locations. These combined robust solutions aligned perfectly with the facility's demanding requirements for long-term performance and ease of maintenance.

In the wet and dry areas, such as the changing rooms and WC's, the Tarasafe Ultra H<sup>2</sup>O and Tarasafe Ultra vinyl safety flooring was installed as it offered key users exceptional slip resistance, whilst also meeting HSE guidelines for these critical areas. In the reception and walkway areas, Tarasafe Impression safety vinyl was installed, carefully selected for its striking design and outstanding slip resistance.

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Maggie Smith, Scotland Team Leader and Specification Manager for Gerflor, commented, “The Nelson Place project has been two years in the making between myself and Wayne Andrews - Sports Key Account Manager - North. The client had only known and experienced timber sprung sports flooring in the past and this was an excellent opportunity to show what our world class Taraflex sports flooring can achieve. Offering, not only high levels of shock absorption but also instant impact protection which timber floors can’t achieve. Wayne visited Belfast to show the client around another facility where Taraflex had been installed. The client was impressed and wanted an Olympic pedigree indoor surface that could deliver first class performance for all Users, regardless of their age and sporting ability.”

Wayne Andrews also highlighted the close collaboration with Fletcher Joseph Architects in delivering a comprehensive flooring solution. He commented “The decision to use Taraflex sports vinyl was driven by the need for easy maintenance, remarkable safety and cushioning for users, and long-term durability and performance, the flooring’s robust qualities aligned perfectly with the project’s high standards.”

Fletcher Joseph Architects, known for their innovative and sustainable designs, contributed their expertise to delivering the project. Sandy Deans, Senior Associate at Fletcher Joseph, commented that the growing student population in north Belfast created a demand for high-quality amenities. The challenge was to design facilities that catered to students' needs, while adhering to a proven development model.

Remarking on the specification of the Gerflor Taraflex® sports flooring Sandy Deans said, “Gerflor have an established track record of supplying world class competition ready sports flooring solutions in the world’s best sporting venues. Where users from Ulster University may be training for competitions, Gerflor were a clear fit in terms of meeting the aspirations of the client and to the benefit of the end users.”

Sandy Deans further added, “In terms of construction this modern sports flooring solution avoided the requirement to integrate a traditional timber floor. This rationalised the slab design, reducing the depth of concrete and digging required and the overall material to be taken offsite for disposal. This also made way for improved thermal continuity below the slab and overall building performance.”

The design approach, influenced by post-pandemic considerations, focused on creating spaces that foster social interaction. This was achieved through three core themes: awareness, flexibility, and participation, which shaped the layout and visual connections between activity zones, including the 690 m<sup>2</sup> games hall, wellness room, physio suite, and social areas.

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Sandy Deans further commented “The Gerflor products have been well received by the client team and the end users. Multiple sporting groups have praised the comfort of the flooring in the main sports hall, while others have commented on the finishes in the gym and multi-use areas. The overall quality and finish of these hardworking spaces enables a range of sporting, exercise and leisure activities and provides practical robustness, whilst future proofing the facility for many years to come.”

Wayne Andrews highlighted further “This remarkable project provided a unique opportunity to showcase a wide range of innovative flooring solutions. All the Gerflor products installed have exceeded expectations in terms of performance and aesthetics. Nelson Place has not only delivered excellent student accommodation but has also contributed to regenerating a brownfield site near Belfast’s Cathedral Quarter.”

Maggie Smith concluded, “The successful incorporation of our Taraflex sports vinyl flooring has opened doors for further opportunities for Gerflor. Residents at Nelson Place benefit from outstanding sports facilities, adding tremendous value to their living experience, whilst Ulster University’s clubs and societies make full use of these versatile recreational spaces.”

Each occupant at Nelson Place enjoys access to the sports facilities, offering exceptional value for money as part of their residency. Ulster University’s over 75 clubs, with their diverse range of requirements, are all able to also benefit from this multipurpose facility.

Sandy Deans finally concluded, “We would recommend Gerflor innovations in such settings again in the future for other key projects. The products offered, and the assistance from Maggie and Wayne at Gerflor, has been excellent. The overall project has exceeded our expectations, especially in terms of the quality of the floor finishes within the recreational facilities, which have been instrumental in the success of the project.”

## **Supporting Information**

### **Gerflor Company Overview**

Gerflor manufactures a comprehensive range of interior flooring solutions tailored for Universities, Colleges, and Student Accommodation, this includes vinyl, linoleum, carpets, and rubber. Their innovative products create both functional and visually appealing environments, ensuring safety, comfort, and long-term performance in high-traffic areas. Gerflor’s flooring is engineered to withstand heavy use while reducing maintenance costs, making it ideal for high traffic sports facilities for students. By working closely with the sport and education sectors and residential developers, Gerflor ensures that its solutions meet the highest standards of safety, hygiene, and accessibility for students and athletes alike.

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## Gerflor products specified for Nelson Place

### Taraflex® Indoor Sports Surfaces

The Taraflex indoor sports vinyls are suitable for a wide range of sports, offering excellent friction, preventing slips, and minimise injury should a user fall. Available in a range of surface options, it provides superior shock absorption and optimal safety. Featuring advanced D-Max™ and CXP™HD foam technology, these innovative surfaces are highly durable. The collections are compliant with EN 14904, meeting the standards for safe indoor sports floors, reducing injury risks and delivering long-term performance.

Used in every Olympic Games since 1976, Taraflex® is widely recognised by sports bodies and installed in schools, universities, colleges, community centres, fitness facilities, and more. These world class surfaces are cost-effective to maintain and ideal for both new build and refurbishment projects. Available in 21 colours, including 4 wood-effect designs, and require no polishing due to its ProtecSol® surface treatment.

### Powershock 300 Rubber Tiles

Powershock 300 tiles is a hardwearing, high-impact rubber flooring ideal for free weight and heavy weight areas in gyms and other areas within a leisure facility. The 30mm thick tiles offer 5 times more resistance to indentation compared to standard rubber flooring and are also extremely easy to clean and maintain. Pre-installed connector pins ensure simple and fast and easy installation, while the vulcanised rubber construction provides remarkable strength and outstanding durability. Powershock 300 is non-porous, odourless, and delivers excellent shock absorption and sound insulation (26dB). It protects subfloors and is perfect for high-performance gyms and leisure spaces where durability is essential.

### GTI Max Technical Tiles

The GTI Max collections provide a fast renovation solution and can be installed over many different types of existing floorcoverings, with minimal subfloor preparation. As well as requiring no adhesives there is no disruption on site and there is no need to close the establishment saving time and money for refurbishments. These ultimate technical tiles come with a PUR+ polyurethane surface treatment for ease of maintenance and specifiers and designers can also benefit from mixing and matching colours to create corners and walkways using its modular tile format. These dovetail interlocking tiles are perfect for when a fast loose lay installation is required, and are highly durable, one of the best in the marketplace and especially suitable for locations where there is high traffic footfall.

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## Tarasafe Impression Safety Flooring

Tarasafe Impression is a slip-resistant sheet flooring range that meets HSE guidelines, available in Safety in Wood and Safety in Mineral collections. Designed for demanding environments, it is suitable for a wide range of contract applications, including healthcare, education, retail, offices, and public spaces. This decorative vinyl flooring comes in 20 design-led colours and features a UV-cured ProtecSol® Control surface, ensuring easy cleaning and maintenance. With HSE 36+ slip resistance, an R11 wet slip rating, and >20 Rtm/Rz surface roughness, it's ideal for high-traffic areas. Available in 2m sheets with a group T wear rating, it also includes a 12-year warranty.

## Tarasafe Ultra and Tarasafe Ultra H2O Flooring

The Tarasafe Ultra and Ultra H<sup>2</sup>O vinyl collections are a range of slip resistant sheet floorings that meets HSE guidelines. They are constructed from vinyl with deeply inlaid mineral crystal particles (patent pending) and coloured chips for a decorative design. Contains no Carborundum.

Tarasafe Ultra comes with SparClean® surface treatment and is reinforced with a glass fibre grid and is suitable for use in all areas of heavy traffic where slip-resistance, durability and hygienic conditions are required. It is also treated with an anti-bacterial and fungicidal treatment. This product comes with a 12-year warranty and is 100% recyclable, when the product is at the end of its' life. Contain 29% recycled content.

Tarasafe Ultra H<sup>2</sup>O is a high performance, slip resistant, safety flooring for wet and dry, barefoot and shod applications. This enhanced slip resistant safety vinyl floor covering has a raised emboss and is designed for applications where there are continuous wet areas. It provides exceptional barefoot comfort and is an ideal solution for wet rooms, showers and changing rooms. It has a 12-year warranty and is 100% recyclable.

**Learn more about Gerflor solutions**, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01625 428 922, emailing [contractuk@gerflor.com](mailto:contractuk@gerflor.com), or visiting [gerflor.co.uk](http://gerflor.co.uk) for the latest flooring innovations.

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