

Spirax Sarco EasiHeats save space and reduce maintenance for Murex Biotech

A single EasiHeat™ Engineered System from Spirax Sarco has replaced two bulky shell-and-tube heat exchangers at Murex Biotech's site in Dartford. The change has delivered reduced maintenance and more space in the plant room.

Murex Biotech is a subsidiary of Chicago-based Abbott Laboratories and produces diagnostic tests designed to protect the blood supply from infectious agents. The new EasiHeat system uses plant steam to produce on-demand domestic hot water for sinks and showers throughout the Dartford site.

"The two shell-and-tube heat exchangers were 25 years old and were starting to develop leaks," says Murex Biotech's Engineering Facilities Manager, Peter Phillips. "They also took up a lot of space and were difficult to maintain."

In addition, the old exchangers suffered periodically from a build up of scale and had to be completely stripped down for insurance inspections every other year. The steam-to-hot water plate heat exchanger at the heart of the EasiHeat system presents no such problems.

"We initially thought we needed to buy two EasiHeats. But after talking to Spirax Sarco, we decided that this unit is robust enough and sufficiently easy to maintain for us to rely on just one," says Mr. Phillips. "That made it a very cost-effective option."

The company purchased a spare set of heat exchanger plates and gaskets at the same time as the EasiHeat system itself. This means that in the unlikely event of a leak or blockage occurring within the exchanger, engineers should be able to fix the problem and have the unit up and running again within an hour. However, there hasn't been a single problem with the EasiHeat unit since it was installed almost a year ago.

EasiHeat systems are supplied preconfigured and skid-mounted. The optimised layout of the skid means the EasiHeat system only uses 1.2m³ of space. "The two old heat exchangers took up a major portion of the plant room and that space has now been freed up," says Mr. Phillips.

Opting for a factory-assembled, modular system also helps to ensure that installation and commissioning run smoothly. "The installation was very straightforward. We installed some pipe work ahead of time, but the actual changeover took only one day," he says. "Spirax Sarco also carried out the commissioning in that time."