

Designing Washroom Dispensers for Mental Health
A CASE STUDY



Mental health issues are unfortunately on the increase in the UK, it is estimated that one in four of us will be affected by a mental health problem at some point in our lives. It is well documented that significantly more investment in mental health services is needed urgently, but for those facilities already providing care, ensuring a safe environment is vital.

Having a deep understanding of the needs and pressures on of these facilities, through years working as a NHS Manager of Estate, was what led industry expert Carl Need to set up the Anti-Ligature Shop (ALS).

Healthcare estates need to provide a safe and ligature free environment but there was no one-stop shop that could provide the products as well as the expertise and guidance, and so The Anti-ligature shop was established in 2012. Since then, the company has continually worked to understand the different environments and the changing needs of patients and staff. Since launch they have developed and widened their product offering and extended their range of services to also include fitting, providing total peace of mind to the care provider.



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anti-ligature
shop ltd.

What is an Anti-Ligature environment?

Mental health issues cause extreme emotional distress, which may lead to those suffering hurting themselves or worse, attempts to end their lives. It is vital that they live in an environment that works to protect them and keep them safe. Creating a ligature free living space requires everyday objects to be viewed differently. From beds and wardrobes to hand rails and hinges, any potential to attach a cord, rope, clothing or bedsheet with the purpose of causing harm needs to be removed.

Many anti-ligature fittings work on a load release system, often by a short magnetic force whereby any abnormal pressure applied simply forces the magnets apart and the two elements separate. This concept doesn't cause any damage to the décor and staff can quickly re-fix the item.

However, within the washroom environment Carl identified that load release was not a viable solution as once the item was released it could then itself be used for self-harm or as a weapon.

Working with Dudley Industries Ltd

The relationship between ALS and Dudley Industries Ltd (DI) was established through a mutual customer who had the same needs.

With a concept in mind it became clear to Carl that DI had the expertise, capability and quality standards to realise it and help bring his idea to market.

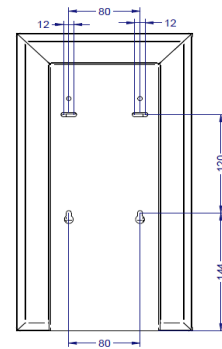
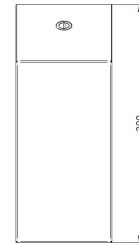


The Concept:

It is vitally important that mental health facilities provide a home from home environment for their patients. This extends into the washroom facilities too. With the luxury of a boutique hotel in mind Carl was clear on the final look and feel he wanted to achieve with this new washroom dispenser range.

The other elements that required consideration in the design were ligature points, robust construction, anti-tamper, lockable and with options for different finishes. It was clear that creating the products in metal was the correct approach.

The final concept was a dispenser that worked in-conjunction with a back plate for additional security. The design was initially applied to a soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser and then leading on to a complete range of washroom dispensers.



The process:



Designing, prototyping and refining the design was a vital but lengthy process to ensure every intricacy of the design, installation process and how the unit operates in use was considered and tested.

Using specialist testing equipment housed at the ALS workshop every stage and concept was thoroughly tested until the team had full confidence in the product, only then would it be signed off.

The learning curve:

Inevitably a process such as this is a learning curve; for Carl it was understanding the consumable element of the dispensers and the number of alternatives available and the difference tolerances between them all.

For the DI team it was understanding the intricacies of creating an anti-Ligature range and how the tiniest adaptations to a design can have a significant impact.

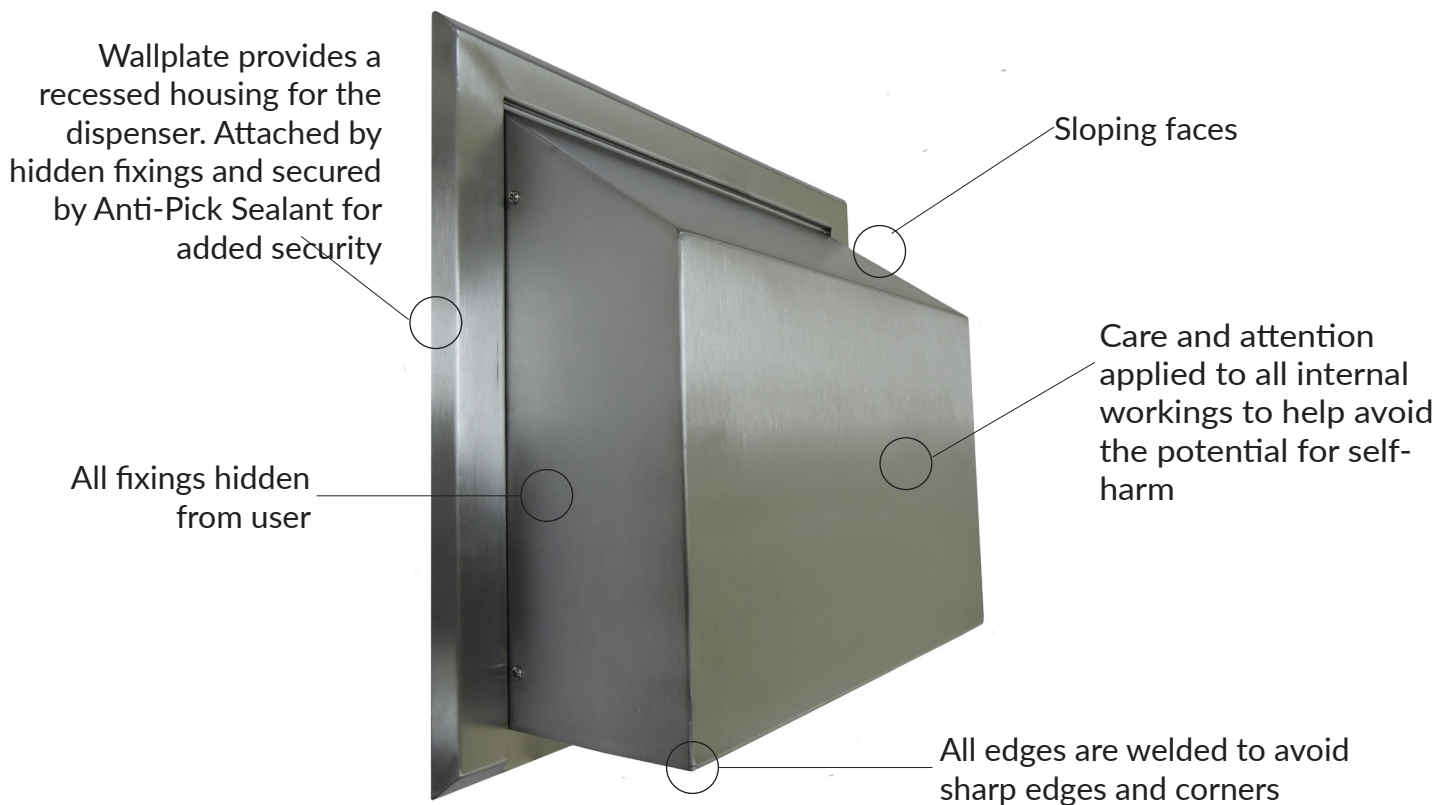
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The product range:

The Anti-Ligature Shop is now proud to provide their unique range of stainless steel washroom dispensers. The range includes

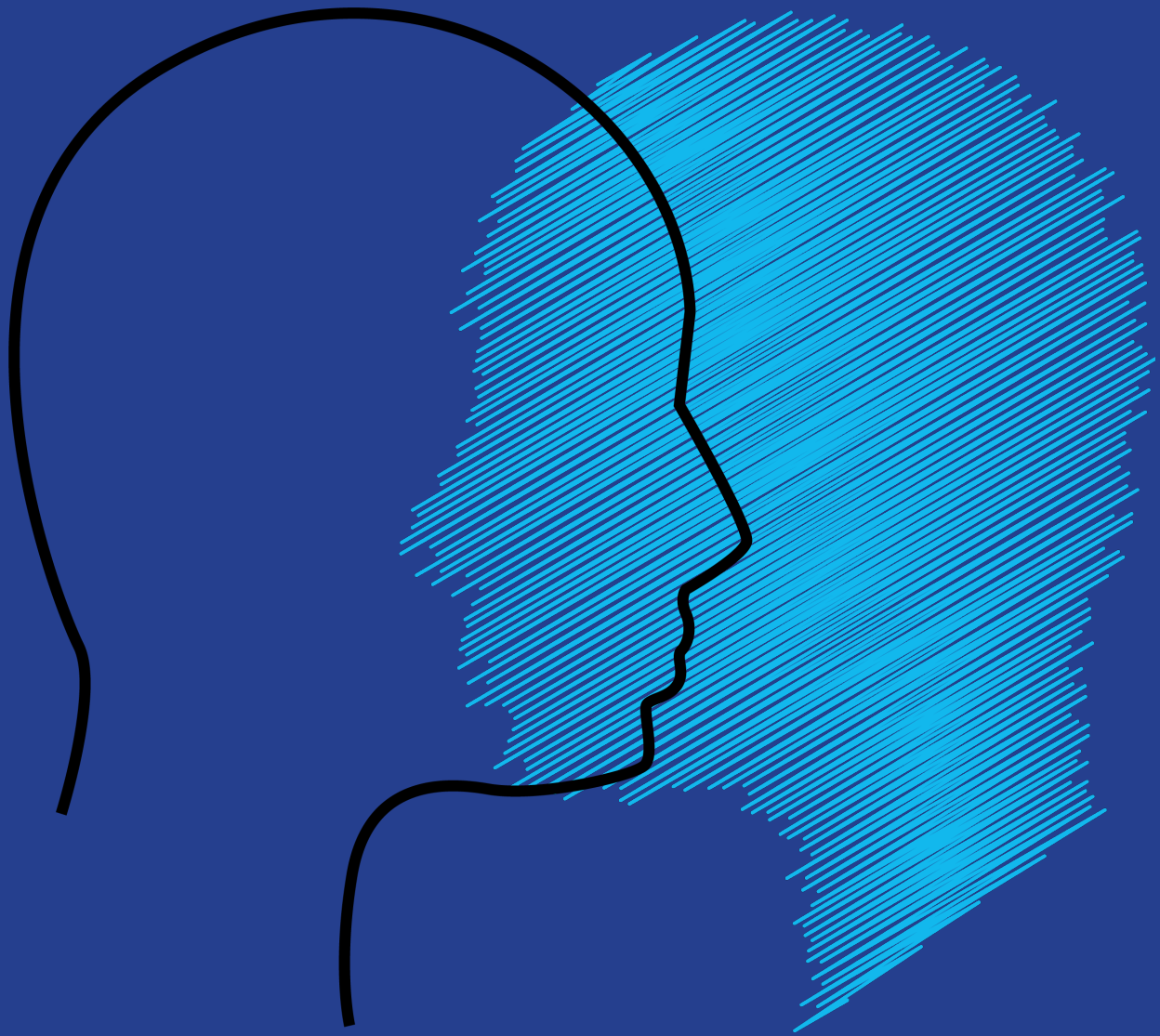
- 1L Manual Soap Dispenser
- 1L Auto Soap Dispenser
- Paper Towel Dispenser - C/Multifold
- Toilet Roll Holder - Jumbo
- Toilet Tissue Dispenser - Multiflat
- Mirror

All manufactured from the finest grade stainless steel with stylish brushed finish.



The future

Designing for the mental health environment is an on-going process as demands change and facilities adapt. The team at ALS are constantly reviewing their product range to ensure they always provide the right products for the right environment. Following the success of this initial range they are confident that this range will grow and develop.



The Anti Ligature Shop

Formed in 2012 to provide a one stop shop for products and guidance for mental health facilities. Their customer base consists of the NHS and private mental health care environments serving learning disabilities, child & adolescent services, addictions and forensic services including prisons and remand services. The online shop can be accessed at:

www.anti-ligature-shop.co.uk

Dudley Industries Ltd

Established in 1942 Dudley Industries are experts in sheet metal engineering specialising in high quality washroom dispensers. All products are designed and manufactured in-house to the highest standards and they are proud to offer quality, style and reliability.

www.dudleyindustries.com