

Spinks secures funding to bring innovative spring technology to rail seating

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Spinks, a spring manufacturer and components supplier to the mattress and furniture industry, has secured a £250,000 research contract to bring its revolutionary EcoSeat™ spring technology to UK rail seating.

The research contract is being awarded by the Department for Transport and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, through the 'First of a Kind' (FOAK) 2023 funded research competition, and will be used to bring Spinks' innovative pocket spring technology to the railway industry with the aim of improving overall passenger comfort and experience.

The research contract demonstrates the British manufacturer's ability to provide innovation and cost-saving solutions which will help deliver new 100 percent recyclable rail seating that incorporates its patented glue-free pocket springs – a key component within mattress production for Spinks' parent company, luxury mattress manufacturer, Harrison Spinks.

Commercial partner in the project, Quantum Seating – a Coventry-based rail seat manufacturer – will bring a wealth of knowledge to the development of longer lasting and 100 percent recyclable rail seats made

using Spinks' EcoSeat™ microcoils, plus integrating hemp, which is grown on the company's 300-acre farm in Yorkshire. The seats aim to be the most comfortable and sustainable rail seat and will be part of an existing Quantum Seating aluminium frame along with seat covers made with high wool content. With flammability standards difficult to meet with conventional foams, flame retardants and fire barriers are normally added to the seat construction, however this is not necessary with EcoSeat™.

Spinks and Quantum Seating are also collaborating with Angel Trains, which operates over 4,000 trains and represents more than one-third of the UK's passenger rolling stock, specialising in innovative and sustainable rail vehicles. The project plans to integrate the innovative seating into new trains for a range of UK rail travel providers.

Darren Marcangelo, Managing Director at Spinks, said: "We're honoured to have been awarded this funding from Innovate UK and feel it's a significant milestone for the future of rail travel. Passengers will soon be able to travel on comfortable seating that's been made here in the UK with safe, quality components, and manufactured with the environment in mind.

"The project is in addition to the recent automotive seating research contract for Spinks, working with a number of electric vehicle manufacturers to integrate microcoils into automotive seating. This new research contract solidifies our position within the transportation sector as we help these industries further reach their sustainability goals.

"We're also proud to be partnering with Quantum Seating and Angel Trains on this ground-breaking project. Working together, we will provide rail seating which is comfortable, safer and circular, with longer operational life, helping to improve rail travel here in the UK and hopefully around the world."

Simon Millward, Managing Director of Quantum Seating, commented: "Improving seat comfort and environmental sustainability are two important factors that drive the engineering of our products and integrating the Spinks' EcoSeat™ microcoils will help us achieve these goals. An added benefit will be to reduce the overall weight of our class-leading products which will also give environmental benefits to our customers. We look forward to developing this exciting new seat in conjunction with Spinks."

This project is funded by the Department for Transport through the First of a Kind 2023 competition, delivered by Innovate UK.

For more information on Spinks please visit <https://www.spinks.co.uk/>.

Photo credit: Spinks