'World class' factory will shortly be fully operational

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A multi-million pound Plymouth factory will be fully operational by the end of next month and home to 130 staff.

HellermannTyton's new "world class" base at Derriford is now finished after an 11-month build.

Production has already started at the site but the international company – which makes insulation, protection and labels for electronic cabling in ships, planes, trains, cars, buildings and white goods – still has to move the bulk of its staff and equipment from its current Pennycross site.

"The next two months are key, that everything moves smoothly," said Steve Salmon, chief executive of the HellermannTyton Group, who visited the site yesterday. "It's a project we set out on more than two years ago and we are nearly there."

Office workers are due to start moving in on September 7 with everything else in place within weeks under a move masterminded by Plymouth-based site logistics manager Mike Stevens and site director Tim Mathias.

"We don't want to interrupt any supply," said managing director Tim Evans, who stressed the "world class" plant would also be key for impressing customers.

HellermannTyton – which has 34 sites worldwide including Germany, France, the US and Japan – is moving its Plymouth operation from its Pennycross building, which was purpose built in 1978 but is no longer suitable for the firm's uses, to a 48,000sq ft plant on the International Medical and Technology Park.

The building contains production space, offices, warehousing, shipping docks, a canteen, and research and development labs where new products can be worked on.

The exact cost of the building is not being revealed but the firm has benefited from a £1 million grant from the South West Regional Development Agency, some of which has already been paid.

Parent company Doughty Hanson – which acquired HellermannTyton in 2005 – funded the rest of the development as part of £100 million it has invested in the past five years across its 34 international sites.

HellermannTyton was due to formally complete the purchase of the Derriford site this week, and said that beside investment in the building it is also putting new machinery in too – one piece of new equipment alone cost £500,000.

The base was intended to house 108 staff, but 130 will work there due to a recent increase in workforce.

Mr Salmon said that due to the technological nature of the work carried out the workforce will only see "modest increases in time".

But he said the research capabilities facilitated by being at the site is a "key area for the group".

"All the time it's advancing the production range," he said. "It's product development, looking at what customers need."

And there is space for expansion if it is needed.

The building is also designed to be energy efficient.

Its roof contains about 700 solar panels.

This article previously appeared on the 'thisisplymouth' website