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Here to help...

Whether you're a new fabricator just getting started or a well-established fabrication operation, choosing a new or alternative PVCu systems company isn't an easy decision. There are several factors you have to take into consideration – but before you begin your research, it's important to ask yourself a few questions.

If you're changing your profile supplier, ask yourself why you're changing and what you want from the next extrusion company you pair with. If you're just setting up, ask yourself what you'd like to achieve out of a partnership with your systems company.

Fast fabrication? Consistent quality? Reliable service? Excellent support? A long-term partnership? All of the above?

This guide is intended to be used as a checklist to help you with the decision-making process, and hopefully help to make the choice a little easier.

Is the systems company strong, and has it invested regularly over the years to support customer service?

All the features of an industry-leading systems company are controlled by one major business focus: investment. Without a comprehensive focus on investment, a systems company can't continue to provide world-class customer support, marketing materials, superb service and consistently excellent quality products.

With regular high investment in machinery, plant, people, product development and research, and on the business as a whole, your systems company is more likely to be stable and with you for the long haul.

Liniar receives annual investment of approximately £10m per year from its parent Quanex, all of which goes into product design, the latest efficient machinery, people, innovation, plant, sustainability and methodology. For more information on the results of investment at Liniar throughout the years, visit www.liniar.co.uk/about/history.

SEK

SUPPORT

SOL UTION

Does the systems company have a clear focus on sustainability?

Sustainability is all about 'doing the right thing', for the planet and for the local environment. The public is much more educated now than ever before about the impact the products they buy have on the environment.

Does your systems company have a zero operational wastage record? What is its scrap rate and where does that scrap go? Are they ISO14001 accredited? All these things are important – because your customers will be asking about the sustainability of the products you fabricate (and if you're an installer, the ones you're fitting in customers' homes).

Liniar's had a zero operational wastage record for more than three decades. With an on-site recycling facility which turns all scrap into new fully or partially recycled outdoor products and an underground water recycling facility, the manufacturing process leaves nothing to waste. Accredited with ISO14001 in 2018, Liniar is the **ONLY** systems company to use lead-free PVCu in its windows from the start - ensuring no matter their age, Liniar windows can be recycled safely.

Does the systems company invest in stock - keeping more products on the shelf for you?

A reliable chain of supply is essential for a fabricator to be efficient and profitable – and keeping more products on the shelf in our 178,000 ft² warehouse means increased reliability for you.

Ensuring your potential systems company retains an extensive investment in stock for fast delivery, as well as a stable supply of raw materials and bought in goods, means that even throughout any turmoil – including Brexit – your operations won't be affected by lack of stock or delayed deliveries.

Liniar boasts multi-million pound investment into raw materials, finished goods and stock to ensure that we can satisfy all commitments to customers, provide consistent on time, in full deliveries and work with the entire supply chain to plan for every eventuality. As an example, you can read more about our Brexit preparations at www.liniar.co.uk/brexit.



Does the systems company have an in-house foiling and lamination department?

An in-house foiling department allows a systems company to provide shorter lead times for a wide range of coloured profiles, whilst ensuring the quality of the foiling finish itself and reacting quickly to any potential customer quality issues.

If they do have an in-house foiling department, ask whether they invest in efficient and top of the line machinery, what their waste records are on primer and how efficient their foiling operations are. With sustainability at the forefront of many minds, including consumers, it's important that the lamination process is as environmentally friendly as possible.

Liniar has an extensive foiling department which invests in industry-leading machinery that's fast and efficient. With new machinery which produces more foiled profile, using only the exact amount of primer for less waste and lower energy costs, Liniar's foiling operation continually reduces its carbon footprint while putting more coloured, foiled products into stock for its fabricators.

Does the systems company have a motivated team to support its customers?

When it comes to building a successful fabrication operation, the support of your systems house is invaluable. It can provide everything from technical fabrication details and support to making sure you receive your deliveries on time.

Taking this even further, a great systems company will allow you to use its facilities with your own customers and even train your sales team for better results. They will also listen to your suggestions and work to make sure products are easy for you to fabricate and sell to your customers.

At Liniar, customer support doesn't stop at your sales representative – you'll get to meet team members from every part of the business. This includes drivers who consistently receive excellent reviews from fabricators for going above and beyond, designers providing technical information and calculations, technical experts helping to advise and plan your optimum factory layout and many more.

Does the systems company work hand in hand with a machinery company?

Especially important when you are just starting out as a fabricator, but also for those wishing to grow and streamline their operations, a systems company working with a machinery company can get you set up quickly and help ensure your fabrication operation is as efficient as possible.

Tooling and software needs, planning and expertise all come into play - not only affecting the timescales but also the products you fabricate... if they don't work hand in hand, you may find the fabrication process is not as efficient as it could otherwise have been.

Liniar and its sister company Avantek Machinery work seamlessly together to provide customers with world-class service. This includes helping to plan the layout of your factory, training employees on how to use the equipment and collaborating on new product development. With short lead times on speciality machinery, often available from stock, Avantek and Liniar can get a new fabricator up and running within weeks, instead of several months.



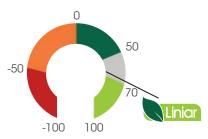




What do the systems company's current customers say about them?

The internet has made it very easy to find out how a company is performing – but it isn't the only way. It's important to ask potential systems companies whether they've recently carried out a customer satisfaction survey – and if so, what the latest result is.

A simple survey can generate a Net Promoter Score (NPS), measuring customer experience on a scale of -100 to +100, and providing an overall perception of a brand, based on one simple question... 'On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this company to your family and friends?' Scores of above 0 are considered Good, above +50 Excellent and above +70 World Class.



Liniar sent out a survey in 2019 to all its customers, and the result was fantastic - the NPS was an excellent +69, one point short of 'world class'. The results of the survey allowed Liniar to learn many things and to tweak elements to make it even better. One takeaway from the survey which tells us we're on the right track: 93% of Liniar fabricators said the company is easy to work with.



Can the systems company demonstrate its daily 'On Time, In Full' delivery status?

The ability of your systems company to deliver the products you need, on the day you need them, is crucial. Without a reliable profile source, your business is affected and you risk letting down your own customers.

Ask to see systems companies' daily delivery statistics over a specific period of time so you can assess whether they offer a reliable service. You could also ask their existing customers how they find dealing with them.

Liniar boasts a 99% On Time, In Full delivery record and can provide statistics on all deliveries to back this up. Investment in stock means products are on the shelf when you need them, and Liniar's own vehicle fleet delivers from its base in Derbyshire to fabricators throughout the UK and Ireland. The logistics teams work tirelessly to ensure deliveries are on time and in full, every time.

Does the systems company put you, the customer, first?

Putting the customer first should be a cornerstone of any successful business. But how many times do we hear this phrase during the 'courtship phase', only to discover it's not actually true once we start doing business?

Look at the systems company's customer service evidence, including ease of ordering and availability of stock, providing customers with what they need, when they need it and offering world class support with products – all of which are essential to the success of any fabricator.

Part of Liniar's ethos is 'doing the right thing' and that includes putting the customer first. All products are designed with the fabricator and installer in mind, Liniar invests in stock to ensure there's plenty on the shelf, creates new, innovative products on a regular basis and provides comprehensive technical and marketing support along the way.



Does the systems company have a culture of swift decision making?

Working through red tape and waiting for months is the last thing fabricators need when trying to get answers to their queries. A complicated organisation structure can hinder even the smallest of questions being answered, adversely affecting your operations.

Ask potential systems companies what kind of structure their business has and what their decision-making process is – often, a complex structure has arisen due to the historical growth of the company, and many management layers can mean unwanted delays.

Llniar has a flat structure with an ethos of putting the customer first. This allows the senior management team to make and communicate decisions quickly, without the double and triple checks of a more bureaucratic structure. Liniar recognises the need to be proactive and make decisions when they are effective, making life easier for its customers.

Will you have the ability to order online 24/7?

Fabricators are busy people, who often don't have the time to sit down, fill out forms and fax them over to their systems company during office hours. Online ordering is key for flexibility, giving you the power to add items when it's convenient to you, on any mobile device, all year round.

Ask your systems house not only if you'll be able to order stocked products online but also whether you can order special 'made-to-order' items, view and download previous orders, delivery notes and invoices, all within a user-friendly application.

In 2019, Liniar launched its **LiniarConnect** service, which brings online shopping to fabricators. Customers have their own secure hub to see previous orders, order by favourites, item codes or descriptions and even order 'made-to-order' products. With several levels of access, it's easy to use, and you can keep adding to your basket throughout the week before checking out.



Are you receiving tender opportunities for commercial and new build projects?

The UK's housebuilders and developers create product specifications for the glazed products they purchase for their sites. In order to be included on these, some systems companies liaise directly with the procurement teams, and as a result receive tenders for sites all over the UK.

If you supply into the new build or refurbishment sectors, whether fabricating only or installing too, you could be receiving a stream of tender opportunities from your systems company.

Liniar has a dedicated commercial focus, developing relationships with the UK's major housebuilders, developers and architects to ensure Liniar products are specified. You could be included on tenders received by Liniar for the areas you cover, giving you leads in this sector.





Has the systems company developed award-winning products at the highest level?

Awards may not seem like an important focus when choosing a systems company, but winning product-specific awards denotes innovation and investment in product development – which means industry-leading products for you to offer to your customers.

An award-winning company often has other benefits, including longevity, sustainability and manufacturing excellence, so look for these logos when selecting a systems company.



Liniar has won a multitude of awards since its inception – in 2017, gaining the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation for the ModLokTM technology in its unique bi-folding doors, as well as New Product of the Year at the National Fenestration Awards for Resurgence, the UK's first PVCu double rebated flush sash window. See more at www.liniar.co.uk/awards.

Does the systems company provide a full product range, allowing you to offer more choice to your customers?

A great systems house will not only provide not only a full matching suite of windows, doors and conservatories, fascia, soffits and cladding, but will also offer innovative outdoor products such as decking, fencing and piling.

These add-on products allow fabricators and fitters to offer their customers added extras – with a single point of guarantee. Why worry about sourcing products from different suppliers – risking a mismatched installation?

By listening to customer feedback and designing products based on market demand, Liniar boasts one of the largest bespoke ranges in the industry, and it's solely available to Liniar customers. Not only that, installers and consumers benefit from a single point of supply and guarantee, streamlining the purchase decision. View the full Liniar range at www.liniar.co.uk.

Can the systems company offer an increasingly growing range of colours?

The days of offering only white PVCu windows are long gone. A systems company with a diverse range of available colours and finishes off the shelf means you can offer a wider range of choice to your customers.

And an in-house, well-equipped and efficient lamination facility allows rapid response times for 'made to order' products, ensuring fabricators can offer their customers products which suit their own individual homes and tastes.

Liniar has an extensive lamination facility with stock of foils in a wide variety of colours and finishes. New colours are added to the range as their popularity grows, and customers always have the ability to offer practically any colour on a made-to-order basis, most of which are available within a 5-day lead time (additional charges may apply).

Are all products designed with all levels of customer in mind?

If fabricators and installers' needs aren't taken into account when designing new products, the finished result is unlikely to fulfil all of their requirements. Similarly, products have to appeal to the end user, be it developer or homeowner, in order to be successful.

Ask your systems company if they collaborate with fabricators, installers and machinery companies in order to not only make products easier to manufacture and install, but also to make them more aesthetically pleasing, thermally efficient and better for the environment.

Fitters and fabricators are the foundation of Liniar's business, which is why all products are designed to make their lives easier. From Liniar's patented 'Glazing Stop' which prevents glass slippage when glazing roofs, to a collaboration to create the UK's first PVCu double-rebate flush sash window, Resurgence, all products are simple to manufacture and to fit.

Are you able to offer a fully matching outdoor range to your customers?

By offering more than a range of windows, doors and conservatories, systems houses can also give you the opportunity to differentiate yourself from other companies by offering a full range of matching products.

Installers are able to cross-sell products such as decking to homeowners when quoting for a conservatory, providing them with a complete solution to their home improvement needs. For a homeowner it means less disruption and a single point of guarantee – and could make the difference in winning a job and improving your overall sales growth.

Liniar's outdoor range includes PVCu and composite decking and fencing, as well as fully recycled piling and retention. These ranges come in a wide variety of colours and the decking balustrades can even be foiled to match windows. Durable, low maintenance and available in made-to-order kits, the Liniar outdoor range is a simple, cost effective add-on for your business.



How many patents and Registered Designs does the systems company hold?

Like product-specific awards, holding patents and Registered Designs indicates that a systems company is forward-thinking, innovative and has made comprehensive investments in product development.

It also puts products using those Registered Designs and patents in a category of exclusivity – giving fabricators who can offer those products a competitive advantage.

Liniar currently boasts 52 Registered Designs and patents across the entire range of products, from windows, doors and conservatories to its outdoor range. With many more patents pending, Liniar's Design and Development team strives to bring to market innovative, UK-first products which enhance security, thermal efficiency and make lives easier for fabricators and installers.

Is 'innovation' in the system company's DNA?

Innovation can be described as "The process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value". The word itself can overused, especially in our industry, but when innovation is at its best, will offer you a high quality range that you can access in order to add value to your own customers.

But it doesn't stop there – as well as new products, innovation should be visible in every aspect of the company you deal with. Think about operational efficiency – do they produce and hold enough stock to satisfy your last-minute requirements? Do they continue to push for better service and find new ways to delight you?

At Liniar, innovation is built into everything we do – in fact, we claim it's in our DNA. Every single member of the team strives for the best possible outcome in all areas, even if that means re-examining what we do on a daily basis and changing it

Was the system's main window profile designed from scratch, around a co-extruded gasket?

When you're looking to purchase something new, which would appeal to you the most? A product which has been around for a few decades, with a few enhancements – or a product which was designed only a few years ago, using the latest technology?

Many systems companies are using the same window and door profile they brought to the UK market more than 20 years ago. Over the years, they've made some improvements, but few have started from scratch with brand new ideas, technology and machinery.

The Liniar 70mm system brought together industry experts with more than 500 years' experience to bring a fresh perspective. The patented co-extruded bubble gasket remains the most advanced on the market, helping Liniar to push the boundaries of thermal efficiency.



Does the systems company offer a PassivHaus certified window?



PassivHaus certification means that a system has met the standard for rigorous energy efficiency which reduces a building's ecological footprint. This is a certification now required by some councils and buildings, such as social housing.

The PassivHaus Institute only certifies the most innovative windows and doors, so the ability to offer such a system in the UK will give fabricators a unique point of differentiation.

Liniar's EnergyPlus90 system was the first PVCu window in the UK to achieve PassivHaus certification. The EP90 range is a 9-chamber window with U-values as low as 0.5 W/m2K. With PAS24 and Secured by Design accreditation, and World Health Organisation compliant, the EP90 range is also noise reducing up to 42 decibels – ideal for urban living.

Does the systems company offer a window system with increased noise reduction?

In recent years, the World Health Organization has implemented a series of guidelines for building contractors and construction companies to follow when erecting specific buildings, such as student accommodation and elderly homes.

These guidelines include noise pollution levels, among other things, and the increasing use of brownfield sites for housing development is making acoustic solutions a critical requirement all over the UK and Ireland – but not all systems companies can offer a window system that meets these guidelines.

Liniar's 70mm EnergyPlus range meets the noise pollution standards of WHO-guidelines, and its 90mm Passive House accredited EnergyPlus90 range far exceeds these specifications, with noise reduction of up to 42 decibels.

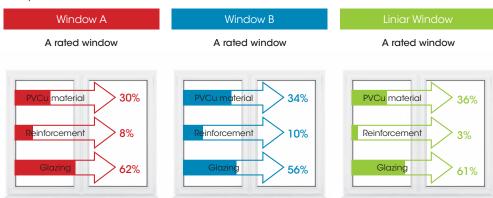




What is the overall cost of a window, including hardware, glazing and spacer bar?

When analysing the cost of choosing a systems house, more than the cost of PVCu profile should be taken into account. When trying to achieve a higher Window Energy Rating, high quality profiles allow for a lower specification of glazing compared to other systems.

Don't just assess the like-for-like profile price - explore the overall cost of fabrication for a full sized window, including all parts of a finished product i.e. hardware, glazing and spacer bar, as well as labour costs - only then can a true comparison be made.



We know that Liniar profiles can be more expensive, per metre, than other PVCu systems. This is due to the patented innovations its products contain, as well as the modern machinery used to create them. The Liniar system is designed with reduced reinforcement and often requires a lower specification of glazing to reach high WERs and low U-values – both of which can contribute to overall cost savings when fabricating a window.

Does the systems company test full-size products?

Design, development and testing go hand in hand to create products which stand the test of time, are safe and are fit for purpose. With comprehensive investment in all three areas, systems houses can launch UK-first products exclusive to their fabrication network.

Testing of products used in the construction industry is crucial to ensure they are safe, secure, stable and durable. Fabricators relying on systems company test results should make sure that all British Standards Institute testing has been carried out on full size products – not the bare minimum size – for their own peace of mind when selling to customers.

Liniar invests heavily in design and product development which includes product testing and an Approved Fabricator Scheme. With a cyclic testing robot on-site which tests the durability of opening mechanisms, Liniar also guarantees that every single maximum size cited in its fabrication and technical manuals has been fully tested by third parties such as the BSI – giving peace of mind to customers.



How quickly can a window be produced in your factory?

If you could reduce the manufacturing time of a window by up to half, what would that mean in terms of productivity and staffing levels for your fabrication operation?

Are your systems company's finished products designed with fabricators in mind – streamlining the fabrication process and saving you time and money? Explore how long it takes with a different system and consider how this may affect your profitability in the future.

Liniar's system requires two-thirds less steel (based on a GGF standard window) – with no loss in strength. This not only saves time in ordering, storing, cutting and fixing steel into window frames, but think of the additional cost savings for fabricators as well. Liniar's windows can also be produced in up to half the time of competitor's products.

"My business is not only more profitable since changing to Liniar, but the team have more time for the value-added customer-focused stuff that really makes a difference..."

Is the systems company CORGI Fenestration registered?



The CORGI Fenestration Scheme is the most comprehensive in the industry. Not only does it certify the whole operation including Building Regulation compliance, but also covers the whole end-to-end product and process – the design, manufacture, installation and repair of fenestration products – along with a number of other benefits for fabricators and fitters.

It all starts with the systems company – and if they're not able to demonstrate compliance to CORGI Fenestration's strict audit process, why should consumers have faith in your products?

In 2017, Liniar became the first PVCu systems company to be CORGI Fenestration registered. Through the Liniar Approved fabricator programme, fabricators can become CORGI Fenestration registered through a reduced audit, saving them time and money – and giving them, and their customers, the peace of mind that the products they fabricate are certified to the highest quality.

Does the systems company offer on-site technical support?

An on-site technical support team offers several advantages, including quick response rates to queries, better educated technicians and the ability to quickly resolve issues.

Third-party technicians or contractors have several disadvantages, including not having a firm grasp on the fabrication of specific products, customer needs and set ups or installation of products. Waiting for answers on technical queries could mean winning or losing a job - so having someone who can answer your queries straight away is an advantage.

Liniar's Technical team is made up of industry experts who work closely with the Design and Development team, extrusion operations and our sister company, Avantek Machinery, to ensure they can answer any queries and provide the ultimate levels of support. The technical team also advises on the best set up for fabricators, carries out Liniar Approved audits and has a hand in helping to shape new products based on customer feedback- making them even easier to fabricate or install.







Does the systems company have an in-house marketing and PR team?

An in-house marketing team is integral in supporting fabricators in marketing and selling to their own customers. Not only does an internal team allow for greater creative control, the team has a firm grasp of product knowledge and an understanding of your target market and how to sell to them, with faster response times than agencies.

In-house marketing and PR teams can also work closely with fabricators to produce case studies and arrange photography, website content and social media, maximising your own marketing efforts.

Liniar's marketing and PR team works to help fabricators every step of the way. With ongoing product and brand advertisements and editorial coverage, digital marketing advice, website content creation, a wide range of literature including homeowner-focused and technical content, Liniar customers have a history of growth when working alongside our team.





Are you provided with measurable leads?

While many systems companies can pass on leads to fabricators, how many of these are truly measurable? Do you have a platform to track leads, and keep a record of all that have come to you from your systems company?

Leads coming directly from a systems company can boost your business with customers who know what they are looking for and are ready to buy.

Liniar's online 'Find a Stockist' search function was developed to provide website visitors with the details of Liniar stockists in their area. Liniar Approved fabricators and stockists are listed with details and Google reviews to enable visitors to make an informed choice. Stockists have access to an online portal to manage the leads that have been sent to them by Liniar; you can contact customers direct, mark leads as won and lost, and create follow up tasks.

Do you have instant access to a high-quality media library?

Having access to a regularly updated, high-quality online media centre, 24/7, is crucial for fabricators. Not only can you access collateral which can be used in your own marketing materials, but you can select images to use on your own website, at the click of a mouse.

Professional quality images of the products you fabricate increases customer confidence in your business, as well as giving them an idea of what they could achieve with their own properties and projects. In addition, you may wish to include literature on your own website, and access this content whenever you need it.

Liniar provides all its fabricators with access to a comprehensive online media centre – you'll receive log in details in your Liniar Welcome Pack. Within the media centre you'll find high resolution images of products, installations and renders. There are PDFs of brochures, newsletters, technical specifications and wall charts, together with a fully comprehensive Liniar Sales Guide – making it easy for fabricators to manufacture and sell Liniar products. We've even included marketing resources to help you get to grips with social media and other channels.

Does the systems company offer website support and advice?

Your website is an online representation of your physical business and should showcase what you can offer to homeowners and installers. If your website is out of date, it can create a negative impression of your business... and if you can't find it near the top of search engine results, it's probably not working hard enough for you.

You can pay for expert website advice - but often your systems company has the expertise to review your site and carry out analysis to make sure it's representing your brand and business well online.

Liniar works with customers to analyse the Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), site speed and other critical aspects of their website, pointing out the areas for their website developer to focus on for the most impact. We can even introduce you to a website developer fully trained in Liniar products, drastically cutting down the time (and costs) involved in building a new website if you need one.

Liniar can also provide advice on social media and pay per click (PPC) campaigns which can help bring traffic and business to your website.

How are your active users trending over t

Does the systems company offer a personalised marketing support range?

When it comes to marketing your own business, you need more than just a pile of generic brochures from your systems company, which could be several years out of date.

Do they offer a service where you can personalise brochures with your address and logo? Are you able to access a library of the latest literature, add your own details and order direct from a specialist printer at the click of a mouse?

Liniar has developed its Web2Print service over many years, in conjunction with a leading print specialist. Literature for the full range always contains the latest information and adding your own details means customers can contact you easily. High quality printed brochures will be delivered directly to your address within a few days.

Does the systems company invest in promoting its brands for your benefit?

Marketing is a mix between long-term brand positioning and short- to medium-term promotions and campaigns – and the best systems companies understand this. If they regularly invest in promoting their brands within the marketplace, this will in turn benefit customers who manufacture these ranges.

The window supply chain can be complex, so a good understanding of targeting all markets is essential – from architects to developers, from homeowners to installers. The audience is more well-informed now than they ever have been, thanks to the internet – so it's important to provide information for all levels of the supply chain.

Liniar invests many £thousands each month in the promotion of its main brand, its product ranges and its sub-brands including Alumina, Resurgence and Elevate – both in print and online. This helps with brand recognition in the marketplace, and includes videos, guides and helpful information which our customers can also use. Pay Per Click ads help with short-term campaigns alongside social media, PR and editorial content, all for the benefit of Liniar customers.





It's not as difficult as you may think!

Whilst changing your systems provider is a big decision to make, it's not as complicated as you may think.

The Liniar team will carry out a full technical audit to determine the tooling required, work with your software provider to make the necessary arrangements and ensure your whole fabrication team is fully trained so you can be up and running with minimal delays. We even offer sales training for your staff to ensure you get the best start possible with Liniar.

Ready to find out more?

Liniar extends a warm welcome to anyone who'd like to visit our state of the art, 400,000 ft² facility in Derbyshire. We offer a factory tour to see how our products are designed and tested, how the mixing and extrusion process works and how we manufacture efficiently whilst ensuring we remain a zero operational waste facility.

You can visit our purpose built underground chambers which recycle a staggering 4 billion litres of water each year, find out how profile lamination works and speak to the people who help to ensure Liniar remains at the forefront of innovation in window technology.

Our vast showroom enables you to get hands-on with every product in the Liniar range – and whilst you're here, why not visit Avantek Machinery to see the UK's first working window fabrication machinery showroom?

Book your visit now at info@liniar.co.uk or by calling 01332 883900.

Liniar

Flamstead House Denby Hall Business Park Denby Derbyshire DE5 8JX Tel: +44 (0)1332 883900 Fax: +44 (0)1332 883901 Email: sales@liniar.co.uk

www.liniar.co.uk

