

SUCCESS STORY

KENT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Blue light collaboration to deliver more efficient and effective services



A shared STORM Command and Control system is enabling the two emergency services to work together more effectively and to share information relating to the mobilisation of resources.

The challenge

Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS) are one of the best performing fire & rescue services in the country. To keep this positioning they have been modernising the organisation and redesigning operations to enable them to balance demand in the face of reducing budgets.

KFRS has challenging targets, aiming to respond to most life-threatening incidents within 10 minutes.

Each year they receive over 27,000 emergency calls and with an ageing mobilisation system KFRS was looking for a mission-critical solution to deliver real improvements and benefits in the handling of these emergency calls.

Collaboration with Kent Police started in 2012 when Phase One of the programme saw KFRS control room staff co-located in the same building as Kent Police. Phase Two was to modernise the Command and Control system and by sharing a common platform the two emergency services would be able to work together more effectively and to also share information relating to the mobilisation of resources in response to incidents as they arise.

Key points

- The first dual service Command and Control system in the UK.
- Commitment to developing interoperability to enhance public safety.
- Value from mapping and routing to enable best possible response.
- Savings of around £2m.

Our solution

STORM is providing KFRS with both a modern mobilisation system to ensure the right resources are rapidly mobilised, as well as being a common platform with Kent Police to support enhanced sharing of information for a joint response to incidents.

A number of key features are enabling KFRS to look at how they deal with emergency incidents and they are also driving improved service delivery through standardised business processes. For any incident it is important to ensure the appropriate number of firefighters with the right skills and equipment are despatched as quickly as possible. Using the real-time information available in STORM on skills availability, mapping and routing, the 999 staff are able to identify what options are available to them and they can then make rapid mobilising decisions on the most effective way to transport firefighters and equipment in the incident.

Having both services on a common platform is also invaluable if an incident requires both police and fire services to attend. Incident transfer is providing both services with a common view of the situation, so, for example, there won't be any risk of duplication, or errors relating to two different incident addresses. The joint system with Kent Police allows the two blue light services to work closely together and the two teams are able to share information about ongoing incidents quickly and effectively.

How we worked together

This project was the first dual service Command and Control system implementation in the UK and Sopra Steria and KFRS have worked extremely closely to ensure the delivery of all relevant fire specific functionality within the multi-agency STORM solution.

With over 55 STORM implementations across Europe and the Middle East Sopra Steria has a tried and tested delivery process for the Command and Control environment. The project kicked off with a series of workshops with senior managers and users to determine the KFRS requirements. Once these were agreed it was possible to define how the system was going to work in practice to enable KFRS to balance the demands for service.

With STORM supporting new ways of mobilising, KFRS was able to take the opportunity to challenge the way it worked and look at new business processes to optimise use of resources. KFRS is taking advantage of new information to determine an optimal resource profile and to improve their time to respond:

- **Mapping** - geographical representation of where resources are located.
- **Routing** - including attributes of appliances to determine time to the incident.
- **Skills** - integration with Kronos Crewing Service Engine to identify the optimum skills profile for the incident type they are being deployed to.

STORM is tailored to the specific requirements of each emergency service and additional fire functionality was also developed in collaboration with KFRS.

As is typical for the implementation of a mission critical solution, a thorough on-site testing regime was adopted to test the joint configuration prior to go-live. Once this had been completed the system went live in July 2015.

Results and benefits

The KFRS team has been co-located with Kent Police colleagues since 2012 and now when the 999 team takes a call, it is very quickly identified if it is going to be a multi-agency response or not. They are able to share information quickly with their police colleagues to make sure the right resources are sent to the scene, as well as improving the safety of those attending the incident.

STORM provides real time information and allows 999 staff to make a mobilising decision very quickly. It has also supported improved service delivery by standardising business processes. Appliances can now be mobilised on exact location information from Airwave radios, with resources deployed to incidents based on near real time calculation of time to attendance from their current location.

Savings and improvements in service are being monitored and it is anticipated that the Control Room collaboration with Kent Police will create savings of around £2 million.

“KFRS and Kent Police have the only dual service, multi-agency Command and Control system in the UK. It allows the two blue light services to work closely together and for our two teams to share information about ongoing incidents quickly and effectively.”

Sean Bone-Knell
Director of Operations
Kent Fire and Rescue
Service



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