

A photograph of firefighters in full gear, including helmets and oxygen tanks, working at a fire scene. The image is partially obscured by a large, stylized graphic element that looks like a fire alarm bell or a similar symbol, rendered in black and orange. The background is a mix of black and orange geometric shapes.

# PEOPLESAFE ALERT HELPING TO MOBILISE A UK FIRE SERVICE

Our national Fire Service responded to a total of 529,101 incidents in the year ending June 2021\*. While most of us go through life confident that our fearless fire fighters will always turn up in time to avert impending disaster, few of us consider the multitude of challenges they face when the emergency bell tolls.

Operating a seamless communication system is one such challenge. When there are lives to save, time is of the essence when it comes to comms and from the moment a member of the public calls 999, to a fire appliance arriving at the scene of the incident, seconds count. Being operationally effective is vital.

In modern times, you might assume that we'd all have our communications sussed. But in fact, many emergency service hubs still experience difficulties when mobilising their staff using old fashioned SMS services. The feedback tells us SMS isn't always delivering to the level it needs to.

## THE PROBLEM WITH OLD FASHIONED SMS

Historically, when control room staff needed to mobilise responders, one of the fastest options has been send a SMS message. But aside from not always being the fastest option in today's world, standard SMS has always been difficult to monitor

As one fire service control room manager we spoke to explained: "The real problem with SMS is that the control room has no data on who has read the messages and we have no option to see response details.

"Also, as situations start to escalate, or are resolved, there isn't option to remove outdated messages from end user's devices, which means our fire officers aren't always acting on the most current information. This can pose a significant operational risk".

SMS flaws for fast and efficient emergency response include erratic and slow response times, difficulties in allocating resources before and during dispatch and challenges with coordinating and managing situational awareness.

## WHEN A COMMS PROBLEM BECOMES A LIFE-THREATENING PROBLEM...

It goes without saying that undependable comms have the potential to escalate to crisis level at any time for the fire service, but particularly out of hours and during major incidents, when additional staff resources may be required. And when you're fighting fires, stakes are high.

Fire control staff who spoke to Peoplesafe explained that another major issue is that fire officers often have their phones set to silent or do not disturb when off duty, or during the night. This means that there's a very real risk that vital emergency messages go unheard.

## THE PEOPLESAFE SOLUTION

Peoplesafe has created an alternative to slow, unreliable SMS communication and it's one that's already working for the Control Room Managers with access to the Peoplesafe Alert Management Portal.

Message groups can be created so that all fire officers have the Peoplesafe Alert app installed on their iOS and Android phones. And our system ensures that the crucial communication always gets delivered. Without fail. Every time.

Now when mobilising, control room staff using Peoplesafe Alert are able to send a message from the Peoplesafe Alert Management Portal to the required message group or groups. Delivered in seconds to the end users' Peoplesafe Alert app, message notification overrides the end user's device being set to silent and repeats until the required response has been made.

The message gets through and, in addition, control room staff are able to view real-time information, via the Management Portal, and immediately gain visibility of who has opened the message, acknowledged receipt, and/or responded with some details - including their GPS location.

Once the required staff level has been achieved and the situation in hand - a stand down message is sent. There is also an option to delete messages, via the portal, which removes them from the end user's device.

## THE RESULT

Peoplesafe Alert has improved message response time from up to an hour, to an auditable 91% open rate in under a minute, with an 80% response rate also under a minute.

Able to retain information on all sent messages and response data, the Peoplesafe Alert Portal can then export it to Excel to aid further discussion or to support enquiries.

## THE FUTURE

The measurable success of Peoplesafe Alert installation to date is indisputable and has given the fire service centres already using it confidence to extend their capabilities. The intention going forwards is to integrate the system with the fire service's own commanded and control system to consolidate the management of critical communication and streamline operations on a much larger scale.

91%

OPEN RATE IN  
UNDER A MINUTE

80%

RESPONSE RATE  
UNDER A MINUTE