



“We have created a highly resilient infrastructure that ensures we have business continuity in the event of a problem, providing a better service to the public.”

John Bonney, Chief Fire Officer, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

power to you



“We gained the best value for our money from Vodafone. We reduced management time despite increasing the scope of our communications network.”

**Neil Moore, Information Services Manager,
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service**

The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is one of the highest-performing emergency services in the country, covering a diverse, 1,500 square mile territory.

Its firefighters respond to calls for assistance in major cities such as Southampton and Portsmouth, rural market towns and villages in the beautiful Hampshire countryside, the New Forest and miles of beaches and coastline. Its population of about 1.6 million is often doubled with visitors and holiday makers in the summer months.

Therefore it's easy to understand why the telephony system plays a crucial role in making sure that the service is operating with maximum speed and efficiency, making every second count.

Managers identified that the current system, although reliable, could be improved.

For instance, the service frequently updated its directory as people moved between stations, and helpdesk engineers had to travel regularly between sites to connect desk phones. When repairing equipment, such as a phone in the call centre, they had to complete a complex operation that often involved a lot of reprogramming.

Not everyone had access to voicemail, so employees could miss important messages if they were away from their desks. And staff that did have access to voicemail were unable to reach their messages when they were working away from their normal locations.

Missed messages

This was an important issue for employees such as Glenn Bowyer, Watch Manager of the Business Education unit, who travels around the region educating people in the community on fire prevention. He says: “I couldn't respond to people as quickly as I wanted because there were delays in picking up my messages.”

Hampshire Fire and Rescue wanted to deliver a better service, reduce costs and get more from its internal telephone system – which plays such a crucial role in responding to these emergencies – by moving to an IP-based solution.

Following a rigorous selection process in line with national procurement strategy for fire services across England, Vodafone was selected because it was able to deliver new efficiencies, features and savings.

A Vodafone system based on Avaya technology was implemented, which includes universal access to voicemail, and voice-enabled dialling and conferencing. The system is more resilient, enabling the service to continue operating in the event of a disaster. Management costs have been reduced by 50 per cent too, while improving services at the same time.

The solution comprises Avaya Communication Manager, providing the software backbone for IP telephony and Avaya Modular Messaging, delivering voice, fax and email messaging services. It also includes CallXpress Speech Server, offering voice-enabled dialling and Avaya one-X Deskphone 9600 series handsets, delivering next-generation IP telephony.

Deployment without disruption

The new infrastructure took advantage of an existing network and previous investments in Avaya technology to reduce costs. Vodafone completed the deployment without any disruption to the service's 56 sites and 1,300 extensions. Staff could start using the technology to its full capacity immediately thanks to training provided by Vodafone. Gill Jones, Support Desk Manager says: “The support we received from Vodafone was excellent.”

Communication Manager has created a centrally managed IP-based telephony infrastructure, which ensures business continuity in an emergency. It provides enhanced call centre features, video and telephone conferencing, centralised voicemail and technology to locate the position of callers.

When call centre shifts change over, staff starting work can log on to any phone and access all their contacts and soft-key functions, as well as see a log of all previous calls.

Employees can also log on to any available deskphone to access voicemail, or simply open their email inbox to reach voice messages. Devices synchronise with email calendars, and employees can see their agendas on the screen. Some members of staff can dial numbers using spoken instructions thanks to the voice-enabled dialling functionality.

In the future, calls to deskphones will be routed automatically to employees' digital mobiles when they're away from their desks, removing the need to keep track of fixed and mobile numbers for employees anymore. Employees will be reachable wherever they are through a single number. Glenn Bowyer says: “I can travel between sites and do my work more effectively. People get hold of me on my fixed line number easily and I can pick up messages quickly.”



“I can travel between sites and do my work more effectively. People get hold of me on my fixed line number easily and I can pick up messages quickly.”

Glenn Bowyer, Watch Manager, Business Education unit, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Ability to collaborate

Increased productivity is helping to deliver a better service to residents. For instance, it can deliver non-emergency services, such as educational programmes, more effectively now that staff can communicate with each other easily and respond to enquiries faster. The ability to collaborate will improve in the future with the rollout of digital mobiles, so calls to fixed line phones are directly routed to mobiles when employees are in the field.

Management has been streamlined by bringing IT and telephony together onto the same network. The IT team has taken over basic management duties and completes much of the maintenance work from the main data centre. Information Services Manager, Neil Moore says: “We gained the best value for our money from Vodafone. We reduced management time despite increasing the scope of our communications network.”

The IP telephony system is also helping the fire service to meet its green commitments. Neil Moore says: “Our decision to work with Vodafone has proven to be a success in many ways. We’ve reduced our carbon footprint because engineers make fewer journeys to different sites to maintain the phone system.”

Since moving to IP-based telephony and Communication Manager, the service’s phone system is more resilient. Key servers are located at different sites and programmed so that if one fails another immediately takes over.

John Bonney, Chief Fire Officer at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, says: “We have created a highly resilient infrastructure that ensures we have business continuity in the event of a problem, providing a better service to the public.”

Significant benefits

- Communication costs have been halved by moving to an IP telephony solution helping the service to control budgets tightly and increase efficiencies
- Savings produced by a 50 per cent decrease in management time are set to rise as the service cuts expenditure on line rental and calls
- Services to the people of Hampshire – such as educational programmes - have been enhanced by improved communications and increased productivity
- Day-to-day management is more streamlined with IT and telephony brought together on to the same network and telephony across all sites managed centrally
- Staff can move between locations without affecting their ability to work, they keep on top of voicemails more easily and call centre staff find it easier to do their jobs well
- The service has created a highly resilient infrastructure, which can cope better with emergencies
- The IP telephony system is helping the fire service meet its commitment to greener working by eliminating vehicle journeys and reducing its carbon footprint