

Case study – London Ambulance Service.

Unified Communications & Collaboration.



London Ambulance Service – keeping the capital safe.



BT's partnership with the London Ambulance Service provides the technology to help deal with any emergency.

London is one of most bustling and congested cities on Earth – even more so during major events such as student riots or Royal wedding celebrations. Whether planned or impromptu, these incidents can have a huge impact on the emergency services – and that's in addition to day-to-day accidents and the threat of terrorist attack.

As a result, the London Ambulance Service (LAS) is the busiest emergency ambulance service in the UK. Because it covers an area of 620 square miles and operates 24/7 in one of the most challenging environments in the world, the LAS has to offer a service that is always available and operating efficiently. It has therefore chosen BT as its partner, to ensure that its technology infrastructure equips LAS staff to deal with every eventuality.

Part of the BT Group, BT offers a range of IT and communications solutions for organisations of all sizes. It has been able to use the full array of its portfolio to offer LAS benefits from cost efficiency to productivity and from greater collaboration to simpler management.

Explains Chidi Oparah, UC project manager for LAS: “We initially decided to transform our voice and data networks to meet increasing demands on our service.

However, it became clear during our discussions with BT that we could achieve maximum operational benefit, now and in the future, if we were to deploy a unified communications platform at the same time as moving to IP telephony across our 80 sites.”

“ For an organisation like ours, reliable communication is vital... ”

Chidi Oparah
UC project manager, London Ambulance Service

Improving efficiency.

To reduce complexity, individual IP phone numbers have been issued so that employees can log in at any phone on the network, regardless of location – which make office moves and changes easier to organise. A Contact Centre has been set up for the LAS Technical Support Services team, which needs to deliver a 24/7 service, to help its 60 agents improve efficiency.

From a management perspective, the IT team at the London Ambulance Service is finding the system easier to run and audit. Fewer lines into each building save money, while IP telephony means that operational directors can be in constant contact with their teams, wherever they are based.

“For an organisation like ours, reliable communication is vital,” says Chidi Oparah. “Having a system down could severely impair our ability to do our job effectively. BT has therefore installed a WAN acceleration solution and fibre ring network with alternate routing to give us resilient fall-back systems.”



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Conferencing for all.

The success of the initial project led to further work to utilise the platform, with video conferencing facilities being installed at eight locations to reduce travel to meetings. The 27 Area Officers who used to travel to central London HQ every Monday morning, now only have to go to their local video conference site, saving money and reducing carbon emissions. The efficiencies gained in employee productivity have prompted three more locations to be set up and a MeetingPlace facility extended to all staff to enable them to initiate conference calls, live meetings and collaborative web sessions at a moment's notice.

In a second project phase, BT has developed a Digital Media Signage solution for the LAS Command and Control Centre to help deploy its ambulances more effectively in the busy capital. Accessing free live video footage from Transport for London, the BBC, Sky News and others, an event commander can see London's hotspots, assess what is happening and decide what resources need to be allocated. The screens give live 'red, amber, green' feedback on LAS vehicles, so that there is always clarity on their availability, allowing them to be more quickly mobilised.

"Information like this is going to be invaluable when dealing with large scale events in London, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games and New Year's Eve celebrations. It could literally mean the difference between life and death for someone," comments Chidi.

Further plans are being finalised to upgrade the BT solution to enable Instant Messaging and Presence capabilities across the Service, along with moving the 999 back-up service to the IPT platform.



“ BT's... experience and expertise was first class... ”

Chidi Oparah
UC project manager, London Ambulance Service

Concludes Chidi: “BT has been a very knowledgeable and flexible partner. The team went above and beyond our expectations to deliver this ground-breaking and complex solution in a challenging environment. The level of experience and expertise was first class, flawlessly deploying the solution with no impact on day-to-day operation, and we know we can trust the team to continue to work with us to provide the most effective service possible.”

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