



Telent head towards 25 years of providing Managed ICT Services to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) covers an area of 249 square miles, serving a population of 1.4m across the five metropolitan boroughs of Sefton, St Helens, Knowsley, Wirral and of course Liverpool.

With a mission statement of “Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters” MFRA has 642 firefighters and around 350 support and control room staff.

Based across 23 community fire stations and a number of additional support locations around Merseyside, they operate 30 fire engines, 4 aerial appliances, a marine rescue unit plus numerous specialist response and support vehicles.

In terms of public safety challenges, MFRA covers a very diverse area with major industrial, transport and coastal risks combined with significant levels of deprivation in certain residential areas. MFRA have one of the fastest responses in the UK and are committed to attending all life risk incidents within 10 minutes on 90% of occasions. Data published by the Home Office confirms they attend more primary fires per 1000 population than any other English fire and rescue service.

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Phil Garrigan, Chief Fire Officer, MFRA

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Client:



Background

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Solution

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Benefits

Delivering vital ICT services and enabling Merseyside to concentrate on its life-saving day-to-day operations. Enhanced ICT services and introduced innovations, yet the cost to MFRA of the Telent contract has broadly remained the same since 2006.

Case Study: Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

After winning an initial contract in 2001 – as Marconi – Telent successfully retendered for the contract in 2009 and 2016, with additional extensions securing the current contract until 2026.

Having successfully worked with Telent since 2001, MFRA knows the difference that having the backing of a trusted partner can make to Information Communication Technology (ICT) services. As the collaborative partnership heads towards its 25 year milestone, Telent remains at its side, delivering vital ICT services and enabling MFRA to concentrate on its life-saving day-to-day operations. Over this time Telent have driven efficiency, expanded and enhanced ICT services and introduced innovations, yet the cost to MFRA of the Telent contract has broadly remained the same since 2006.

Mission critical communications

Community safety and life-saving operations are the number one priority for MFRA, as the risk profile of incidents and the regional infrastructure continues to evolve. Preparation for this is managed through the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) – a statutory requirement on all Fire Services. ICT services are crucial to the day-to-day running of operations and must be developed, aligned and continually reviewed to ensure they can support the delivery of the IRMP.

In law, MFRA has a statutory duty to comply with its core functions under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, including firefighting, road traffic accidents and emergencies. The role of MFRA Fire Control in answering emergency calls and mobilising resources assists MFRA in complying with this statutory duty.

In order to allow MFRA Fire Control to respond to all emergency calls for assistance with a level of response appropriate to the risk, and deal with all emergencies efficiently and effectively, Telent undertook a comprehensive replacement of the Command and Control ICT service infrastructure in 2004, moving from Fires to Capita Vision Computer Aided Despatch (CAD). Today, the innovation continues as Telent are key in delivering an upgrade of CAD as MFRA seek to introduce Capita Vision 5, the latest technology to manage Emergency '999 calls' and to mobilise the appropriate resources to incidents.

A new digital era

Once again Telent is building on previous successful MFRA projects. 2007 saw the seamless switch of telephony solutions for MFRA as a Mitel single integrated digital solution using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony. The solution was designed and implemented by Telent, delivering savings as internal voice traffic migrated across to be carried over the data network, with greatly reduced numbers of connections to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

In 2019 MFRA went live with a new Mitel 3300 solution with the administration telephone lines to the outside being replaced by SIP circuits. This allows a greater degree of resilience to MFRA as well as opening the

“What comes with an ICT Service Catalogue is the ability to have a Service Level Agreement with clearly defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and I am pleased as Telent continues to meet those KPIs. The Service Catalogue also provides the flexibility to easily adopt new services as our requirements evolve or new technology solutions become available.”

Ed Franklin, Head of Technology,
MFRA

door to future closer working with multi agency partners and the ability to use the latest electronic collaboration solutions.

ITIL

Having an Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) based ICT service catalogue and flexible approach to the contract has ensured that MFRA can easily change the services it receives, depending on its needs at the time and the latest technological advances. This has ensured MFRA can effortlessly meet new technological requirements in an extremely cost-effective way.

Recent additions to the ICT Service Catalogue include providing ICT services for National Resilience (NR) and the introduction of MFRA ICT cloud based services. National Resilience ICT service involves the life cycle management of the ICT for the National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC) based in Merseyside, which is responsible for deploying and co-ordinating National Resilience equipment, supporting individual fire and rescue services to minimise the impact of major emergencies. Cloud based services embrace the adoption of DevOps as Telent works closely with MFRA Development Team to deliver in-house apps on frontline appliances.

Among the most crucial elements of ITIL provided by Telent is the ICT Service Desk. Located in Merseyside, the ICT Service Desk handles on average, 650 ICT incidents and requests per month from users across MFRA. Operating from 8.30am to 5pm, the service desk ensures there are always Telent staff on-hand to provide immediate help and support for any problem as it arises and provides a single point of contact for all ICT-related issues. A Telent 24/7 service centre deals with out of hours issues; they will escalate and deploy specialist engineers for high priority incidents; including those that affect emergency operations, 999 calls or the dispatch of fire appliances.

The Service Desk has proved particularly pivotal for MFRA, with Telent being able to remotely fix around 75% of all ICT Incidents reported. This service delivery model has been so successful that the same service desk is now also working with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, which selected Telent as its Managed ICT Services Provider in 2016.

Each customer has an agreed number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are met. The approach works so well that Telent now uses the same service desk to support all ICT incidents experienced by the company's own staff across all of its UK wide sites.

A glimpse of the future

As Telent looks towards 2024 and the next four years of the contract with MFRA, it will continue to evolve its services as technology and Merseyside's needs change. Within this work, cybersecurity will be key, as will the embracing of cloud technology. Telent also expects to see control rooms begin to move to the cloud. To be successful this will require an extremely robust, secure and highly available service, like telent's own UK-based private cloud platform which is used by Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and other public safety organisations.

"The success of our collaboration with MFRA is really down to the partnership approach we have taken throughout the length of the contract. We evolve the services we provide to MFRA as the needs of its staff and operations change, ensuring the ICT services in place are always at the cutting-edge, supporting the important lifesaving work of MFRA. Some of these services are ones which any business would need, but others have been tailored specifically for the blue-light sector to meet the unique challenges encountered when it comes to ICT."

Barry Zielinski, Operations & Services Director, Telent

The longstanding partnership between MFRA and Telent also benefits the local community of Merseyside, including Telent recruiting local apprentices into their delivery team in Liverpool. Also Telent were delighted to donate towards the ongoing support of the MFRA Heritage and Education Centre. This was founded to preserve the heritage of the Fire Service, initially as the Merseyside Fire Museum in 1973. In 2011, the MFRA Heritage and Education Centre was set up as a charitable trust and now holds the largest archive of any Fire and Rescue Service in the UK and a large display of equipment and vehicles. Additionally, Telent donates £10,000 annually to MFRA to support local community projects, recent initiatives this has supported include the Toxteth Fire Fit hub and the MFRA Fire Cadets.

“Our relationship with Telent means we have a partner that we can rely on in the most demanding of circumstances. As well as having a deep understanding of the blue light sector, Telent bring a flexible approach to their service delivery which has proved invaluable to us as we work to keep up with the fast-paced technological changes across the business sphere. Ultimately we know we have a highly-trusted partner in Telent and look forward to working with the team for years to come.”

Phil Garrigan, Chief Fire Officer,
MFRA

