



OVERVIEW

In a busy hospital environment efficient management of resources is critical to delivering safe, fast and effective clinical care. A vital component of this is getting the right message to the right person as quickly as possible. Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust runs three of London's busiest and most efficient hospitals. The Trust recently deployed the Everbridge communications platform to further enhance its ability to communicate quickly and effectively with the right people when incidents take place.

STREAMLINING SUCCESS

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust runs three hospitals in London: St Thomas Hospital is located just across the River Thames from the Houses of Parliament on a site also shared by Evelina London Children's Hospital; Guy's Hospital in London Bridge is close to The Shard – Europe's highest building. In total Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust treats more than two million patients per year.

The Resilience Management team at the hospital is led by Resilience Manager, Jess Child. The team at the hospital works in the knowledge that there will always be incidents that will challenge the efficient running of the hospital, but is tasked with ensuring that these never impact on the

care provided to patients. The Incident Management team anticipates risks and provides contingency planning for issues as diverse as loss of power, loss of IT functionality, supply chain disruptions and security incidents affecting the premises.

CRITICAL WHEN AN INCIDENT OCCURS

A critical element of the communications process when an incident takes place is alerting members of staff that the incident has occurred, that it may continue for some time, and ascertaining rapidly who is available to help and support. Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust's Resilience Management team was looking for a new and highly effective means by which to communicate with staff. Of particular importance was the ability to ensure messages got through, as well as quickly receiving confirmation of message delivery and a status update of response staff.

Having reviewed a number of different options, Guy's and St Thomas' Resilience Management team chose to deploy the Everbridge platform. Important factors in the decision were the reliability of the platform, combined with the ease with which a message could be sent and responses reviewed and actioned.

The Resilience Management team deployed the Everbridge platform to streamline incident responses and to improve communications to more than 1,100 Trust employees, including clinical and administrative staff with incident response functions. When an incident is declared, the Incident Management team can quickly send a message to key personnel. The flexibility to send a message through a number of different communications channels significantly enhances response rates. If a response is not received within a specified amount of time, the Trust will be able to send another message through an alternative communication channel.

A further benefit of the Everbridge platform was the ability to easily deploy polling to receive a quick response from recipients of the message. The Trust's Incident Management team can send a templated message which recipients can respond to immediately by choosing one of three different options: on site; off site and available; off site and not available. This provides the Incident Management team with a rapid assessment of who is available and who can be deployed to help with an incident, alongside the ability to quickly send follow up information to staff who are available to assist and fill resource gaps if needed. When testing the Everbridge platform the Trust received an 80% response rate to messages within two minutes of the message being sent.

DAY TO DAY SCENARIOS

Whilst the Everbridge platform proved its value in such a significant test, there are more routine day to day incidents where the platform is also deployed.

IT incidents in a healthcare environment can have severe consequences. For example, if a Medical Electronic Data for Care History and Readiness Tracking (MEDCHART) system with electronic prescribing is impacted just before lunchtime drug rounds, this can be a far bigger issue to manage than at other times of day. If prescriptions are not accessible clinical staff need to know which patients are affected, and the knock-on effect this might have for timely medicine delivery.

The Everbridge platform provides the capability to communicate with relevant IT personnel to ensure that they are aware of any IT application disruption and that they are able to resolve it quickly. This reduces the Mean Time to Know (MTTK) – which in turn means issues can be resolved more effectively.

TESTING AND TRAINING

An early opportunity to test the Everbridge platform came when London Fire Brigade led a major emergency planning exercise based on the scenario of a tower block collapsing at Waterloo station and causing mass casualties. During 'Exercise Unified Response', volunteers played the role of casualties with simulated major trauma injuries who were brought to the Emergency Department (A&E) at St Thomas' Hospital.

Dozens of staff from across the Trust participated in the exercise and responded as they would to a real-life major incident. The volunteer casualties played by medical students - with simulated traumatic, life-threatening injuries – received treatment from teams in the Emergency Department, critical care, surgery, imaging, and other specialist services. The exercise was particularly important as it provided the hospital with the opportunity to manage the type of trauma cases that it might not routinely see.

The live play element of the exercise held at the Trust was developed by the Trust's Resilience Management team over a number of months, the exercise enabled Guy's and St Thomas' to rehearse its procedures for dealing with a major incident and to test its level of preparedness. The Trust has previously been assessed by NHS England as having high quality emergency planning in place. The exercise simulated more than 2,000 casualties of which 600 were most critically injured, with a number of the more challenging trauma cases being treated at St Thomas'.

From the outset of the incident, notifications were sent out to those with major incident roles and others participating in the test. This functionality was crucial as it

gave the Resilience Management team and site control teams instant visibility, allowing them to identify who was on-site and available. Having established this, the Resilience Management team and site control teams could deploy relevant personnel quickly to where they were needed most. All of this took place without having to use other communications platforms, such as the Trust's telephone system. This was important because, during a major incident the Trust will receive thousands of telephone calls from the public. The Everbridge platform enabled the Trust to manage its resources without additional burden on the switchboard.

The emergency mass notification system played a significant part in ensuring a successful simulation – the first time that an exercise involving simulated casualties arriving for treatment had been run in the working emergency department. The Trust evaluated not only the number of casualties dealt with but also how the medical students (that were simulating the victims of the incident) felt their care had been delivered.

CONCLUSION

Expecting the unexpected is part of daily life for the Resilience Management team at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust has been recognised as having high quality emergency planning services but is always looking for tools that can enhance the Trust's ability to improve incident management. The Everbridge platform has enabled the Incident Management team to communicate with relevant personnel more efficiently, rapidly providing an overview of the resources available and supporting the deployment of these resources quickly and effectively.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG), is a global software company that provides critical communications and enterprise safety applications that enable customers to automate and accelerate the process of keeping people safe and businesses running during critical events. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Beijing and London.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.