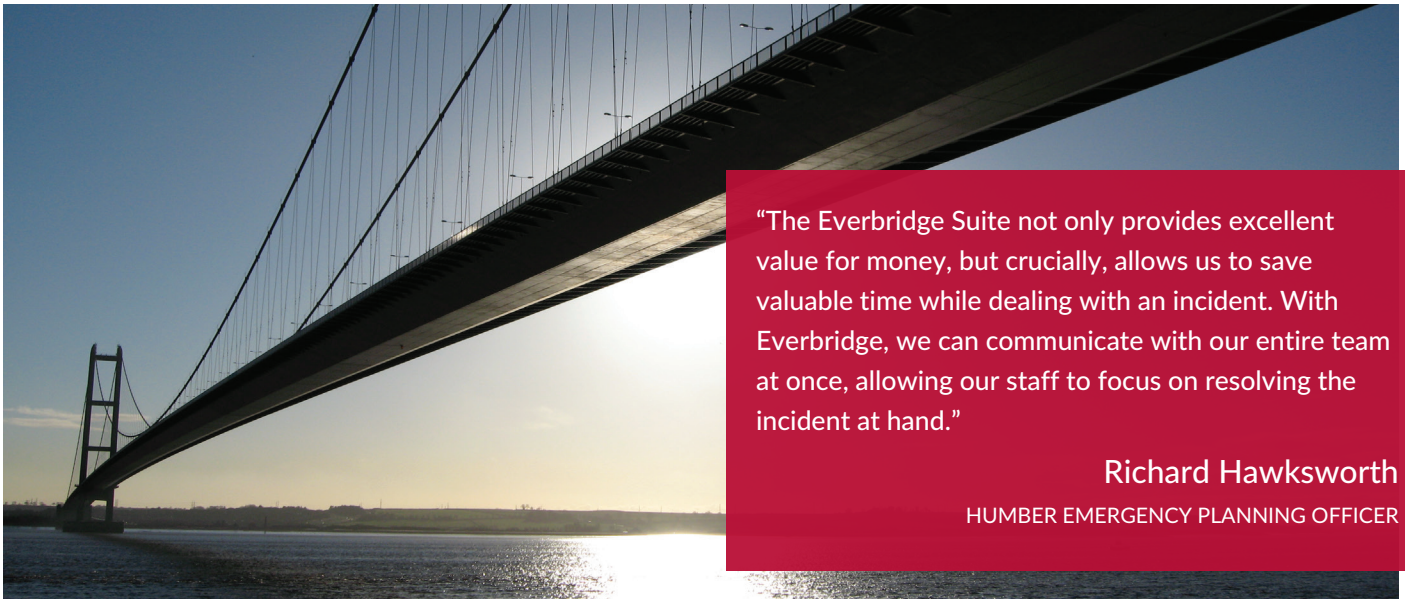




## HUMBER EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE



“The Everbridge Suite not only provides excellent value for money, but crucially, allows us to save valuable time while dealing with an incident. With Everbridge, we can communicate with our entire team at once, allowing our staff to focus on resolving the incident at hand.”

**Richard Hawksworth**

HUMBER EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER

### OVERVIEW

Humber Emergency Planning Service is a local authority emergency planning team that serves four unitary authorities in the Humber region in the north of the United Kingdom. The role of the organization is to make certain authorities comply with their emergency planning responsibilities and have emergency management and business continuity arrangements in place to respond to major incidents in a swift and coordinated manner.

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### PROBLEM

In case of an emergency, Humber Emergency Planning Service needed to coordinate action by alerting responders within each authority and the other responding agencies in a faster and more efficient fashion. The organization’s existing platform was slow and difficult to use, leading to a lack of communication between the authorities and their staff.

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### SOLUTION

Everbridge provides HEPS with a communication platform that enables text-alert assistance in case of emergencies. It’s easy to use and saves valuable time and resources. Administrators can type the message and, within seconds, send it to multiple groups and responders to set up planning and response meetings. It also allows two-way communications, so HEPS can leverage real-time information directly from key staff roles.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH RICHARD HAWKSWORTH, HUMBER EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER

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## Q: TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION?

**A:** My position is Humber Emergency Planning Officer. My role involves maintaining and developing emergency management arrangements for the local authorities we look after, as well as promoting increased individual, community and business resilience to an emergency or business disruption within the Humber region.

## Q: OK, LET'S TALK ABOUT SOME OF YOUR COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES BEFORE YOU DEPLOYED EVERBRIDGE.

**A:** Well, before Everbridge, we had another mass notification system but the accessibility of the system didn't suit our needs and the pricing of the system stopped us from renewing the contract. We were looking for a platform that was a bit simpler to use and could reach people a bit quicker and a bit easier. The main challenge we had was to find a solution that not only alerts people within each authority during an emergency, but that could be done whilst at a desktop or from a mobile. Allowing us to then pull these people together for the meetings and to turn this communication into action no matter where we were or what time of the day it was.

## Q: SO, HOW WERE YOU REACHING THESE STAKEHOLDERS BEFORE EVERBRIDGE?

**A:** Before Everbridge, the previous mass notification system we were using was not as accessible as we would have liked. Things like the call-in questions to recipients were limited and it was a challenge to connect with individuals in real-time after they received the alerts.

Prior to Everbridge and our previous mass notification system solution, we just worked on ringing people up or sending an email, and obviously it's difficult for people to pick those up if they're away from their desk. Calling people can take a considerable amount of time. The time it took to actually get in touch with groups and deal with basic needs, was taking three quarters of an hour just for me to reach people.

## Q: SINCE DEPLOYING THE EVERBRIDGE SOLUTION, HOW HAS IT HELPED TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES AND MEET YOUR COMMUNICATION NEEDS?

**A:** With the Everbridge mobile app, all you need to do is type out the message. Send it. And that's it. Within seconds, you can set up a meeting from anywhere. It'll send the message to all the contact paths of the people stored in the group. From there I can keep track on who has received the message by the responses that come back. These are simple to understand in the pie chart format used. So first off it's a time perspective, getting a meeting organized quickly is great because obviously there's a lot of time constraints when responding to emergencies. Before this, it was taking more time than we thought was appropriate. Something quicker was definitely a bonus for us.

Secondly the ease of use of Everbridge system is another key factor because it means training to use the system doesn't need to take hours. People can have some basic training and be confident in using the system. A couple of overall administrators can then look after the general housekeeping of the wider system.

With previous system we paid for the amount of contactable groups set up which was restricted by our budget. Emergencies are not always predictable in the resources that are needed to respond to them making it difficult to

predict who needs to be in a preset group beforehand. With Everbridge we pay for the amount of contacts in the system allowing us the freedom of putting those contacts into as many different groups as we wish. This allows us to inform the people with the correct expertise and skills required to deal with the emergency without bothering people who aren't directly involved.

## Q: CAN YOU DISCUSS SOME SPECIFIC USES OF EVERBRIDGE TO-DATE?

**A:** We have already used the solution to distribute general messages and help us arrange meetings. Luckily, emergencies don't happen that often. One instance when we used the system effectively was during the avian influenza outbreak. The solution allowed us to inform the correct emergency roles within the authority and set up the initial meetings extremely quickly. From there, it enabled us to keep everyone up to speed with meeting times and the changing situation. We were also able to quickly add new contacts and set up a new group on the system so that we could keep in touch with the extra staff brought in to carry out door knocking activities in the affected community. Using the event feature allowed us to keep all the messages on the same thread making it easier when reports need to be produced.

We've used it in a lot of exercises as well. We have to train staff within the councils on their roles, so we've used Everbridge to dry run scenarios, just to get them used to seeing the message, and what we've put in it, as well as how to respond and confirm.

## Q: CAN YOU DISCUSS THE REAL FINANCIAL VALUE THAT EVERBRIDGE PROVIDES TO YOU AS AN ORGANIZATION?

**A:** There is definitely a financial value that Everbridge provides as it's cheaper than our previous mass notification system. Not paying for the individual messages we send out means we use the system more for everyday tasks as well as in emergency situations.

Although it's not all monetary, there is a time-saving cost. It is a huge time saver for the team because an officer, or one of the assistants, can use Everbridge to communicate and gather everybody involved on a teleconference call all at once, rather than talking to everyone individually. Allowing the rest of the team to focus on other tasks rather than having two or three officers managing a situation.

## Q: HOW DID YOU FIND THE DEPLOYMENT PROCESS?

**A:** Everbridge is really simple to use. It's really good that I have a dedicated person helping me go through the setup of it and helping me out afterwards if it's needed. It was real easy and quick, once we'd gone through the main steps of how to send out messages, put in the chief information, people's contacts and it's really simple using the Excel spreadsheets. Keeping it up to date after that is really easy as well. We've got a few people in the office trained to do it.

## Q: WHAT FUTURE PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE EVERBRIDGE SOLUTION?

**A:** It would be using the mapping tools more to target geographical areas where individuals may be. You've got the Universe tool where you can put people's addresses against their contact details and actually target people in a certain area without having to send the message to a preset group. That's something we will look into more.