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Ollie Tovey

South Western Ambulance Service

OVERVIEW

The South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of emergency and urgent care services across a fifth of England, covering the counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Trust employs over 4,000 staff members who are responsible for its 96 ambulance stations, three clinical control rooms, six air ambulance bases and two hazardous response teams.

PROBLEM

As part of the NHS, the South Western Ambulance Service has key performance targets for emergency care that it is required to meet. The Trust had used crisis communication platforms in the past without the level of success it wanted and was open to the idea of implementing a new product that would help to improve staff notification and incident awareness, whilst reducing emergency staff response times for major incidents.

SOLUTION

Everbridge's mass notification system allowed the Trust's emergency response teams to communicate with all of its key stakeholders to notify and alert them of major incidents. The platform's ability to deliver alerts to a number of people and organisations via multiple delivery channels has increased staff notification responses by 138%. Everbridge's text-to-speech functionality has helped reduce staff response times from more than 60 minutes to less than four minutes, decreasing the time it takes to complete a communications cascade and helping to increase the Trust's visibility of major incidents—ensuring its resources are deployed quickly and efficiently.

Everbridge's unified communications platform has helped improve the Trust's mass communication to both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that it maintains its high standards of patient care.



WHAT DOES YOUR POSITION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION ENTAIL?

My position as Resilience Officer is part of the wider Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Department within the Trust. Whilst the department as a whole focuses on the assessment and prevention of external risks, my role is to evaluate internal business continuity procedures and resilient communications to ensure the Trust is maintaining its high standards of patient care and meeting its legal obligations.

Part of that process involves sourcing the technology that is best suited to our needs and that helps the Trust fulfil its duty of care to patients and the local community.

WHAT SORT OF INCIDENTS HAVE YOU BEEN USING THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM FOR?

The Trust has been using the Everbridge platform for all the major incidents that are declared across the South West region. The last two major incidents that we used the Everbridge platform to manage have produced some remarkable results. Staff acknowledgement has increased from around 2% to 100%, meaning that the Trust is able to effectively deploy its resources to handle a major incident. Also staff notification response times have decreased substantially to under four minutes.

As an organisation we are therefore able to provide assurances to Health Commissioners and NHS England that we have the best product for our needs and have optimised our emergency response procedures.

WHAT SORT OF FEEDBACK HAVE YOU HAD FROM YOUR USERS?

By implementing the Everbridge platform we have reduced the pressure on our services and resources, removing the need for our employees to pick up the phone and manually call every stakeholder and organisation in the event of a major incident—this technology speeds up that entire process which the Trust’s Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Department are especially happy about.

The feedback we have had from within the organisation has been positive. The fact the Everbridge platforms allows the Trust to target its messages and notifications means we no longer have to take a blanket approach to emergency communications—notifications can be sent out based on specific criteria so only relevant staff receive them. This new, targeted approach—using multiple delivery channels such as SMS, email, text-to-speech and push notifications—achieves a much more effective response which staff find less intrusive.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM?

The Everbridge platform has helped streamline the Trust’s internal and external communications to all stakeholders and partner organisations, allowing it to quickly and reliably deliver a consistent message in the event of an emergency. The Trust’s mass notification process is no longer a time intensive process and with the increase in delivery methods that the platform allows, response times have fallen dramatically.

Before Everbridge we only had one distribution channel to send out alerts, meaning its time to



complete a cascade was more than an hour whereas now it is less than four minutes. This allows our command centres to make constructive decisions knowing that if the situation requires it, a message can be sent to all stakeholders in a matter of minutes. In essence, the Everbridge platform provides the Trust with the capability to manage and co-ordinate responses to major incidents, providing an effective method of recalling staff to duty and keeping all stakeholders consistently informed of the latest events. Being able to implement Trust wide communications seamlessly onto the platform has saved time and reduced costs in other areas of the organisation.

recent flooding in Somerset, the Everbridge platform will allow us to fulfil our duty of care to the public and notify them of unfolding events.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM GOING FORWARD?

There are lots of future use cases for the Everbridge platform within the Trust. Whilst we will continue to use it in the event of a major incident, we intend to rationalise all of our communications onto the Everbridge platform—providing the Trust with one unified platform for managing day-to-day and emergency situations.

There is the potential to use the platforms administrative capabilities to help fill staff vacancies and overtime shifts, as well helping the Trust to fulfil its obligations to the wider community. We have plans to implement a member portal within the platform that is specifically for community groups and the wider general public. Not only will this improve the communication between the Trust and the wider community but in the event of a major incident like the

About Everbridge

Everbridge is a leading unified critical communications platform trusted by corporations and communities of all sizes that need to reach the right people for immediate action, collaboration, and decision-making. Connecting millions of people and internet-connected devices, the company provides reassurance that secure, compliant messages are delivered, locally and globally, received and responded to, no matter the recipient's location. Everbridge is based in Boston, Los Angeles, 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.

