

How we helped deliver 'on-scene eyes' to the emergency services



The challenge

Control room operators are under immense pressure to question 999 callers to ascertain what's happening, where and what resources are required – and to do this as quickly as possible.

If we can talk to friends and family around the world through video calls, why can't we use similar technology to enable professionals to view the scene of an emergency? This realisation led to 999eye, the world's first emergency live streaming solution.



Our approach

Developed as a collaboration between West Midlands Fire Service and Capita, the system allows 999 callers with smart devices to securely send live-streamed footage of incidents to emergency control rooms. It has been in use in the West Midlands since May 2017.

The control room operator, with the caller's permission, sends a text message to the caller's smartphone containing a URL. When the caller clicks on it, a one-use-only live stream is opened that allows footage or images to be sent directly to the control room. GPS coordinates are also delivered.

The live images offer instant 'on-scene eyes' that help operators to better assess the scenario and select the appropriate resources to dispatch.

West Midlands Fire Service worked on the prototype, but needed help to put its vision into action. The Capita team provided the technological expertise to ensure the software was secure and wouldn't expose the department's emergency systems to risk. It was also able to provide the crucial reliability needed across networks.

"That ticked all the boxes for us and the partnership came together", said Eddie Sammons, Station Commander, West Midlands Fire Service.

The impact

999eye is improving outcomes for people using the emergency services, as well as making first responders' aware of the risks prior to attendance, to begin planning and tactical strategy.

"It's very much increasing the efficiency of our response in terms of being able to augment or reduce attendances as and when we get the fuller picture" says West Midlands Fire Control's Graham McCann.

Capita is now helping the West Midlands Fire Service to embed 999eye into the department's main mobilisation system, further streamlining operations and improving efficiency. This will be *'a big step forward for fire control'* according to Graham McCann.

"This is a groundbreaking solution that has the potential to deliver significant benefits to blue light services and the general public. In addition to fire and rescue services, this technology could advance the way emergency calls are reported and dealt with by police, ambulance services, the maritime and coastguard agency, and mountain rescue services across the UK." George Greig, Business Director, Capita Communication and Control Solutions.