

## Risk Management

# Kent's intelligent targeting reaps benefits

Kent Fire and Rescue Service has improved community safety efficiency through intelligent targeting offered by a new customer relationship management system. Kent's Community Safety Development Manager **Jon Chapman** reports on the difference this has made to Kent's vulnerable communities

### KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE

service has turned how it deals with fire prevention and community safety initiatives on its head. A new customer relationship management (CRM) system went live in January 2008 after a year long trial phase. Since installation the system has proved itself by delivering a service efficiency improvement in its dedicated Home Safety Visit (HSV) team's bookings of greater than 100 per cent. This has enabled more sophisticated targets for fire prevention activities to be set from April 2008. But perhaps more exciting is its new found ability to target its proactive safety initiatives with much more accuracy and relevance to those members of society who are most at risk from fire.

### Case Study

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service's HSV programme had grown organically. Initially a pilot in a few districts, the programme was rolled out county-wide. Stations were responsible for generating, booking and delivering visits. The necessary paperwork was just that – paper forms to be filled out and submitted to divisional admin offices where data was entered onto a simple database. Initially the system worked well, but as it grew it was beginning to become a victim of its own success.

Operational fire officers were fitting the visits and the admin they generated around their essential emergency response work. The effect was that residents' HSV requests did not always receive a timely response. Queries from the public would come into service headquarters, perhaps with a request to reschedule a check, but there was no way of finding out which station or officer had



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booked the original visit. The public had 13 different numbers they could call to request a visit, but they had to ring, leave their contact details and wait for a call-back. The margins for error were significant. KFRS decided it needed a system that would manage the scheduling so that the public could book an appointment instantly and the visit could be both assigned to a team and tracked.

In 2004 the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister released funding for HSV programmes. For KFRS, this was the opportunity they had been waiting for to really make a difference with their community safety work.

KFRS looked into how other services were addressing the issue and after thorough research, engaging with several peers, defined the challenge and identified how they wished to invest to improve the service.

Initially KFRS was looking for an IT system that would simply manage the HSV programme. After an evaluation process it selected Microsoft Dynamics CRM, customised and integrated by public sector CRM specialists Optevia. However, during the feasibility study phase of the project it became clear that the CRM could actually do much more. The CRM system could also manage the information coming from KFRS' wider community safety programme. These activities have to be reported in Communities and Local Government Integrated Risk Management Plan returns. For example, the education team now logs all school visits in the CRM system and records the results – making completing IRMP returns much easier.

This also applies to the other community safety activity KFRS undertakes with society's most vulnerable groups. The ability to record this information centrally allows for sophisticated reporting. Kent's dedicated analyst teams are now able to map its prevention activities geographically – giving KFRS real visibility into what they are doing on a local level around fire prevention and community safety.

KFRS aspires to use the CRM to record all of its fire prevention activities to allow better data interrogation and to be much cleverer in terms of risk. For example if a fire does occur, the CRM can return data to show whether the service has been working with firesetters in that area or to see what prevention activities have happened – and to ask the question has it done enough in that locality?

### Benefits of the New System

KFRS has seen HSV programme efficiency improve by more than 100 per cent since installing Microsoft Dynamics CRM customised by Optevia. Between 2006 and 2007 Kent's dedicated HSV team delivered around 1,500 visits. From 2007 to 2008 the same team delivered 3,200. This means an additional six families every day in Kent receive free advice and smoke alarms to help prevent an accidental fire.

This translates to the HSV team delivering an average of 12 visits every day, compared to an average of six before. This is possible because of a 50 per cent reduction in paperwork. Previously the team lost half of their working week to admin.

by Jon Chapman

What's more, centralising admin means visits can be prioritised. The dedicated team, by definition, has more time for visits than stations that have to fit HSVs around essential emergency response. The dedicated team takes on urgent cases and those with special requirements or vulnerabilities – for example the elderly – residents suffering hearing loss who need special alarms, or those with mobility issues. The programme is more efficient with more visits taking place, and more effective with those in greatest need being prioritised.

### Improved Data Quality

Formerly a number of clerks were tasked with data entry, leading to potentially inaccurate and inconsistent data. Now there is central control, that data is accurate, it is also geo-coded and attached to output areas.

The CRM enables faster more accurate filing of IRMP returns each year, with changes to data sets easily accommodated and paperwork reduced significantly. The centralised recording of data means it is now almost 100 per cent accurate. Should changes to the IRMP data sets be requested, it is now possible through CRM to update the fields quickly and easily. In the past sensitive personal data, around ethnicity for example, might not have been collected or might not have been accurate. However, now the admin is centralised at HQ, sensitive information is collected from all callers using a set script, delivering far more accurate data.

Kent can now begin to interrogate its own data more intelligently to establish a clearer picture of risk. KFRS is using the cleaner data to understand its communities better, beginning to understand the correlation between several different factors and their impact on risk. This improved data is the biggest advantage of the new CRM system.

### Better Customer Service

Before the CRM was in place, booking and managing a HSV was a challenge for the public and for KFRS. There were 13 fire safety offices, 22 stations and the headquarters all of which had different numbers to call. Now there is just one freephone number: 0800 923 7000. The faster more efficient and prioritised service plus a single point of contact make it easier for the public to schedule their visits. One call puts a resident through to a dedicated team who can book appointments instantly. The team is trained to handle enquiries, can access relevant services and information and can track bookings to ensure a professional service to the public.

Resources are now focused most effectively on those most at risk, and methods of outreach targeted to best effect. Kent uses the FSEC (Fire Service Emergency

Cover) toolkit to break the county into around 5,500 risk-rated output areas. That data is overlaid with demographic profiling from Mosaic and with Kent's own incident and HSV data from the CRM system and a sensible weighting is applied. This returns a list of priority areas, so recognised by comparison to similar areas and their incident frequency rates. With that intelligence, the service is now able to target community safety activities accordingly.

The CRM system allows visibility into fire prevention and community safety activities which was impossible before, allowing KFRS to begin to measure impact. After six months if a HSV recorded a household as above average risk, the CRM system alerts KFRS to re-visit. The team can then go back to see if safety advice was acted on. The service believes that re-visits to earlier targeted areas will begin to show changes in risk status, perhaps as a result of fire prevention activities.

Certain demographics make fire more likely. KFRS uses the CRM to better target those individuals with appropriate services – more directly dealing with the risk and representing a much more effective use of resources. For example, KFRS implements proactive marketing to target areas offering appropriate safety information and support. The service then monitors response rates. If an area shows a bad response to outbound marketing, Kent act on that – sending in the district team for more direct outreach perhaps. Monitoring each campaign's response is allowing Kent to fine-tune their outreach activities to be more effective.

As KFRS' understanding of risk deepens, this is fed back into its activities. In April 2008 Kent launched new, more sophisticated fire prevention activity targets enabled by the CRM system. In addition to being measured by volume of HSVs, fire stations must also deliver HSVs to 50 per cent of homes in identified high risk areas.

### Improved Partnership Working

Partnership working has long been a priority for fire and rescue services and Kent is no exception. KFRS has a responsibility to work across agencies, to record that activity and to be accountable. The CRM system helps as it automates the business processes and services that support those relationships.

The CRM facilitates internal collaboration between KFRS teams – for example if a fire setter is noted during a HSV, the system automatically informs the Fire Setter team. The system also supports the work KFRS does with key public and voluntary sector stakeholders – such as Social Services, Help the Aged, and the local authorities. As an illustration, when KFRS interacts with a resident with a level of hearing loss, they can



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refer an initial visit to the Deaf Services Bureau. Following assessment the partner agency contacts KFRS to let them know what follow up is required.

In short, Kent is leading the field of 46 services in England in managing HSVs with this level of sophistication, and with the ability to record and therefore over time measure, other fire prevention and community safety activities. What began as a project simply to manage the booking and coordination of home visits is now delivering much more value in terms of appropriate and relevant targeted services, the benefits of which are now measurable.

At first sight perhaps the system is not so novel, but the quality of data and level of sophistication of analysis we are able to work with now is new. The rigour the system encourages in data recording and the mapping of our community safety programmes allow us to begin to understand what the home safety visit programme actually means.

Simply performing the home visits, just putting a smoke alarm into every household in the county is not intelligent or risk based. Increasing our understanding and identification of more vulnerable groups enables us to use our resources in the most effective and efficient way in order to reduce risk.

### About the Author:

Jon Chapman is Community Safety Development Manager at Kent Fire and Rescue Service. With KFRS for four years, Jon's main areas of interest focus on tailoring the Service's response to meet the needs of individuals and the IT based solutions that support those improvements. Prior to joining Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Jon worked in various roles within the marketing and media industries in Kent.