

# North Wales Fire and Rescue

## Better supporting frontline teams in the public sector

The emergency services increasingly rely on technology to support frontline teams and safeguard lives and property. Thanks to Sunrise, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service has now upgraded service management to eliminate paper-based processes, improve the user experience and to introduce a self-service portal that is increasingly becoming a one-stop shop for information from across the organisation, all contributing to frontline effectiveness.





Covering an area of 2,400 square miles North Wales Fire and Rescue Service helps to protect an estimated population of 678,461 people as well as hundreds of thousands of tourists and visitors. It has nearly 1,000 staff and 44 fire stations, many of which are crewed by retained firefighters, who are on-call to attend incidents when required.

### Supporting the frontline

Technology is mission-critical to the service's role, from the alerters (paggers) used to call retained firefighters to incidents, through control room systems to the mobile data terminals on appliances. The six strong IT support team, is therefore crucial to the organisation's success, handling thousands of calls per year. It operates 9-5 with call-out cover for emergencies.

"We rely on a lot of bespoke systems, which means service management has to be efficient and effective to ensure we are delivering on the frontline," says Steve Morris, ICT Technical Manager, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

"We also need to support a wide range of service requests from both front line and back office staff all of whom have essential roles in keeping the Service running successfully."

### The journey to ITSM

North Wales Fire and Rescue first installed Sunrise for IT service management in 2002, adopting an ITIL-based approach in 2014 around incident management and launching a self-service portal in 2018. However, Steve always felt that it was not maximising its use of the platform, due to conflicting pressures around workload, priorities and staffing.

"The self-service portal was a first step in driving change in our approach, and was successful in moving our end users away from the phone. What really accelerated our progress was bringing in new skills and approaches to the team," adds Steve.

Joining in April 2019 as ICT Support Officer, Louisa Phillips didn't have a typical IT background. Self-taught and returning to the workforce after a career break to raise a family, she brought a new perspective to IT service management. "While everyone agreed we needed to upgrade Sunrise, it wasn't seen as a priority. So I spent time with our team to find out what their pain-points were and how the platform could make their lives easier, which is now reaping results."



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## Bring users inside

In combination with Steve's engineering background, advice from Sunrise and attendance at multiple user groups, this approach has led to a complete move to ITSM 4, going live early in 2020. This provides for a user-friendly interface for self-service, management dashboards and a new automated approach to requests to create new starters/leavers and provide access to specific folders. Previously this was all paper-based, adding considerably to the time taken to authorise requests as forms had to be signed, authorised and manually sent back to IT.

"Sunrise is incredibly easy to customise, and talking to our account manager and other customers at user groups has really inspired us and opened our eyes to what can be done with the platform," explains Steve. "For example, Sunrise showed us how to turn our prehistoric paper forms into electronic ones, with a proper workflow to notify relevant people when they need to grant permissions, which has made a significant difference to the way we work."

The new Sunrise implementation also provides a platform for other departments to reach employees through the self-service portal. As well as IT-specific content, this includes training videos from the corporate communications team to make it easier to share knowledge, and to reduce the need for trainers to travel large distances to deliver courses.



Future plans could see further expansion. As well as potentially adding HR forms, the data protection team is evaluating switching to Sunrise to record and monitor incoming Freedom of Information requests. This would enable previously manual steps to be automated, with in-built SLAs ensuring response times are met, as well as providing a full audit trail.

"Our utopian dream is to become a portal for everyone as more departments come on board," adds Louisa. "As part of this we're looking at making self-service available securely outside our network – with a large number of retained firefighters who are rarely in a station this will make it easier for them to make contact and find the information they need."

While resource pressures mean that the Service's ITSM journey has taken time, Steve has always been confident in the platform and support that Sunrise has provided. "What I love about Sunrise is that it is so flexible and user friendly – and that the team there want us to do the best we can with the product. Together we've come a long way – but can see the potential to keep adding new services to drive even greater improvements going forward."



## Our customers

A wide range of customers uses Sunrise for a variety of different purposes, from ITSM and MSP or external customer Service Desks to HR and Facilities Management.

Read more case studies from public sector, not-for-profit and commerce at [www.sunrisesoftware.com/customers/](http://www.sunrisesoftware.com/customers/)

## About Us

Sunrise Software has over 20 years' experience building and implementing service management software that enables organisations to support both employees and external customers. Sunrise is designed to meet industry best practice and is easily configurable to meet individual organisations' specific needs. The platform is browser based, notably easy and intuitive to use.

Sunrise ITSM is suitable for IT departments providing technical and support services, while applications are available for Shared Services and external / third party Customer Service, as well as HR/ Payroll and Facilities Management. The software is available as a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution on the IBM Cloud platform, or on-premise, and is used and trusted by hundreds of high profile organisations in public sector and commerce.



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