



**EBOOK**

# A Vision of the Future of Fire & Rescue Services



Totalmobile



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# Introduction

Our Fire and Rescue Services have long been a pillar of society; their role as protectors sees them provide core services to the public and face unique challenges.

But as society changes, there are new, more complex emergencies developing, how they provide fire and rescue services cannot remain unchanged. Technology is an ever-growing presence and part of the everyday lives of customers and businesses alike. Embracing mobile technology must play a role in the future vision of our fire and rescue services.

In this eBook, we explore the current environment of our fire and rescue services and the challenges they face, before stepping into the future and assessing what steps should be taken to ensure they are able to continue to effectively serve the community.



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# The Fire and Rescue Service Today

Fire and Rescue Services face new challenges, not only in the community but in balancing reducing budgets and falling staffing levels.

Austerity, a growing population, increased housing and climate change mean that officers and mobile fire and rescue staff are facing increasing pressure to deliver a high standard of service with limited time and resources.

Fire prevention methods have improved general fire safety, but as the climate changes and the increased use of technology within the home advances new risks are emerging, placing increasing pressure on Fire and Rescue Services to innovate and find new ways of providing services to the community.

Additionally, due to the Grenfell Tower Fire there has been an increased awareness around compliance standards in fire safety

and a focus on the fire and rescue services provided in the community. The processes behind delivering those services and recording compliance have largely remained unaltered despite the changing expectations and needs of society. Processes continue to be largely manual and paper driven, causing problems when accessing and recording information at the scene of the emergency.

Visibility of data is limited, restricting officers at the scene and resulting in additional reporting taking place after the event, which can delay investigations and their ability to provide a high and consistent standard of service.

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# The Future of Fire and Rescue Services

Looking to the future of our Fire and Rescue Services, it is clear that there is a need for innovation to help improve the delivery of services and their ability to be reactive to the changing needs of society.

But where can these improvements be made?

According to a report by the Local Government Association – Fire Vision 2024, the government’s fire reform programme led by 45 Fire and Rescue authorities in England, there are a number of key areas which the fire and rescue service will continue to focus on. The report’s intention is to take the Fire and Rescue Service forward and deliver a “service

for the twenty-first century.” Technology plays a key role in ensuring this happens, technology such as mobile workforce management, which uses a mobile device and intuitive software to provide new ways for officers to access information and improve reporting and investigative work.



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# How Technology Can Improve Fire & Rescue Services

There are a number of areas that the report highlights are important for the continuing development of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Amongst those is the advancement of relationships with other services and partners, as well as relationships within the community to improve fire prevention work. Mobile technology could play a large role in encouraging these, providing immediate access to information from other services and to key partners through integrations.

As technology continues to be a dominant part of society, employing it in our Fire and Rescue Services will help to communicate safety information and support officers as they work in the community, enabling them to be agile to risks. Another aim highlighted in the report was the delivery of locally tailored services, overseen by a robust system of independent inspections through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), mobile technology would ensure seamless integration and provide officers with immediate access to this information directly on their mobile device.

The report highlights the need to recruit, retain and develop a workforce that is representative of society, to do this, it's important to address the challenges that the existing workforce face. With a lack of technology and support, those in the field have difficulty accessing and recording information, instead they spend their time taking notes by hand, capturing evidence on multiple devices, before returning to the office to re-enter the information and submit a report. Unfortunately, this introduces an opportunity for human error, details can be

forgotten, or information misinterpreted due to the delay in reporting. It can be difficult to escalate issues to specialist officers as manually this takes time and results in further delays. These processes put fire and rescue officers under increasing pressure to complete all their duties and report effectively despite working to full capacity.

As the demand on their capacity grows, those providing fire and rescue services face mounting stress, which can lead to stress related leave and a difficulty in recruiting into the industry. Technology will improve how they work, by giving them the tools to complete tasks more effectively and to meet the changing landscape of society head on. By providing effective mobile technology, work life balance is improved and a positive workforce improves recruitment and retention.

After the Grenfell Tower Fire, the regulation of building construction and fire safety became a major focus. However, compliance within Fire and Rescue remains paper driven, which is not only time consuming but costly in storage and security. With the growing population and the rising levels of housing it is already increasingly difficult to maintain high standards of compliance with the current system. Mobile technology provides an opportunity to innovate and improve compliance by providing access to compliance forms on their mobile devices with information already inputted and available with a few taps.

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# What benefits can be achieved?

*“Traditional barriers to efficiency must be removed and the standards to which we operate must be kept relevant to modern needs.”*

- Local Government Association – Fire Vision 2024

Addressing the identified areas of improvement will provide a wide range of benefits for the Fire and Rescue Service, their staff and the community. Mobile working technology provides a unique opportunity to improve working processes for those responding to emergencies.

With access to specific forms at the scene, improved evidence capturing and access to information through integrations all from their mobile device, officers are able to maximise their time and improve capacity to attend additional emergencies.

By providing staff with the latest mobile technology they are able to upskill and enjoy having the tools to do their job in new innovative ways. For the organisation, not only does mobile working technology reduce the cost of paper-based administration but reduces staff costs such as recruitment and training, as staffing levels improve with more efficient ways of working.

With access to the right information at the scene and detailed compliance forms on their mobile device, it becomes simple to ensure the right information is captured and for compliance standards to be improved. Reporting no longer has to take place after the emergency, back in the office, but can take place at the scene. Not only does this improve the accuracy of the information captured but also improves consistency of reporting and service delivery. By eliminating paper-based notes and instead utilising tailored forms that are available directly on their mobile device consistency can be achieved across all teams.



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## How do they achieve this?

The future of Fire and Rescue relies predominately on finding new ways to adapt to the needs of the community and to continue to attract a new workforce to the service.

Technology plays an essential role in this, mobile technology in particular enables officers to respond quickly to the growing types of emergencies.

It provides access to information when it is needed most and historical information that can help those attending the scene to be more informed in their investigations. It enables accountability with evidence based practices, which helps to improve service delivery in the community.

By driving innovation and technology, our Fire and Rescue Services can continue to be relevant in an ever-growing and changing society. The time of manual, paper-based processes is now restricting the service from meeting the expectations and needs of the community. Mobile technology holds the key to their growth.

*“We want to create a culture and environment where new technologies and data can add value to the activities of the sector and partners, provide improved services and accountability to the community, and allow outcomes to be properly evaluated against objectives.”*

- Local Government Association – Fire Vision 2024



Totalmobile will help you release the potential in your mobile workforce. Our 'mobile worker first' approach to innovation results in solutions people love to use.

Our customers are seeing significant increases in workforce capacity and cost savings, while also ensuring compliance and driving levels of service consistency. We will transform how your organisations works and help your people do more of the work that really matters.

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