

SPITFIRE IS A FAST RESPONDER FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

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Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) operates eight full-time fire stations across the county with another 14 stations operated by part-time retained fire fighters. In addition, there are four other admin sites with two of these being the primary/secondary core data sites. The core sites maintain other essential emergency data connections with key partner services including other county emergency services, the county council and the fire service in neighbouring Warwickshire.

Louis Mills is ICT Projects Officer for the NFRS, with responsibility for maintaining the wide area data network linking these sites. NFRS was using a national ISP to provide data links, but there were serious service issues as Louis confirms.

"We were supposed to get new orders for connections implemented in 60 days, but it was actually taking up to eight months to get connections and in one case over a year! We raised the issue repeatedly with the supplier, escalating our concerns up their management chain but nobody seemed able to tackle the issue and expedite the orders."

After discussions with senior management at NFRS, Louis was tasked with finding an alternative supplier. "Driving to work I had heard Spitfire's radio advertisements promoting their voice and data services so I gave them a call. Following which and after researching the market, Spitfire proved to be the best value, in addition to their expertise."



NFRS had a particular requirement which Spitfire was able to meet as Louis details.

"We wanted a 'wires only' ISP because for security reasons we manage our own routers, switches and other network hardware. Spitfire were happy to work with us on that basis."

Spitfire is a leader in advanced IP engineering solutions and is one of very few specialist business only ISPs, focusing on the needs of commercial and public sector customers such as NFRS with business class ISP services and support.

Spitfire expertise in IP engineering means it can provide a comprehensive service for customers, offering access to the UK's widest range of market leading, competitively priced Ethernet, FTTP, VDSL, SDSL, or ADSL circuits over the company's own core network.

Louis noticed an immediate improvement in order processing and implementation of new connections.

"It was such a refreshing change. Orders were processed and implementations went in exactly as stated, with everything confirmed by email."

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“If I want to talk through points about the orders I get through immediately to a technically qualified member of the support staff. And our account manager is very responsive, always getting back to me the same day, if he is not at his phone.”

Spitfire assigns a personal account manager for each customer to gain an understanding of their organisation and recommend the best solutions to support their requirements. Spitfire’s SLAs emphasise fast fault response and sophisticated on-line fault tracking, backed with a ‘Keep-Customer-Informed’ policy, ensuring regular updates by phone, email or text from a Support Technician who manages issues to completion.

The NFRS uses an MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) network to link its sites across the county. MPLS is a way of achieving multisite connectivity efficiently and with minimal cost compared to other methods. Spitfire’s MPLS solution provides cost effective, secure connectivity for NFRS to connect its multiple sites for data by using MPLS enabled Ethernet or broadband circuits combined.

Louis explains, “We use dedicated 100mb Ethernet links to the full-time fire stations which provides a direct fibre link to the premises. For the part-time retained stations we use VDSL (Very High Speed Digital Subscriber Line) connections.”

Of course, the data connections for an emergency service such as NFRS are ‘mission critical’.

“A signal over the network from our Fire Control sounds the alarm at the station and activates the main doors for the appliances, so it’s essential that the network performs correctly. And we have two other levels of backup for added resilience.”



Spitfire’s responsiveness has certainly impressed Louis. “I’ve just place an order for ten additional circuits with Spitfire and immediately got back an implementation date.

“We’re extremely impressed with Spitfire technical expertise and service delivery.”

Spitfire believes that tech support based on technical competence is incredibly important, and invests heavily in training all of its customer support technicians and account managers in IP Engineering, with study for qualifications such as Cisco CCENT and CCNA. The firm aims to operate at the highest standards and provide a quality management system which complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 for the sales, installation and support of integrated telecommunications and internet solutions. Louis continues,

“It’s great to be dealing with professional people who know their job and treat us as a valued customer. My only regret is that we didn’t discover and work with them sooner. We could have saved ourselves so much bother and time.”



**Northamptonshire
Fire and Rescue Service**

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