

**innogistic**

# Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Implementing CFRMIS Mobile

[www.innogistic.co.uk](http://www.innogistic.co.uk)

# Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Implementing CFRMIS Mobile

In a drive to improve productivity, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has implemented Innogistic's CFRMIS Mobile solution. In this case study, John Richardson from Innogistic talks to Dave Norgate, Group Manager from HFRS, about how this new solution has made a big difference.

## Case Study : Hampshire Fire



With 52 stations located in 10 groups, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service operates across an area that encompasses the M3, M27, the docks of Portsmouth and Southampton, the large commuter belt conurbations of Basingstoke, Farnborough and Aldershot and beautiful yet vulnerable rural areas such as the New Forest and the Hampshire Downs. Serving a population of 1.7 million, HFRS fire-fighters not only attend all types of fires, they respond to a wide range of emergencies, including road-traffic collisions, rescues and incidents caused by hazardous materials, pollution, flooding and high wind.

In line with their statutory requirements HFRS also conduct fire safety activities through a team of Fire Safety Inspectors. These activities include business fire safety visits to enforce fire regulations in non-domestic premises as well as fire risk reduction and education in the community as a whole.

Delivering ongoing service improvements, whilst maintaining a tight control on expenditure, is a challenge which, like all public sector organisations at present, HFRS constantly faces. Ever since the Hampton report of 2005 looked into the scope for improving regulatory inspections and enforcement, there has been a drive towards using



new processes and technology to gain efficiencies. As a result Fire and Rescue services such as Hampshire have been charged by the Department for Communities and Local Government to implement cost savings whilst also improving efficiencies and services.



At around the same time, changes in fire safety legislation occurred; Dave Norgate explains. *“Until recently, fire authorities were responsible for the inspections and for issuing the fire certification for commercial and workplace premises. However, the introduction of the Fire Safety Order (FSO) 2005 brought about a major change in fire safety legislation. Employers were made responsible for the fire safety of their buildings and were required to carry out their own risk assessment and compliance activities without the local fire service having to make an inspection visit. Should the fire service decide to visit the premises to conduct a fire safety audit, then the company’s fire responsible person provides us with their risk assessment as the starting point of the audit process. The fire service will audit the fire safety risk assessment by checking the supporting processes as well as undertaking a physical check on key areas within the building. This audit process has now replaced the old certification process but HFRS, like all other Fire and Rescue Services, still maintains a recording, consultative and enforcement role to ensure that fire protection regulations are being adhered to.”*

HFRS is recognised as being a proactive and forward-thinking brigade. Their Senior Management Team recognises that technology is changing rapidly and that new developments can mean new opportunities to improve their service. They are particularly keen to investigate new practices and supporting technology that will give efficiency gains and provide the best, most efficient, service to the community. With this in mind, HFRS took the decision to implement CFRMIS (Community Fire Risk Management Information System) developed by Bristol based software specialist, Innogistic, in order to collect and manage information relating to Technical Fire Risk throughout the county.

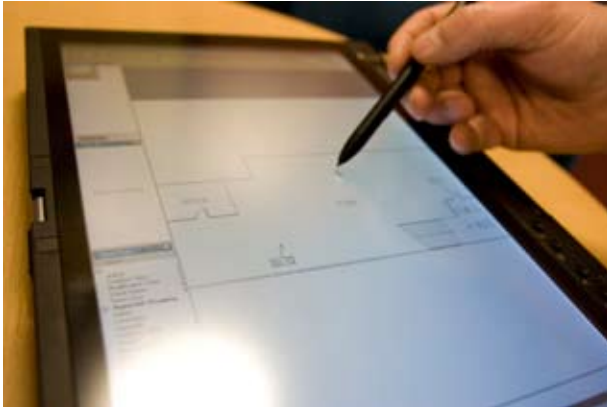
Dave continues; *“HFRS have records, held in CFRMIS, of all non-domestic premises in the county. Each premises has a risk rating which moves up or down dependant on the standards of fire safety found during the Fire Safety Audit conducted by the fire service. This information is used by us to ensure compliance at all business and commercial premises. It can also provide us with a profile of locations requiring monitoring and possible enforcement inspections. For example, there may be buildings that represent a particular fire risk due to the nature of processes occurring within them or the nature of goods stored within them. Alternatively it may be a business which has not previously heeded our non-conformance notification. An inspection may be needed in this instance so as to ensure compliance or gain information should we need to take stronger action.”*

The process of Fire Safety Inspections, although supported by CFRMIS as the main back office system, was primarily paper based and as such was both resource hungry and inefficient in terms of time and travelling. Innogistic realised that remote working using a mobile solution could provide an answer to these problems and help Fire and Rescue Services across the country. Significant advances in mobile technology and hardware provided the required infrastructure for mobile working and Innogistic developed CFRMIS Mobile to take advantage of these new developments.

CFRMIS Mobile is a software solution that Fire Safety Officers can use to download details of fire safety inspection jobs to a tablet PC. At the inspection site, prescribed data gathering forms, are used on the tablet laptop, to record all the details of the premise and any particular risks associated with it. Dave states that this point is of particular importance: *“Using the audit forms electronically on site is of particular value for us as it helps ensure that the proper procedures and legalities of a fire safety inspection are correctly adhered to. This has been a particular advantage of CFRMIS Mobile. If we need to consider the possibility of legal action, it is vital that we have done everything correctly in the run up to that action.”* Once the inspection is complete and the correct data collected, CFRMIS Mobile will then synchronise the new information back to the central CFRMIS database held at the fire and rescue service’s headquarters.



HFRS were quick to see the potential of CFRMIS Mobile and were one of the first to sign up to Innogistic's "Early Adopter" programme. This gave them the opportunity to help shape the initial and further development of the solution with the added benefit of a financial incentive.



Dave explains HFRS's decision to implement CFRMIS Mobile: "We could see the potential of the solution right from the start. We had a vision of our Fire Safety Inspectors working remotely, being able to access information prior to the visit and undertake data capture at the point of inspection, all without having to first travel to their main work base to collect and plan their jobs for the day. All of this is now a reality using CFRMIS Mobile. Our inspectors can now remotely connect to our network, download any completed jobs as well as pick up their future inspections, all with one visit to any of our branch offices or stations throughout the county. They can then plan their schedule of inspections much more efficiently and without the need to 'call in at the office' morning or evening. The difference this has made to travelling times and costs, and of course to our CO2 emissions, is very impressive. But importantly it has also greatly improved our productivity in terms of numbers of inspections undertaken."



There were initial concerns about capital investment costs in terms of new hardware as well as the cost of the software. Dave explains "Naturally when you instigate a new system like this you are conscious of the initial investment costs. However, we have found that in terms of pure hardware costs, the new system has given us

savings as we no longer need the traditional fixed desktop terminals that the inspectors used to use, which are paid for on a lease rental basis. This saving alone has more than covered the cost of the new tablet laptops." Dave further added: "This system has also allowed us to look into new ideas where our hardware is concerned. We have been very pleased with the performance of the tablet laptops we procured, as they are lasting longer than we initially predicted. We are now looking into portable printers which, if they work as we hope, will eventually allow our inspectors to print out any correspondence, forms or non-compliance documents, and deliver it personally to the business concerned at the end of the inspection, saving us a great deal in administrative time and postage."

Although all these advantages became apparent quite quickly, HFRS wanted to make sure that any improvements were correctly measured over a longer period of time, in this case over a full year of operation. "When you implement such fundamental changes in infrastructure and working practices, you need to ensure that they are delivering wholesale improvements in service delivery and cost. To find this out properly we approached the initial implementation of CFRMIS Mobile as a one-year trial, making sure we rigorously measured any changes or improvements and reported objectively on the findings. The whole purpose of implementing mobile working was to provide the most efficient and cost effective way of delivering fire safety enforcement in Hampshire, so we had to measure the system's impact on the broad spectrum of our Fire Safety Inspectors' performance as well as our infrastructure." The trial study initially involved eight fire safety officers throughout the County, although this has now been rolled out to all 30 of the county's inspectors, and measured elements of System Performance, HR and ROI. These elements included:

- Systems considerations such as:
  - o System and hardware performance including the connection between the tablet, the communications network (Hantsfirenet) and the central CFRMIS system.
  - o The ability of CFRMIS mobile to upload and download information at any HFRS venue.
- HR Considerations such as:
  - o The impact of mobile working on Fire Safety Inspectors (lone working, contact time, office time, job allocations etc).
  - o The identification of reduction or increase in sickness absence with regard to mobile working.
- ROI Considerations such as:
  - o Percentage improvements in average numbers of inspections carried out
  - o The net reduction in average cost per audit
  - o Any reductions on CO<sup>2</sup> emissions per audit



So how well did the trial go and how did CFRMIS Mobile perform? Dave again takes up the story. *"We were very pleased with the way this new system worked. As I have already implied, right from the start we began to notice a difference but it was not until we produced the final report that we were able to see how much of an impact CFRMIS Mobile had made. The new solution, once installed, gave us very few headaches and has performed exactly as we wished it to. The interface, utilising the workstation connection points at the regional offices and stations has proved robust and cost effective, especially when compared to other mobile solutions. The ability to upload and download jobs, with very few exceptions, has proven highly successful and our team enjoy the freedom and flexibility that mobile working has given them."*

*"Talking of the Fire Safety Inspection team, CFRMIS Mobile and the new mobile working arrangements have had a surprisingly positive effect on them. Most of our team have greeted the new solution favourably and have enjoyed the flexibility in working that these new arrangements have given them. It is always a good indicator when your team want to provide positive feedback to help HFRS and Innogistic further develop the system which, of course, we can do as part of Innogistic's Early Adopters Programme".*

*"We were also pleasantly surprised to find that, for the duration of the trial, we saw an average reduction in sickness absence of two days per person over the year. There was anecdotal evidence of this happening in other locations where mobile working has been introduced. Nevertheless we were delighted to find this happening in our trial."*

And what of the all important bottom line improvements?  
*"Once again we have been delighted with the results from the trial. The reduction in distance travelled as a result of*



*but the trial has provided us with a new baseline in CO2 emissions which we will be targeting to further improve upon in the future."*

*"Across the board we have seen improvements in the number of Fire Safety Inspections undertaken since CFRMIS Mobile was introduced. Interestingly, we have found that the benefits of mobile working are higher in rural areas due to the larger distances that must be travelled. But within more built up areas there were still significant benefits due to the ability of the system to allow multiple inspections to be undertaken over a period of several days before it becomes necessary to plug into Hantsfirenet and download the results. Even with these variations in mind however, we have seen an impressive 15% average productivity improvement in all our Fire Safety Inspections. This was achieved despite a reduction in our personnel during the trial period due to some staff turnover and others being promoted, which meant that our experienced inspectors needed to take time out to mentor new officers."*

And what about average costs? *"Although I can't talk about specific numbers, the results that we have achieved would be considered very reasonable in the circumstances and I am happy with the result. There is also no doubt that, the more we utilise CFRMIS mobile, the better and more efficient we will get at using it and the greater the benefit we will gain from it. I am also certain that Innogistic will make improvements to CFRMIS Mobile which will help to further improve our efficiency. Over a longer period of time I am certain we will continue to see further reductions in average inspection costs."*

## Innovative IT for a joined up world



### Innogistic Ltd

Hanover House Queen Charlotte Street Bristol BS1 4EX  
Call: +44 (0)845 071 6220 Fax +44 (0)117 904 6688  
Email: sales@innogistic.co.uk

