

Emergency

I Services Ireland



E-LEARNING MODULE

**IS CRITICAL FOR
AMBULANCE STAFF**

**UCC LEADS RESEARCH TO TEST
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

**RAPID RESPONSE TO IRISH AID
RECRUITMENT DRIVE**

**AGSI BACKS NEW AUTHORITY
TO POLICE THE GARDAI**



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3 NEWS UPDATE**21 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS**

The first eLearning module on Critical Incident Stress Awareness Training, recently launched by the National Ambulance Service CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) Committee, aims to deliver a high standard of training to all members of the National Ambulance Service at all grades.



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27 EXTRICATION & TRAUMA

Carlow Fire & Rescue Service and Laois Fire Service were the overall winners in both 'RTC Extrication' and 'Trauma' categories at this year's National Extrication Challenge in Bray, Co. Wicklow.



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35 CFOA CONFERENCE

Fire officers, academics, industry experts and government and local government officials from home and abroad will come together to discuss and debate 'Leading the Fire Service of the Future' at this year's Chief Fire Officers' Association conference on 7-8 May in Naas, Co. Kildare.



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37 EMS IRELAND GATHERING

EMS Gathering Ireland, which returns to Killarney in mid-May, will focus on 'Trauma, Education and Leadership', for doctors, paramedics, nurses and voluntary practitioners involved in the patient's journey from roadside to recovery.

39 MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Mountain rescue teams across Ireland are seeking a change to European legislation that would harmonise VAT exemption for all search and rescue teams.

45 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

UCC is leading an international consortium that has secured €3.5 million in EU research funding to standardise procedures in crisis management. The three-year project aims to develop new decision support systems emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery across borders.



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53 RAPID RESPONSE CORPS

Following Irish Aid's 2014 recruitment campaign for the Rapid Response Corps, 23 individuals have been selected to undergo a two-week training course in May before they are invited to join the roster for deployment to overseas aid missions.

63 INCIDENT RECORDING SYSTEM

Cork City Fire Brigade is the first emergency services agency in Ireland to purchase a new incident recording and management information system, following the launch of the 'IRS Plus', which has been designed for all fire and rescue services/mission critical services worldwide.

67 GP EMERGENCY CARE

A pre-hospital immediate medical care training initiative is providing GPs and GP Registrars with updated and best practice emergency care protocols, as well as the confidence to deliver the practical skills necessary to implement them.

71 SPECIAL REPORT

An emergency homeless centre, opened by Dublin Civil Defence earlier this year, has been forced to close its doors due to a lack of available resources. The Government is now planning to provide a sustainable housing-led approach to homelessness.

77 POLICING CONFERENCE

Factors that contribute to confidence in policing were discussed during a recent conference hosted by the Northern Ireland Policing Board in Belfast. In light of events within An Garda Síochána lately, there have been calls to set up a similar body for the Gardai.

83 'RESPOND 2014' REPORT

Community first responders hope to save 200 lives from cardiac arrest within the next year, delegates were told at 'RESPOND 2014' – the first national conference for community first responders which was held in Tullamore, Co. Offaly in March.

99 UK-IRELAND MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE

Workshops on water rescue techniques, trauma counselling, search management skills and mountain recovery vehicles will feature at the UK & Irish Mountain Rescue Conference on 12-14 September in the Scottish Highlands.

100 ARMED FORCES DAY

Northern Ireland's Armed Forces Day, taking place on 21 June in Newtownards, Co. Down, has become a major feature on the calendar north and south.



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101 CRITICAL HEALTHCARE

Critical Healthcare's €5 million contract to provide emergency and non-emergency medical products and services to the HSE National Ambulance Service will provide cost savings of over 30 per cent across the 90-plus ambulance stations nationwide.

107 IRISH GUIDE DOGS

The Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is looking for volunteers to run in the upcoming marathons in Dublin and Cork, in addition to its own 'Kinsale10' run.

108 OVERSEAS AID

Members of Dublin Fire Brigade have been working with Action Trust Ireland to develop and improve training and resources of local fire services in Lesotho, since the charity rolled out its first project there in 2011.

114 AVIATION AWARDS

The inaugural Aviation Industry Awards will be presented to those who have made an outstanding contribution to Ireland's aviation sector, at a special reception on 10 June in Dublin.

125 COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS

Pre-hospital care issues such as treatment techniques and procedures in haemorrhage control, key steps in research projects and auditing of voluntary organisation standards by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council formed the basis of a recent 'Scientific Day' organised by the Irish College of Paramedics.

128 CHILDREN'S AMBULANCE

The world's first interactive ambulance service, designed to make hospital journeys more about fun and less traumatic for young patients, has been gifted an assortment of

state-of-the-art equipment and technology by leading transportation and emergency services providers.

133 MEDICAL VILLAGE

Barringtons Hospital in Limerick could be the foundation for what its medical director Paul O'Byrne describes as a medical village for the city centre.

137 SATELLITE NAVIGATION

Now in its 11th year, the European Satellite Navigation Competition (ESNC) 2014 is inviting participants across Europe to submit their ideas for new opportunities in the €100 billion satellite services market.

139 DISABLED CRIME VICTIMS

A new study by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties has highlighted protection gaps for people with disabilities who become victims of crime.

141 CROSS-BORDER EXERCISE

A multi-agency cross-border emergency training exercise in Jonesborough, Co. Armagh has tested operational command and response from the responding agencies to an extensive railway and multiple road traffic collision incident in the border area.

147 WORLD RESCUE CHALLENGE

The Fire Service College will join forces with the World Rescue Organisation to host the 'World Rescue Challenge 2014' in the UK on 9-12 October for rescue and medical personnel to share rescue science and technology ideas.

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RNLI'S 'MAYDAY APPEAL' CALLS OUT FOR VOLUNTEERS

The RNLI is appealing for volunteers in Ireland to help with 'MAYDAY' from 1 to 5 May. The charity's forthcoming national fundraising event hopes to exceed the €114,000 raised last year.

The charity is calling on people to show their support by volunteering to help with street collections and a range of other fundraising events, which will be taking place across Ireland during the five days.

Events will have a 'welly' theme, in a nod to the iconic yellow wellies – worn by the RNLI volunteer lifeboat crew members.

Last year, RNLI lifeboat crews from Ireland's 44 lifeboat stations launched 1,087 times, rescuing 1,278 people. They are on-call 24/7, every day of the year, ready to respond to emergencies at sea.

Emma Gibson, RNLI Community Fundraising Area Manager, says: "We hope people will volunteer a bit of their time to help run some of the great fun events for the five days spanning the Mayday bank holiday weekend."

All money raised will be used to fund crew training,

buy new crew kit, or contribute towards the running costs of a lifeboat station. For further information and to volunteer visit www.rnli.org/Mayday or call 01-8951837.



Pictured with Lough Ree RNLI crew member Stan Bradbury are from left, Evie Hodges, Naomi Pickard and Ben Jordan.

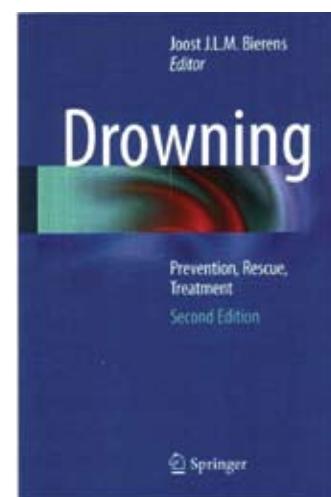
LIFESAVING FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

The 2014 Lifesaving Foundation Drowning Prevention and Rescue Conference will take place in Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin from 30 September to 2 October.

General details are available on www.lifesavingfoundation.ie. The key topic will address the 'Handbook on Drowning (Second Edition)' which is due for publication. The handbook contains over 1,200 pages of specific detail on all aspects of drowning prevention, rescue and treatment; authored by over 200 world experts.

Lifesaving Foundation Honorary CEO John Connolly said that a hard copy of the handbook costs over €200, adding that some papers can be quite technical.

"Working with the editor we aim to have a group of experts present the key points in plain language understandable by the general rescue community," Connolly told 'Emergency Services Ireland'.



INDIVIDUAL POST CODES DUE FOR DELIVERY BY 2015

Emergency services are finally to benefit from a new unique national post code system, due to go live in early 2015, following the recent announcement of the new €25 million system by Communications Minister Pat Rabbitte.

Every address in the country will have a new seven-character postcode by early 2015. An easy-to-remember identifier will be in the format A65 B2CD with the first three digits relating to the postal district.

When the system goes live, Ireland

will join other European countries, which have used postcodes for decades. But this country will be the first in the world to have a unique postcode for each individual address.

Communications Minister Pat Rabbitte said: "This will benefit the emergency services to locate destinations for call-outs, which in some instances are life and death situations.

"Given the prevalence of satellite navigation systems in cars, drivers will simply be able to insert a postcode into their device which will provide the accurate location," he said.



NEW WEBSITE TO SUPPORT PRE-HOSPITAL RESEARCH

A new website aims to encourage, educate and support pre-hospital researchers worldwide, and in a nutshell to be a 'one-stop shop' for all things related to pre-hospital research.

The website contains articles on reading papers, drafting proposals and ethics applications, through to upcoming research events and conferences, featured research, a forum for exchanging ideas and researcher support tools.

The founder of the website is Alan Batt, an Irish trained paramedic now living in Canada, and founder of the site. He told 'Emergency Services Ireland' that resources for pre-hospital researchers are few and far

between, adding that his site aims to remedy that.

"We hope to encourage pre-hospital providers worldwide to come together, collaborate and further the profession through research."

All resources on the site are free to use, and membership is not required. Contributions, he says, are always welcome, and details can be found on the website www.prehospitalresearch.eu



'LESS IS MORE' AT RESUS 2014

The RESUS 2014 conference will be held in Treacy's West County Hotel & Conference Centre in Ennis, Co. Clare on 13-14 November.

Due to popular demand the conference is returning to a two-day event. Last year's conference had the highest attendance to date and the RESUS committee is very confident that the 2014 conference will exceed this.

A number of nationally and internationally renowned conference speakers will discuss and debate a variety of topics based around this year's theme – 'Less is More'.

New to this year's event will be the addition of pre-conference skills workshops on the first day of proceedings. These workshops will include ECG Recognition & Interpretation, Environmental Resuscitation, and the Use of Ultrasound in the ED.

The research presentations at RESUS 2014 will form an integral part of the scientific programme;

a prize will be awarded for the best research presentation. Both oral and poster presentations in the fields of resuscitation science, emergency medicine and pre-hospital care will also be featured. The Scientific Committee of RESUS will issue a call for research abstracts this summer.

*Contact Bernie Woods @ 061-234615; email info@resus.ie or visit www.resus.ie for updates.



CLARE WINNER OF QUALITY STANDARD IN FIRE SERVICE

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service has joined Limerick County, North Tipperary and Carlow as the only fire authorities in Ireland to have achieved the prestigious OHSAS 18001:2007 certification.

The 'OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Requirements' standard was first published by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) in 2007. The standard sets out a preventative and proactive approach to identifying workplace hazards and assessing and controlling risk.

According to Adrian Kelly, Clare's Chief Fire Officer: "While we were always satisfied that we were achieving the highest possible standards, securing this accreditation helps us to promote this fact to the wider public throughout the county."

Ennis Station Officer Gearóid Blake, who was involved

in the NSAI's audit of the local fire service, stated that the certification will serve to remind them of how maintaining health and safety standards is central to the work carried out on a 24-hour basis, 365 days of the year.

"As someone who is on the frontline of managing the health and safety of fire service personnel at incidents, I am acutely aware of the benefits for both firefighters and the general public in enforcing these high standards," he said.

The awarding of OHSAS 18001:2007 certification follows just months after Clare County Council's Overall Local Authority Award at the 22nd Annual National Safety Awards scheme, hosted by the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) and the Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISG).

*For more on OHSAS 18001:2007 certification visit www.nsai.ie.

HUMAN COST OF FURTHER DELAYS IN MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

The delays in mental health funding, including the appointment of 250-280 new staff and the remaining staff, due from 2013 until the latter half of 2014, will have a real human cost, according to the Director of Mental Health Reform.

The HSE National Service Plan 2014 indicates that certain initiatives, including the appointment of new staff for community mental health teams allocated for 2013 and 2014, will be "specifically targeted towards the latter half of 2014 to allow savings to be utilised on specific services on a timing delayed basis."

Shari McDaid, Director of Mental Health Reform, commented: "Unfortunately, mental health needs do not operate on a 'timing delayed basis'." She said the demand on child and adolescent mental health services is running at 13 per cent above the anticipated level. Research published by the Royal College of Surgeons also shows that children and young people in Ireland have a higher rate of mental disorder than elsewhere in Europe or the USA.

The HSE is to produce an implementation plan

for the final years of 'A Vision for Change'. The lack of a plan was identified by Mental Health Reform as a gap, hindering progress." The introduction of a performance indicator on psychological therapies within the implementation plan would be welcome. It is also important that the plan includes costs and timelines, and contains clear targets and performance indicators," concluded McDaid.

Mental Health Reform is a national coalition of 39 member organisations and promotes improved and prioritised mental health services in Ireland.



WEEE CAMPAIGN SPREADS SOME SUNSHINE FOR CHILDREN'S CHARITY

Since the 'Spread a Little Sunshine' campaign for the LauraLynn Foundation was rolled out by WEEE Ireland three years ago, the organisation has recycled 57 million batteries in its designated areas and raised much-needed funds for LauraLynn in the process.

WEEE Ireland launched the campaign in 2011 to encourage the public to recycle portable waste batteries, raise awareness of the importance of battery recycling for the environment and to reach recycling targets, whilst also raising funds for LauraLynn, Ireland's first hospice for children.

Ireland's favourite red-haired puppet 'Bosco' (pictured here) is currently raising awareness for the initiative and encouraging everyone to recycle their waste portable batteries with WEEE Ireland for the campaign.

The WEEE Ireland blue battery boxes are on display across Ireland in retail outlets and other locations. They are the simplest outlet for the general public to recycle their batteries for free. Every battery counts when it comes to reaching the EU targets as well as raising funds for LauraLynn, so it's important for everyone to help in collecting the batteries.

WEEE Ireland's free battery collections extend to all waste batteries and a range of collection points can be provided to anyone looking to 'Spread a Little Sunshine'.



Prior to the battery regulations, many entities had existing protocols and environmental procedures and contracts to collect and recycle waste batteries. These services can be provided free of charge by WEEE Ireland-approved now contractors.

The WEEE Ireland blue battery box makes the perfect office or work station solution for battery recycling and has been developed in line with the necessary transport regulations!

Contact WEEE Ireland to get a blue box, visit www.weeireland.ie for useful information on safe battery storage and handling or call 1890 253 252.

'COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER' AND 'EMERGENCY RESPONSE' AWARDS

The 'Community Volunteer' and 'Emergency Response Person of the Year' were recognised for their efforts during 2013 at the LAMA (Local Authority Members' Association) Awards ceremony earlier this year.

The 'Community Volunteer' accolade was presented to Aiden Thomas, who is a member of Tallaght community group 'Trustus We Care', which has expanded to help all of South Dublin.

He was appointed as a board member of Trustus (formerly Tallaght Welfare Society) at its start-up in 1969, and is still a member and secretary of the board, having served also as chairperson.

Thomas served five years as a board member of the Citizen Information Centre (CIC), is the current chair of Partas Enterprise Centre that operates four enterprise centres in Tallaght employing 350/400 in their incubator units. He is a board member for 25 years.

He participated in and with community organisations in lobbying for various community issues. In April 2013 he was instrumental and on organising committee in a one-day seminar 'A Vision of Justice for Tallaght' where Fr Peter McVerry was guest speaker.

The 'Emergency Response Person of the Year' went to Daniel Hughes, who was nominated by Roscommon County Council in this category.

The 18-year-old from Boyle was awarded for his heroic efforts in rescuing two young people who got into difficulty whilst swimming the river. Hughes was in an area known as Assylinn in the Roscommon town, when he realised that the two 13-year-old youths were in extreme difficulties. He immediately on impulse dived into the river and brought both boys to safety.



Pictured at the 'Community Volunteer of the Year' award to Aiden Thomas were (l-r): Phyllis Duff, Mary Roberts, SDCC's Cllr Paddy Cosgrave, Aiden Thomas, LAMA's Cllr Hugh McElvaney and SDCC's Cllr Mick Duffy.



Pictured at the presentation of the 'Emergency Response Person of the Year' award to Daniel Hughes were (l-r): Roscommon's Councillors Martin Connaughton, Tom Crosby and Emmett O'Halloran pictured with Daniel Hughes, Frank Dwyer, Lindsey Delaney, LAMA's Cllr Hugh McElvaney and Roscommon County Manager Frank Dawson.

AMBULANCE SERVICE IS 'RUNNING ON EMPTY'

The National Ambulance Service Representative Association (NASRA) has said the service is under-resourced and "running on empty", pointing to insufficient personnel or vehicles to adequately meet response times set by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

HIQA has set a target for the National Ambulance Service to reach 85 per cent of call-outs within seven minutes and 59 seconds.

Michael Dixon, NASRA national chairman, said there are gaps in the provision of ambulance services across the state.

"[They are] mainly due to base closures, non-replacement of absent personnel, whole-time equivalent posts not being filled, and lack of investment across the services."

"Over the past number of years, the cuts to budgets have seen a remarkable decrease in investment in the provision of pre-hospital emergency care."



RESEARCH RESULTS IN DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S CARE

Research funded by the Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF) through the National Children's Research Centre (NCRC) in Crumlin has resulted in the implementation of a ground-breaking pain relief medicine for sick children.

Out of almost 2,500 children transported by ambulance to emergency departments in Ireland in a 12-month period, the research reveals that two-thirds had suffered moderate to severe pain, but less than half had their pain managed appropriately before arrival at the emergency department.

Intranasal fentanyl is a painkiller which allows for the administration of strong pain relief to children by advanced paramedics prior to their arrival at the hospital. The ease of application through a nasal spray allows paramedics the opportunity to overcome some traditional hurdles that prevented them from administering pain relief to children.

Prof Ronan O'Sullivan of the NCRC commented; "The application of Intranasal Fentanyl in the ambulance setting for children is a fantastic breakthrough in children's medicine. Funding supplied by the Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF) is crucial to Irish medical practice. Overall, it will revolutionise the levels of care afforded to sick children in Ireland."

This research has led to calls for revision of the clinical practice guidelines used by pre-hospital

practitioners in Ireland for acute pain management in children. These revised clinical practice guidelines now include an age-appropriate pain assessment tool to grade pain intensity in distressed children.

Intranasal fentanyl acts as an alternative to oral/intravenous morphine to treat acute and severe pain. A comprehensive online up-skilling module has also been developed to deploy these guidelines nationally, and this treatment is now available for use.

Pain is the most common symptom in the emergency setting. The disparity in managing acute pain between adults and children has been described in detail over the last 25 years, with adults twice as likely to receive appropriate pain relief.



Paramedics can now administer the intranasal fentanyl pain medication to children.

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST CAMPAIGN IDENTIFIES FOUR 'AT-RISK' TEENS

The family of a young man who died from a sudden cardiac arrest has helped identify four 'at-risk' teenagers, after launching an awareness campaign in West Cork recently.

Colin Callanan's mother Marie said she is delighted the teens, who underwent screening at her late son's former school, have now been referred for further cardiac screening.

"Rather than letting Colin's death be another statistic, we said 'let's try and raise awareness of this huge problem — Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome'." She has now appealed to all secondary schools to arrange cardiac screening for first-year students, and to make 'CPR' and 'First Responder' training part of transition-year programme.

Colin Callanan (29), a father of one from Innishannon, Co. Cork, was working for Australian firm AMS services and maintenance. Seemingly fit and healthy, he decided last April to travel to the Thai island of Koh Tao to get a rescue diving certificate. But tragedy struck during his dive on 13 April 2013 and while initial reports suggested he had drowned, it later

emerged that he had suffered a sudden cardiac arrest.

Marie said she, her husband Donal, and their children, Sarah and Simon, in Innishannon, Keith and Julie, in Perth, and Colin's son Lee, were shocked to learn of Colin's unknown cardiac condition.

Family members were later screened at the Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) Centre at the Adelaide and Meath Hospital in Dublin. CRY Ireland is a registered Irish charity, established in 2002 by parents and relatives who have experienced the effects of sudden and unexplained deaths within their families. CRY does not receive any government funding.



C R Y

Cardiac Risk in the Young

CRYP Centre, Adelaide & Meath Hospital, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Tel: 01 4525482

CRY Helpline: 01 8395438

Email: info@cry.ie

Web: www.cry.ie

CENTRAL DECONTAMINATION UNIT OPENS IN CAPPAGH HOSPITAL

A newly-opened €5 million Central Decontamination Unit at Dublin's Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital is the first of its kind in Ireland to provide commercial central decontamination services to the wider healthcare and associated industries, in addition to meeting the needs of Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital.

Funded by the HSE, the Cappagh Hospital Foundation and Zehnacker Ireland Healthcare through a Joint Venture Agreement at Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital, the new unit was constructed to be fully compliant with the HSE standards, European standards and ISO standard 13485. This will ensure that all medical devices processed in the new unit are decontaminated to the most current Irish and European requirements.

The new unit is commercially managed by Zehnacker Ireland Healthcare to provide fully accredited, HSE and European standard compliant decontamination services to the Irish healthcare industry. It was specifically developed to allow other healthcare facilities to use the decontamination process, which is common practice in most European healthcare settings.

In recent years the hospital has completed major developments including new theatres, a 10-bed isolation unit and the purchase of a 3-Tesla MRI unit. Cappagh carries

out elective orthopaedic surgery for six adult and children's hospitals in the east: the Mater Hospital, Connolly Hospital, Beaumont Hospital, St James Hospital, The Children's University

Hospital Temple Street, St Vincent's University Hospital.

Cappagh is a major teaching institution with undergraduate and postgraduate training facilities in medical, surgical anaesthetic and nursing programmes in conjunction with the Royal College of Surgeons, UCD and Dublin City University.

It has 157 beds for adults and children. On average it carries out approximately 3,000 major patient operations, 8,000 minor operations and 12,000 out-patient reviews annually.



Mary O'Rourke, patron of Cappagh Hospital Foundation and Nikolai Burkart, chairman of Zehnacker Ireland Healthcare, officially opened the new unit on 11 April. (Pic: Lar Boland)

CONCERN OVER SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES FOR SOUTH SUDAN

Concern has recently started to distribute survival kits to help vulnerable families affected by the violence in South Sudan, but with resources stretched the Irish aid organisation urgently needs more supplies.

Returning from a recent trip to South Sudan, Senior UN Official, John Ging said: "The scale of death and destruction in (South Sudan) since last December is appalling. The people are facing huge challenges and they deserve the support and attention of the international community. It is essential for aid to be delivered on the massive and swift scale that is needed."

Nearly one million people have received some humanitarian relief since January 2014, but much more remains to be done, he said.

Since the start of the brutal crisis, thousands of people have been killed. More than one million people have fled their homes, with over 250,000 crossing into neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. Nearly five million people now urgently need basic humanitarian aid in South Sudan.

"Our teams are working hard to help those most in need. As part of our response we have started distributing survival kits but our resources are stretched so we urgently need more supplies.

"A sum of €35 could provide one family with a survival kit. Kits contain plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, blankets, mosquito nets, soap and kitchen utensils," noted Ging.



€2.5 MILLION SUITE OF SCANNERS FOR CORK'S MERCY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

With almost 10,000 CT scans currently performed annually within Cork's Mercy Hospital, the introduction of two new scanners will further improve the services and care offered to patients.

The new CT imaging suite is home to two new Toshiba Aquilion scanners. Through 'volumetric imaging' of the body, the scanners will enable the diagnosis of a wide range of diseases, and allow the staff of the Radiology Department to effectively monitor the progress of patients who are undergoing certain treatments.

The suite was jointly funded by HSE/The Mercy University Hospital and The Mercy Hospital Foundation. The Foundation raised €1 million in the last three years to specifically fund the equipment which will have a significant benefit to the quality of radiology services available.

With the significant improvement in image quality delivered by the new scanners, the radiologists now have far more detail and information available when they review the patient's scans, which improves their ability to diagnose disease. Combined

with Toshiba's latest 'dose-reduction' technology, and ultrafast scanning times, the hospital can now provide the latest technology to both adult and paediatric patients.



Micheál Sheridan, CEO of the Mercy Hospital Foundation, and Sandra Daly, CEO of the Mercy University Hospital, pictured with Minister for Agriculture, Marine & Food Simon Coveney who officially opened the new CT imaging suite on 4 April.

AGREEMENT REACHED ON PROVISION OF CYSTIC FIBROSIS FACILITIES

Agreement has been reached on the provision of specific Cystic Fibrosis (CF) facilities at Cork University Hospital (CUH), between 'Build4Life' and HSE/CUH Management.

Build4Life, formed in 2007, has to date raised €3.5 million in funds to develop lifesaving inpatient and outpatient facilities for People with Cystic Fibrosis (PWCF) at CUH, which cares for 25 per cent of Ireland's CF population.

Build4Life, which is run voluntarily by PWCF, their family and friends, was the first charity in Ireland to raise funds for CF facilities in any Irish hospital.

Thanks to the improvements in facilities and treatments, PWCF are living longer. In 2005, CUH cared for 85 CF adults; this increased to 160 in 2013, and is estimated to reach 250 by 2020. Even though PWCF live longer, one

statistic remains the same – over 90 per cent of PWCF die from respiratory issues, which is why the development of a state-of-the-art Respiratory Ward (Ward 5B) is essential to extend the lives of PWCF using the CUH facilities.

Ward 5B was proposed as a new, high-tech respiratory ward. However, Build4Life was informed that CUH had no funds to develop this ward. Taking a proactive approach and thanks to the generosity of the general public, family and friends of PWCF, Build4Life raised €2.3 million to fund the ward.

This money was raised with the understanding that 10 beds out of the 20 would be ring-fenced for CF patients and an additional one-bed unit in the Renal Ward for CF patients with infections like cepacia, who couldn't be treated in the CF ward.

DUBLIN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SEMINAR 2014

As part of National Volunteering Week 2014 (12-18 May) the Dublin Volunteer Centres, in conjunction with Volunteer Ireland, are hosting the third annual Dublin Volunteer Management Seminar on Tuesday, 13 May.

The seminar takes place at the Conference & Learning Centre, Citi, 1 North Wall Quay, Dublin 1. The venue is wheelchair accessible and entry is by e-ticket only. The event is targeted at groups and organisations from the Greater

Dublin Area who currently involve volunteers or those thinking of involving volunteers; and individuals who work directly with volunteers or who are responsible for managing volunteers in some capacity.

Registration can be made online at www.volunteerdublin.eventbrite.ie. Ticket prices (€20-€35) exclude booking and administration fee.

For Twitter updates #DVMS for the Dublin Volunteer Management Seminar and #NVW14 for the National Volunteering Week 2014.



INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO STRESS AWARENESS TRAINING

THE FIRST eLEARNING MODULE ON CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS AWARENESS TRAINING HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY THE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE CISM (CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT) COMMITTEE. JOINT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DAVID MAHER SAYS IT WILL DELIVER A HIGH STANDARD OF TRAINING TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE AT ALL GRADES.

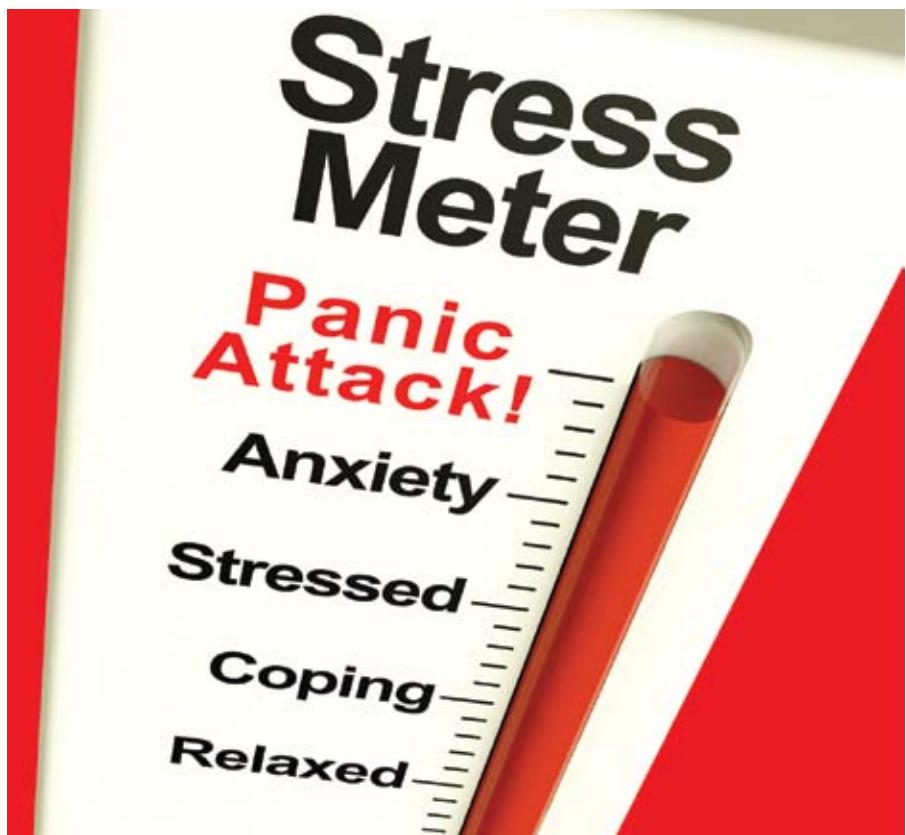
Have you noticed all the acronyms used nowadays in workplaces to describe various processes and procedures? Conversations can seem like double Dutch sometimes at some workplaces.

One such acronym is 'CISM', which stands for Critical Incident Stress Management. The technical description for CISM is it's a comprehensive, integrative, multicomponent crisis intervention system. In simple terms CISM is psychological first aid, most of us have benefited from first aid sometime or another in our lives. Essentially first aid is a basic simple intervention to prevent the injury from getting worse.

Psychological first aid can also be a simple intervention to prevent things from getting worse. It has to be said Irish people are not great when it comes to mental health; in a report by the HSE in 2007 it suggests that all too often our reactions can be negative, uninformed and disinterested and yet mental health is vital for us all both at work and at home.

Employers have various legal duties and moral and ethical reasons to ensure employees are protected. Within the realm of the emergency services CISM is used widespread as a system to provide support to staff but also to protect the organisation from litigious claims.

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS
There is a compelling evidence that CISM, if used correctly, will increase morale and reduce sick leave, consequently leading to increased efficiencies in the workplace. There are various examples of legal cases in Ireland where claims have cost the state hundreds of thousands of euros in



compensation because effective support systems were not in place in the past.

However, there are also examples in the courts where CISM is used effectively and has protected the organisation.

At the National Ambulance Service CISM Committee we have recently launched the first eLearning module on Critical Incident Stress Awareness Training in collaboration with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council.

This is an innovative approach in learning and allows the user to access the learning module in their own time from their own device. As work demands users can stop and start the training or they can

complete it outside of work schedules; either way it is a very efficient way to deliver CISM training.

QUALITY TRAINING MODULE

The training module is also interactive and the user engages in the exercises at various different levels during the module. It must be noted that the training module is of a very high quality with cases of real-life stories and different examples of how one can access supports.

The module is evidence based on research conducted from the CISM Committee over last ten years. Sharon Gallagher, Principal Academic

Researcher, and Brian Glanville. Clinical Psychologist at the CISM Committee, have been the lead professionals in developing the main content of the eLearning module.

I am personally delighted to see its launch as it will deliver a practically high standard of training to all members of the National Ambulance Service at all grades. Sometimes training can be inconsistent, people might miss the training day, even with the best trainers there can be variations in the training, but an organisation can be assured of a particular standard of delivery with this method of eLearning.

PEER SUPPORT WORKERS

However, in saying that I would issue a word of caution – stress awareness training must work in conjunction with the CISM systems established. Peer support workers are key to the effective roll out of CISM in an organisation, and while eLearning offers a credible standard of training it is vital that the human interaction given by the peer support workers is fully supported by an organisation.

Having policies in place is hugely important for CISM to operate but this has to be done in conjunction with the interaction of the peer support workers. They are trained individuals who work in this area in addition to their normal job; it's a confidential role and it supports workers at all levels of the organisation.

The proactive management of critical incident stress management in the workplace or in the voluntary sector helps organisations prevent psychological injuries and ill-health at work.

TIME TO DISCUSS ISSUES

As a peer support worker it's my experience that emergency services personnel often just need that 10 or 15 minutes to discuss issues that may be affecting them. It's really important to understand that it is quite normal to have strong feelings or emotions during or in the aftermath of an event.

We have seen substantial changes in state organisations over a short few years and with continuous change ahead I see eLearning as part of that transformation as it fits into today's new working atmosphere. It offers a certain standard of training, it has a lower impact on the environment and certainly for larger organisations it can be significantly cheaper to deliver.

A huge thanks to the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) who sponsored the training, and in particular to Jacqueline Egan, Programme Development Officer, and Darren Hedden, Director of Production at Dillon Productions.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the NAS CISM Committee who supported the eLearning concept and to Bernie Brady, EAP HSE.

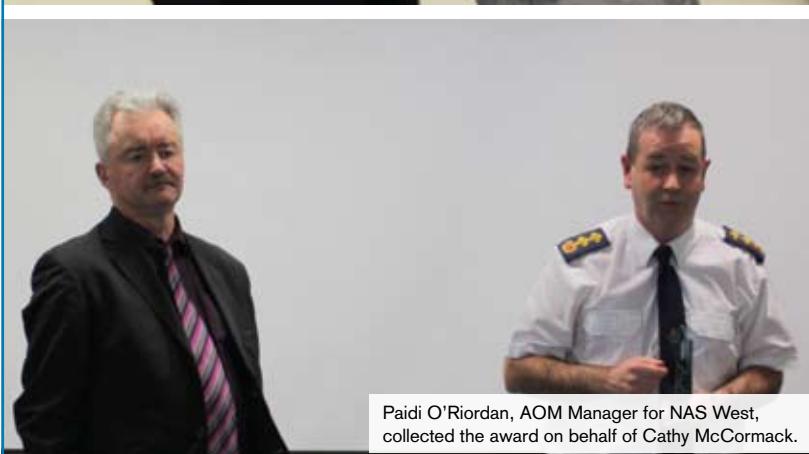
PEER SUPPORT WORKER AWARDS 2013

The launch of the 'eLearning module on Critical Incident Stress Awareness Training' took place at a seminar held at the National Ambulance Service College, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The event included an overview of the CISM eLearning module, as developed by the NAS CISM Committee, in collaboration with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council.

The following Peer Support Worker Awards for 2013 were presented by Frances Rogers, HSE's Assistant National Director of Human Resources, for each NAS region.



Jim Leonard was presented with his PSW Award for NAS North Leinster.



Paidi O'Riordan, AOM Manager for NAS West, collected the award on behalf of Cathy McCormack.



Mary O'Neill-Houlihan, CISM co-ordinator for NAS South, collected the award for Adrian Collins

NATIONAL FIRE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES IS NEEDED

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED FIRE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ON A NATIONAL BASIS IS NOW MORE URGENT THAN EVER IN THE LIGHT OF THE CRISIS IN THE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICES, ACCORDING TO JOHN KIDD, NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF THE IRISH FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES ASSOCIATION.

The litany of failures and mismanagement of the National Ambulance Service, as shown in the recent 'RTE Prime Time Investigates' programme, cannot be addressed adequately under the present NAS management structures.

As communities evaluate their present emergency medical care needs, they may focus exclusively on patient transportation issues. Most research, however, has demonstrated that rapid, on-scene medical intervention produces the best patient outcomes.

The ride for the sick or injured person in the ambulance is only part of the system. A comprehensive EMS system includes rapid response, intervention, stabilisation, and then transportation to a definitive care facility, if needed.

An integrated fire-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) offers the only hope of addressing the problems faced by the National Ambulance Service in meeting emergency response times set down by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

The current structure of the emergency services is wasteful, inefficient and incapable of meeting response time targets when resources are being cut across the country.

A fire-based EMS as part of a National Fire and Ambulance Service will save lives, save costs and meet the most rigid response time demands being set down by HIQA.

IFESA has been the leading advocate for the development and co-ordination of a national fire and ambulance service in Ireland to respond to medical emergencies and the need for such a service now has never been greater.

A better chance for patient survival

is the true measure of quality for any pre-hospital emergency medical system. Dublin Fire Brigade firefighter paramedics respond annually to approximately 80,000 medical incidents and have the second best record for surviving out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the world as reported by European Society of Cardiology in 2011.

Fire service-based EMS provides this pivotal public safety service whilst also emphasising responder safety, competent and compassionate workers, and cost-effective operations.

The service most capable of rapid multi-faceted response, rapid identification and triage to the appropriate facility would be the development of this EMS system as operated in 90 per cent of North American cities.

As the debate rages on about the failure of the current emergency systems to meet critical response times it is time for national and local politicians, health service planners and the wider community



John Kidd, IFESA national chairman.

to acknowledge the need for a fire-based EMS service which can guarantee compliance with the HIQA standards and deliver the best chances of patient survival.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – 'WRITE TO REPLY'

The views expressed in this article are entirely those of John Kidd in his position as national chairman of the Irish Fire and Emergency Services Association (IFESA).

If you have certain viewpoints and issues you wish to highlight on foot

of this article, please email The Editor grace@emergency-services.ie These will be included in a new 'Letters to the Editor' section in the next issue of 'Emergency Services Ireland' and also online in our new website www.emergency-services.ie



NATIONAL WINNERS LOOK FORWARD TO WORLD RESCUE CHALLENGE

FIRE SERVICE TEAMS FROM CARLOW AND LAOIS WERE THE OVERALL WINNERS IN 'RTC EXTRICATION' AND 'TRAUMA' CATEGORIES AT THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL CHALLENGE IN BRAY, CO. WICKLOW. BOTH TEAMS WILL NOW GO ON TO REPRESENT IRELAND AT THE WORLD RESCUE CHALLENGE IN THE UK'S FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE IN OCTOBER.

This was the sixth annual National Extrication and Trauma Challenge organised by Rescue Organisation Ireland (ROI).

This emergency services voluntary organisation, which was set up in 2008, regularly runs skills training days across Ireland as well as this annual national challenge, which is centred round two events:

- The Extrication Challenge:** A five or six-person team of firefighters must safely extricate trapped live casualty(s) from crashed cars in a simulated Road Traffic Collision (RTC) within a specified timeframe.
- The Trauma Challenge:** A two-person team of firefighters/medics must treat a live casualty involved in a traumatic incident within a specified timeframe.

Carlow Fire & Rescue Service took the honours in the Extrication Challenge, while the Laois Fire Service team was the overall winner in the Trauma Challenge.

The winning fire service teams from Carlow and Laois will now go on to represent Ireland at the World Rescue Challenge on 9-12 October at the Fire Service College in Moreton-on-Marsh Gloucester (see pages 153-155 for further details).

SHARING SKILL SETS

ROI held this year's event in Bray, Co. Wicklow on 5-6 April, which was attended by 21 fire and rescue service teams from around the country, in addition to teams



from Albufeira in Portugal, London and Hampshire.

According to ROI secretary Pádraig Ó Longaigh, "This unique training event sees emergency services teams take part in the 'Extrication' and the 'Trauma' challenges with internationally accredited assessors from Ireland, Canada, Scotland, England, Portugal and Spain adjudicating performance levels."

He added that it also provides all fire service personnel the opportunity to come

together to promote and share skills and experience in vehicle rescue and casualty care training. "Fire and rescue services respond to thousands of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) annually on our roads and have to deal first hand with the many casualties and deaths.

"Experience shows that such participation and interaction greatly assists with the development of vehicle rescue and casualty care skills within the fire services," he added.

Results of National Extrication & Trauma Challenge 2014



Extrication Challenge

Best Overall RTC:

- 1st Place: Carlow Fire Service
- 2nd Place: Cork Fire Service
- 3rd Place: Laois Fire Service

Best Medic: Cork County Fire Service

Best Technical Team: Laois Fire Service

Best Overall Rapid Scenario: Carlow Fire Service

Best Complex Scenario: Carlow Fire Service

Trauma Challenge

1st Place: Laois Fire Service

2nd Place: Cork County Fire Service

3rd Place: Greystones 2

Best International Trauma: London




RESCUE ORGANISATION IRELAND

In addition to the annual National Extrication and Trauma Challenge, Rescue Organisation Ireland (ROI) regularly runs skills training days across Ireland. As a member of the World Rescue Organisation, the winning teams from its national challenge go on to represent Ireland in the World Rescue Challenge, which take place this year in the UK's Fire Service College on 9-12 October.

ROI was set up in 2008 as an emergency services voluntary organisation and registered charity to:

- (a) Develop extrication and trauma skills,
- (b) Provide a forum for emergency service personnel focussing mainly on RTCs,
- (c) Provide a platform for international best practice in dealing with RTCs and other trauma incidents.

*For more information visit www.rescue-org-ireland.com



REALITIES OF EVOLVING SECURITY THREATS

NOW IN ITS SIXTH YEAR, 'COUNTER TERROR EXPO' TAKES PLACE ON 29-30 APRIL IN LONDON. THIS PREMIER INTERNATIONAL EVENT TARGETS THOUSANDS OF BUYERS AND SPECIFIERS FROM THE SECURITY SECTOR WITHIN GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, EMERGENCY SERVICES AND THE SECURITY SERVICES.

Akey feature of 'Counter Terror Expo 2014' will be its education programme comprising in-depth free-to-attend seminars, providing visitors with the opportunity both to examine newly-launched products and review successful case studies.

Over 400 exhibitors are scheduled to attend the show, while a roster of speakers will represent the Home Office, emergency services, government departments, NATO, NGOs and the private sector. In total, they will deliver 100 conference sessions organised around a number of themes.

GLOBAL COUNTER TERRORISM

Multilateral counterterrorism is an ever evolving field influenced in no small part by the changes of the Arab Spring revolutions and the profound regional consequences arising from the ongoing conflict in Syria.

The global security situation continues to unfold, forcing nations to constantly reconsider and adjust their counter terrorism strategies.

The sessions in this theme will provide a focused review of threats posed by radicalisation, home grown terror and violent extremism as well as debating the diversified nature of leading international terrorist groups and the key influences on the future of terrorism.

RISK, RESILIENCE & SECURITY

These conference sessions will bring together owners and operators, policy makers and practitioners as well as key supply chain representatives to debate the issues at stake and provide a sustained focus on the importance of strengthening threat awareness, emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

The conference will also deliver insights into human factors and their influence on security and resilience,

discuss CBRN threats and advances in bio-weapons, and consider the implications of cyber exploitation of the national infrastructure.

SECURING PUBLIC SPACES

Crowded public spaces – from sporting and entertainment venues to shopping malls to transport hubs – remain a key security focus as they are both highly vulnerable and extremely difficult to secure.

The session will look at the role of new design to counter-terrorist threats and consider the application of innovative methods to overcome inadequacies in existing structures. In addition, the conference will examine blast mitigation techniques and best practice policing procedures.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

This session will consider the practicalities of multi-agency response, the role and features of the effective commander and how to provide mutual aid and interoperability across services.

There will also be sessions providing an in-depth review of the current levels of preparedness for major emergencies, including challenges for rural communities, urban fire prevention, the use of CBRN and other hazardous materials, and resilience in the face of marauding firearms attack.

CYBER THREATS

While increasing global interconnectivity delivers enormous benefits to society, the cyber world provides vast opportunities for state-sponsored actors, terrorists, extreme activists and criminal gangs to do considerable harm to national infrastructures and global commerce.

The conference will consider how the world is changing and the real nature of the cyber terrorism threat; as well

as considering the government's cyber security strategy, what the police service and other agencies are doing to combat e-crime, and new ways to make both nations and businesses more resilient to cyber-attack.

In addition, there will be sessions on how to build a defence strategy that works, how big data is a useful weapon in the defence of the cyber threat, and the implications for information security of increased social media and mobile device usage.

COUNTER TERRORISM

Covering both hostile and non-hostile environments, this conference session will cover the key skills required in counterinsurgency operations, discuss private versus public sector protective security, and consider how to protect soft targets from hard-line terror.

Specific issues addressed will include the benefits of deploying IED search personnel for VIP visits and significant events and new solutions for counter terrorism surveillance as well as the use of positive engagement with host communities to mitigate hostile security threats and the increasing adoption of 'soft security' measures.

To view the full programme visit www.counterterrorexpo.com/conference



AMBITION FOR AMBULANCE AND PRE-HOSPITAL CARE SERVICES

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' IS THE MEDIA PARTNER OF AMBITION 2014 – THE DEDICATED UK AMBULANCE AND PRE-HOSPITAL CARE EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE – WHICH TAKES PLACE AT OLYMPIA, LONDON ON 29–30 APRIL.



Now in its fourth year, Ambition is the only show with the full support of all NHS ambulance services. Therefore, it will have the guaranteed attendance of a broad range of frontline staff and senior managers from across the emergency services sector.

Ambition is fully supported by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) which will host its various national director group meetings during the show.

The AACE includes NHS Ambulance Chief Executives, Chairs, Heads of Procurement, Directors of Clinical Care, Directors of Operations, Directors of Finance, the HART Vehicle & Equipment Group and many more.

Ambition 2014 will focus on delivering excellence in pre-hospital care, resilience and interoperability by bringing the emergency response sector together.

Co-located with Counter Terror Expo and Forensics Europe Expo, the emergency response sector will benefit from thousands of pre-existing visitors from the emergency service, police, law enforcement, and military sectors providing a wide scope for networking, sharing best practice, and education in one Central London venue.

Founder of the event Carl Rees says: "Ambition has been built around excellent content that allows professionals of all levels to learn something new and develop their knowledge and capabilities and provide excellent networking opportunities with other multiagency partners."

"This results in an exhibition of new products and technology that emphasise their benefits to patients as much as their efficiencies to managers."

Ambition 2014 will be enhanced to provide a one-stop-shop for visitors from organisations involved in emergency response, crisis management, interoperability and pre-hospital care.

For further information visit
www.ambition-2014.com



Exhibitors who have booked their stands to-date include:

- Ambulance Radio Programme
- BMW Group
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Excelerate Technology
- Openhouse Products Ltd
- ORH Ltd
- Rescue & Medical UK
- Respirex International Limited
- Simulaids Ltd
- SpecialWear (UK) LTD
- Stryker
- Total Post Services
- Zeal Solutions.

BURNING ISSUES ON AGENDA AT FIRE CHIEFS' CONFERENCE

FIRE OFFICERS, ACADEMICS, INDUSTRY EXPERTS AND GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FROM HOME AND ABROAD WILL COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE 'LEADING THE FIRE SERVICE OF THE FUTURE' AT THIS YEAR'S CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE ON 7-8 MAY IN NAAS, CO. KILDARE.

Celine Barrett, conference secretary and Kildare's chief fire officer, said that the fire and rescue sector has had to adapt and be competent to meet current and future challenges. This, she added, is against a background of budget and service constraints, changing personnel demography, greater scrutiny and wider demands on the service it delivers to the community.

"Technology is rapidly advancing with information being readily available and expectations are more demanding for an instant solution," noted Kildare's CFO.

According to Seamus Murphy, CFOA chairperson and Mayo's chief fire officer, the conference and exhibition will give all those involved in the fire and rescue sector the opportunity to hear about current issues, latest developments in fire service appliances and equipment, and explore the newest technology in fire service operations and fire prevention.

"This year's conference will again host expert speakers within the emergency services sector and the fire technology industry from Ireland, UK, USA, Netherlands and Estonia who will aim to provide innovative thoughts and ideas about how the fire and rescue service can adapt to meet these challenges," he added.

*For further information visit www.cfoaconference2014.ie

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 7 MAY

8.30-9.30	Registration, Tea & Coffee
Session 1	Chairperson: Seamus Murphy, CFO, Mayo County Council
9.30-10.00	Official Opening
10.00-10.15	Address of CFOA Chairman, Seamus Murphy
10.15-10.50	Prof Daniel Boatright, Senior Associate Dean, University of Oklahoma
10.50-11.00	Tech Talk
11.00-14.00	Tea/Coffee/Delegate Networking & Fire Technology Conference
13.00-14.00	Lunch

Session 2

14.00-14.35	Sue Lampard, President, British Association of Public Safety Communication Officials
14.35-15.10	Tony O'Brien, Deputy Executive Director, European Emergency Number Association
15.10-15.20	Tech Talk
15.20-16.20	Tea/Coffee/Delegate Networking & Fire Technology Conference
16.20-16.55	Paul Fuller, President, CFOA (UK)
16.55-17.15	Ministerial Address

DAY 2 – THURSDAY 8 MAY

08.30-09.30	Registration, Tea & Coffee
Session 3	
09.30-10.05	Conor Hanaway, Managing Director, SHRC Limited
10.05-10.40	Sean Hogan, National Director for Fire & Emergency Management
10.40-11.15	John Power, Director General, Engineers Ireland
11.15-11.25	Tech Talk
11.25-14.00	Tea/Coffee/Delegate Networking & Fire Technology Conference
13.00-14.00	Lunch

Session 4

14.00-14.35	Barry Van Padje and Guido Leegemate, Netherlands
14.35-15.10	Margo Klaas, Estonian Rescue Board
15.10-15.45	Carmel Kirby, Limerick County Council
15.45-16.20	Caroline Creamer, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
16.20-16.30	Open Forum & Close of Conference

MAJOR EMS GATHERING SET FOR KILLARNEY

THIS YEAR'S 'EMS GATHERING IRELAND' WHICH RETURNS TO KILLARNEY IN MID-MAY, WILL FOCUS ON TRAUMA, EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP FOR DOCTORS, PARAMEDICS, NURSES AND VOLUNTARY PRACTITIONERS INVOLVED IN THE PATIENT'S JOURNEY FROM ROADSIDE TO RECOVERY.

National and international EMS leaders will come together in Killarney on 14 & 15 May to share their thoughts and expertise on a variety of subjects including trauma, education and leadership. The two-day event is described by 'EMS Gathering' committee chairman Dr Conor Deasy as "a not-for-profit conference organised by EMS for EMS".

There will also be workshops in airway management, extrication, research, ECG reading, teaching skills and education through social media. The two-day event has accredited CME/CPD points from the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI), the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), An Bord Altranás, and the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC).

Back by popular demand will be the 'learning with leisure' concept where EMS education is fused with Killarney's great outdoors – whereby cutting-edge topics will be presented in a way never forgotten by delegates!



*For further details visit www.emsgathering.com or email emsgathering@gmail.com

SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday 13 May (2pm-5pm)

Pre-EMS Gathering' Symposium on Tactical Emergency Medical Response:

- Dr Adrian Murphy: Tactical Emergency Medical Support (The Irish Experience)
- Prof Tim Coakley: Penetrating Injuries (The ABC of Management for First Responders; Advances, Breakthroughs & Controversies)
- Dr Rinihi Uhlich: Measuring the Effectiveness of Life-Saving Procedure Skill Training
- Prof Steve Barnes: Combat Casualty Care; Lessons Applied to Civilian Trauma
- Prof John McManus: Current & Future Trends in TEMS

Wednesday 14 May (9.30am-12.20pm)

- Dr Mark Forrest: Interdisciplinary Trauma Training/Pre-Hospital Airway Management;
- Prof John McManus: Pre-Hospital Ultrasound/Arresting Bleeding Pre-Hospital (Tourniquets/Haemostatic Agents)
- Prof Tim Coakley: Hypotensive Resuscitation/Mass Casualty Scene
- Darren Figgis (AP): Pelvic Splintage
- David Hennelly (AP): Major Haemorrhage Protocols, including TXA (Examples from Civilian EMS)
- Dr Gareth Davies: Resuscitative Endovascular Balloon Occlusion of the Aorta (for shock in the UK trauma system)/ Head Injury (better pre-hospital management)
- Prof Steve Barnes: Massive Transfusion – What products? What ratios? Why?/Blood Pre-Hospital (The Challenges)
- Dr David Menzies: Emergency Thoracotomy
- Shane Mooney, AP: Concussion

Thursday 15 May (9.30am-12.20pm)

- Dr Adrian Murphy: Pre-Hospital Pain Management in Children
- Prof John McManus: Pre-Hospital Pain Management in Adults
- Prof Simon Carley: Educational Leadership
- Prof Tony Ryan: Object-Based Learning/Crew Resource Management
- Prof Simon Carley; 'Training at the Virtual Hospital'/Lessons for Delivering Pre-Hospital Education
- Dr Andy Neill: Effective use of Social Media to Keep Up-to-Date
- Comdt. Phil Bonner: Crew Resource Management (Lessons from Aviation)
- Dr Mark Forrest: Trauma Teams (The UK Experience)
- Dr Gareth Davies: Getting the most out of HEMS (Dispatch Criteria)
- Dr Jason van der Vilde: Telemedicine and Trauma
- A/Prof Conor Deasy: 'You can't manage what you don't measure' (Major trauma audit Ireland)
- Prof Gerry Bury: Degree Programmes in Emergency Medical Science
- Dr Damian Ryan: Research in Trauma - Recent Game Changers
- Barry O'Sullivan: What lies ahead from the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council of Ireland?
- Dr Cathal O'Donnell: What's ahead for the National Ambulance Service?

MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS SEEK VAT EXEMPTION

MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS ACROSS IRELAND ARE SEEKING A CHANGE TO EUROPEAN LEGISLATION THAT WOULD SEE A HARMONISATION OF THE VAT EXEMPTION FOR ALL SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAMS, THEREBY PUTTING AN END TO THE CURRENT INEQUITY. REPORT BY JOHN WALSH.

Ireland's 12 mountain rescue teams are urging all MEPs and MEP candidates in the upcoming European elections to actively work towards achieving a VAT equity and harmonisation on rescue equipment in Europe, including Ireland.

This will end what they describe as "the illogical anomaly that currently exists between land and sea-based rescue activity".

Ireland's 12 volunteer mountain rescue teams currently pay VAT on all lifesaving equipment, an obvious anomaly when contrasted with marine search and rescue, where a VAT exemption prevails.

"The modern world is very complex and life often isn't fair. But if voluntary rescue groups at sea don't have to pay VAT, we can't see why voluntary rescue groups on land should have to pay VAT," argues Gerry Christie; training officer with Kerry Mountain Rescue Team.

"We are just looking for a level playing field. If you are walking down a local street and you give €10 to a lifeboat collection, and you then give €10 to a mountain rescue group, the money you have given to the lifeboat group is going to go further because of the way the rules are written," he continues.

"That could probably hurt our generous voluntary donators, because so much of their donation is going back to the Government in the form of VAT."

AN EXPENSIVE ANOMALY

On average, it costs €40,000 to run a mountain rescue team in Ireland, Christie explains, although the Dublin-Wicklow, Glen of Imaal and Kerry operations are more expensive as they operate bigger teams. In general terms, 40 per cent (€16,000) of that comes from public funding, with the other €24,000 (60 per



cent) from donations.

"Not all public funding comes directly from the Government," Christie notes, however. "Some teams get funding from local authorities, because they are part of the greater emergency plan."

He cites a number of examples of large VAT payments being made by mountain rescue teams. At the moment, South East Mountain Rescue is in the

process of renovating an existing building in Clonmel that was donated by the local authority.

However, to turn the building into an operational base will cost in the region of €170,000. "Of that, €20,000 will be paid in VAT," Christie says. "They are getting public funding to assist with the development, but a lot of it goes straight back as VAT."

Last year, Kerry Mountain Rescue replaced an ageing off-road vehicle. "The money for that came from the Ring of Kerry cycle and loads of people, including Enda Kenny and Leo Varadkar, took part.

"The vehicle cost over €60,000, but €8,000 of that went back as VAT. A lot of the people who cycled the 112 kilometres around the Ring of Kerry were effectively cycling for the Government."

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

He cites the public's call for transparency and accountability in the charity sector.

"There is a charity industry, which is almost a commoditisation of charity," he says. "Mountain rescue is part of the charity sector, but not the charity industry. We are all volunteers; we don't have a CEO; we don't want to make money out of it. It is the same with the RNLI guys: it's a labour of love.

"But the call for transparency and accountability tends to come from the Government as a bottom-up thing. The anomaly I am highlighting here would suggest that we need top-down transparency and accountability as well."

HARMONISATION PROPOSAL

Christie and the estimated 350 volunteers across Ireland's other mountain rescue groups are calling for the EU to harmonise VAT on all voluntary rescue agencies and end the current inequity.

"I am putting it to EU representatives and potential representatives that if they could do this, they would demonstrate that the EU is not just a centralised, elite group, imposing some kind of austere reality on us, that they can bring something to voluntary groups that means something at a community level," he explains. "It's a token in the greater scheme of things, but it would level the playing field for rescue groups."

The European Commission is currently consulting on changes to the EU VAT Directive (2006/112/EC). Chris Davies, MEP for NW England, has submitted a response, calling for a VAT exemption for mountain rescue teams, as part of a wider exemption for all search and rescue organisations. Here in Ireland, Mairead McGuinness MEP has publicly supported this initiative.

HUGE PUBLIC INTEREST

There is huge public interest in exempting

WHY MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICES SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM VAT

Gerry Christie, training officer with Kerry Mountain Rescue Team, argues that:

1. Mountain rescue services clearly generate a public benefit. The VAT exemption would be a way for the EU to demonstrate its practical support for such organisations and for the good that society enjoys as a result.
2. Mountain rescue services clearly assist in promoting the health and prolong the life of citizens in the EU.
3. In many EU member states, these services are partly, largely or wholly funded by voluntary subscription. Volunteered donations may be significantly weaker, where there is a perception that a proportion of the contribution must be subsequently surrendered by the charity as taxation, which can be seen as a double taxation.
4. These essential services underpin tourist and leisure activities enjoyed by citizens and, therefore, are a direct economic benefit to member states;
5. VAT exemption will not generate competitive advantage, as voluntary services are obviously non-commercial.
6. Sea rescue services currently enjoy a wide-ranging VAT exemption. The proposed amendment would include all voluntary rescue organisations in the scope of the exemption and would harmonise and simplify the EU Directive.
7. There is much public good will and support for mountain rescue and also for this proposed VAT amelioration.



certain activities from VAT; specifically land-based search and rescue activities. The EU VAT Directive (2006/112/EC) currently exempts a number of activities carried out in the public interest by means of Article 132, but Christie describes the list as "neither coherent nor complete".

"We are looking for it to be written unambiguously into Article 132 that safety equipment purchased by rescue groups in the non-commercial sector should be VAT exempt," he says.

The proposal seeks an exemption for all search and rescue organisations written into Article 132 of the VAT Directive. This exemption would command widespread public support and more importantly, would enable volunteers to make more use of their limited resources, Christie stresses. He also describes it as a move towards a more equitable, uniform and easily applicable VAT system.

EU SUPPORT

The provision of EU support through tax exemptions for voluntary rescue services

provided for the public good would be positively received by European citizens and increase the perceived relevance of and respect for the EU at local level, he argues.

Mountain rescue volunteers argue that immediate positive action must be taken by the European Commission in altering the EU VAT Directive, facilitating member state governments to provide a VAT exemption for all search and rescue organisations who depend on voluntary subscription.

Indeed, they are urging members and prospective members of the European Parliament to bring their influence to bear in securing a rapid, positive and equitable outcome.

"Most of the progressive social legislation introduced over the last 30 years didn't come about because the Irish Government thought it was a good thing," Christie concludes. "It came about because it was frogmarched through the gate by Europe and that's what I am hoping will happen here."

MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE

OSI MAPPING, AIR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION, CRIME SCENE PRESERVATION, AND SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS WERE HIGH ON THE AGENDA AT THIS YEAR'S MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND CONFERENCE, HOSTED BY THE GLEN OF IMAAL TEAM IN WICKLOW.

Dlegates from all rescue teams and partnering agencies gathered to discuss frontline issues at this year's Mountain Rescue Ireland conference, which was hosted by the Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team at the Defence Forces' Coolmoney Camp in Wicklow.

Topics on the agenda ranged from OSI mapping, Air Accident Investigation, Crime Scene Preservation, and Search and Rescue Dogs. The Air Corps also landed at the event on board the EC139 Helicopter and briefed assembled rescue personnel.

Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Leo Varadkar, praised mountain rescue personnel for their commitment to community volunteer work and spoke of the Government's awareness of the vital work they do. He confirmed that while there will be no increase in grant aid in the coming year there would be no reductions either.

The Minister also launched the team's new purpose-built incident command vehicle, which was funded by public donations and supporters who joined in the 'Moonlight Challenge' night walks, which take place every November in the Wicklow Mountains.

The vehicle is used in the organisation and planning of searches as well as keeping communication channels open with all operational rescue parties on the hill.

Guest speaker Frank Nugent, one of Ireland's best known explorers, sailors and historic mountaineering writers, regaled the assembled delegates with memories from times past in both Ireland's mountains and beyond.



Minister Leo Varadkar addressed delegates at this year's Mountain Rescue Ireland conference, hosted by the Glen of Imaal Team.



A presentation was made to Cmdt Derek Hanley by a member of the Glen of Imaal Team in recognition of 30 years working together in the west Wicklow hills.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

Mick Kellett, one of the founding members of An Oige Mountain Rescue Team (which later became the Dublin and Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team) was one of the many serving and retired mountain rescuers to receive distinguished service awards for their commitment and service over the years.

There was a poignant moment when search and rescue dog 'Bono' received a posthumous MRI Distinguished Service

Award. It was presented to his handler, master and friend Mick Grant to a standing ovation.

Finally, a presentation was made to Defence Forces Cmdt Derek Hanley by the Glen Team in recognition of 30 years working together in the west Wicklow hills.

The team which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year also had its busiest year to date with over 111 callouts for assistance in the mountains.

UCC-LED RESEARCH TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

UCC IS LEADING AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM THAT HAS SECURED €3.5 MILLION IN EU RESEARCH FUNDING TO STANDARDISE PROCEDURES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT. THE THREE-YEAR PROJECT AIMS TO DEVELOP NEW DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS TO CO-ORDINATE EMERGENCY PLANNING, PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY ACROSS BORDERS. REPORT BY GRACE HENEGHAN.

Large-scale disasters require immediate response under time pressure, rapid decision-making, appropriate allocation of resources, prioritising casualties and casualty evacuation, administering first-aid, dealing with human and psychological stress, and efforts to limit the level of devastation. All of this becomes more complicated in the case of cross-border catastrophes and current solutions do not fully address all of the challenges.

To overcome these present shortcomings, partners of a new international consortium – S-HELP (Securing-Health Emergency Learning and Planning) – will develop a range of decision support tools and systems for the management of all four phases of an emergency situation: planning, preparedness, response and recovery. Training and crisis-management communication will also be included in the project.

PROACTIVE AGENCIES

Co-ordinated by Dr Karen M Neville, principal investigator and managing director of the Centre for Security Management Research (CSMR), Business Information Systems at UCC, the international consortium is funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for a three-year period.

Neville said that by linking all the relevant agencies, the idea is that the authorities can further improve their existing cross-border emergency action plans, like those regularly activated in exercises at county or regional basis around Ireland. In the general scheme of things, she did think that in terms of Ireland's level of preparedness and readiness "all of the agencies, north and south, are very proactive".

However, crucially, the new system will also work between different countries, using detailed and wide-ranging information such as paramedic skills in each jurisdiction or whether one country's firefighting equipment matches the other's hydrants.

The UCC researchers' initial design

led to their selection to head up the S-HELP consortium, and more detailed development plans have been drafted since March. The system essentially aims to improve the timeliness and quality of information available during a crisis or disaster.

In addition, an integrated tool-kit will be developed making it possible to judge quickly the size of the emergency and help decision-makers manage incidents involving large numbers of agencies across different borders.

Having well-trained, competent and motivated people on the ground in an emergency is vital to dealing with it effectively. The reality, however, tends to be limited ongoing training and a lack of standardised procedures between



Dr Karen Neville, Managing Director of CSMR, UCC and Dr Andrew Pope, Development Co-Lead, UCC. (Pic: Tómas Tyner, UCC)

countries.

"When analysing how the different agencies respond to an emergency in a single country, there are huge issues involved with all the agencies working together, linking their own systems and inter-agency communication during a disaster. This problem is amplified when the incident involves several countries," notes the project co-ordinator.

This reduces the effectiveness of an international response to emergencies and results in people on the ground being ill-prepared in situations that require split-second decision-making in the middle of the chaos and fury of an emergency.

"According to research a lot of responders think that they communicate very well during the crisis, but it's only afterwards at the evaluation stage that they realise what they could have done better. On top of that there's the risk that responders will probably pay too much attention to what the media is saying."

THREE TEST-SCENARIOS

Regular and consistent training coupled with joint exercises are key to good emergency planning.

The use of real-world emergency scenarios is the best way to train people who may be involved in responding to an emergency.

In the S-HELP project such scenarios will be devised and carried out by the UCC team in partnership with the HSE and Northern Ireland's Public Health Agency (PHA), as well as Magen David Adom (MDA), Israel's national aid society and blood bank service.

"In talking with our partners in the HSE, PHA and MDA about making sure we can test the system properly, we chose three scenarios which we thought were the best and also the most likely in

these different areas."

Over the next two years, the team will roll out three training-based scenarios to identify problems in current cross-border emergency plans and to see how the S-HELP solution will address them, and if the software system can be expanded elsewhere.

One scenario will simulate a cross-border chemical explosion between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, another will entail a major flooding incident in London, and a large-scale biological incident in Israel.

"These scenarios of flooding, chemical spills or biological incidents will test everything that the European Commission – as the main stakeholder – is looking to investigate under the terms of this research."

Neville had created what she described as "a matrix" of all possible incidents from which to choose for these training-based scenarios – terrorist attacks, explosions, chemical spills and flooding incidents, biological incidents. "This enabled the team to research the similarities in emergency planning and response between each incident.

"We will design the scenarios this year and roll them out to test different aspects of the system and evaluate each one." In the interim she said they have been invited

to attend other inter-agency exercises to see how 'S-HELP' can be incorporated into these events.

PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to its three main partners – the HSE, Northern Ireland's Public Health Agency and Israel's national aid society and blood bank service Magen David Adom – the S-HELP team also consists



The S-HELP project (607865) is funded by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the EU.

of three private small and medium-sized companies (SMEs): accelopment AG, Future Analytics Consulting and Vector Command Limited, and four academic institutions: Sweden's Lund University, the ASSERT Centre in UCC, and Austria's TUGraz and the University of Vienna. There is also complementary and world-leading expertise in security, learning, decision-making and emergency management.

S-HELP is completely in line with the key regulation in the field of emergency medicine from the European Committee of Standardisation and will set new standards in crisis management – before, during and after an emergency. As such, it will be the leading example of protecting people's lives through effective emergency learning and planning.

SOCIAL MEDIA ELEMENT

The system will allow greater harnessing of information from social media, so emergency services can be directed by co-ordinators to or from places or incidents.

Neville says that a lot of responders think they communicate very well, adding that it's only in the aftermath of an incident during the evaluation process that they realise what they could have done better.

"You cannot control social media but you can certainly make sure to send out the right information, and also to gather the right information from it. With S-HELP I have focused on educating the public and how the public would behave and what information they would need in the event of a disaster."

She says that the University of TUGraz in Austria will concentrate on how such information should be filtered to frontline responders and how it should be presented. "In the event of such disaster situations the media are very helpful and it's important that everyone knows exactly what's happening."

Apart from the social media element, other aspects will involve integration of live weather information, mapping likely flows for floodwaters, and allowing better planning for the aftermath of catastrophes.

IMPROVING INTEROPERABILITY

Neville and her team have looked at existing incident management systems. "These seemed to be very static in terms of equating, for example, the skills of a

FACTFILE ON S-HELP

(Securing-Health Emergency Learning Planning)



Decision Support System

The S-HELP Decision Support System (DSS) will provide a unique mechanism to assist stakeholders and end-users to work together for co-ordinated, effective and evidence-based decisions at all stages of emergency management. The tools delivered by S-HELP will result in improved preparedness and response of health services involved in large scale and/or cross border emergency situations.

Project Objectives

S-HELP is a people, process and technological solution to emergency situations. The central aim of the S-HELP project is to develop a holistic-framed approach to healthcare preparedness, response and recovery. More precisely it aims to:

- Define an interoperability standard to enable communication and co-ordination across different geographical areas and cultural settings.
- Facilitate a collaborative end-user and support partner-driven solutions to meet the needs of different users from Ireland, the UK, Sweden, Austria and beyond.
- Define and apply an interoperability standard for multiple agencies jointly responding to a disaster.
- Advance the design and application of current available solutions, to improve preparedness, response and recovery in emergency situations.
- Deliver decision-supporting tools for emergency preparedness, response, recovery, tested, evaluated and enhanced through end-user designated emergency scenarios.

Project Details

Co-ordinator: University College Cork

Contact: Dr Karen M. Neville, UCC

Duration: 36 months

Budget: €3.5 million

Funding Programme: FP7-Security

Area: ICT

Partners:

- Accelopment AG, Switzerland
- Magen David Adom, Israel
- Future Analytics Consulting Ltd, Ireland
- HSE, Ireland
- Lunds Universitet, Sweden
- Public Health Agency (PHA) Northern Ireland
- Technische Universität Graz (TuGraz), Austria
- Universität Wien, Austria
- VectorCommand Ltd, UK

paramedic in the Republic to the UK, Germany or Israel."

One of the academic partners in the consortium – the University of Vienna – will work on the interoperability element for the three chosen scenarios by investigating the personnel, equipment and skill-sets involved in these exercises.

"This information will be automated in S-HELP, so that the decision-maker on the border, for example, will know the exact resources they will be allocating and this should also be the same between other countries. This means that emergency response procedures and skill-sets will be standardised nationally and more importantly between countries."

So, in the event of a real flood, chemical spill or biological incident, S-HELP will record the levels of communication, the resources available and the level of interoperability between two different countries working together.

"There will also be an opportunity for S-HELP to use real incidents training exercises for future incidents," noted the project co-ordinator, adding that it will be essentially important that the exercise can be used for sharing lessons learned with other countries.

PROTOTYPE PLANS

The consortium also aims show that a prototype of S-HELP could be successfully deployed to any future emergency incidents or disasters. "As part of the proposal for this project, the European Commission is expecting to see a plan in place to commercialise the prototype."

Neville explained that this is the norm for every project funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme – "the Commission expects to see a commercial prototype in place, once the research is complete, with the potential of job creation etc".

Under the S-HELP project a certain number of voluntary agencies will also be invited to take part in the exercise. "For example, we have already spoken to the Red Cross in Austria, and we aim to take on more Red Cross branches across different countries. There are also plans to involve other voluntary bodies down the line," Neville noted in conclusion.

No one can predict when a large-scale disaster will strike, but strike they will. There is great comfort in knowing that a project like S-HELP is on hand to break through and improve the emergency response, care, and aftermath treatment of what nature (or man) has in store.



RAPID RESPONSE TO RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

FOLLOWING IRISH AID'S 2014 RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR THE RAPID RESPONSE CORPS, 23 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO UNDERGO A TWO-WEEK TRAINING COURSE IN MAY BEFORE THEY ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE ROSTER FOR DEPLOYMENT TO OVERSEAS AID MISSIONS.

The Rapid Response Corps is a standby roster of highly skilled and experienced professionals available to deploy at short notice to humanitarian emergencies anywhere in the world. The corps is under the umbrella of Irish Aid, at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

When deployed, roster members fill specific skills gaps identified by these four Irish Aid standby partner organisations:

- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The World Food Programme (WFP)
- The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Roster members provide surge capacity to standby partners, supporting humanitarian operations worldwide. Currently, members are deployed overseas in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Philippines and South Sudan.

In an emergency scenario, the initial assessments of the needs are often based on inadequate information, and the emergency itself will constantly change.

Roster members require an ability to work under pressure and employ sound judgment and adaptability in highly stressful and changeable environments.

Living conditions can be challenging.

Applicants should have an understanding of, and commitment to, humanitarian principles, substantial technical qualifications, relevant experience, as well as strong leadership and coordination skills.

Humanitarian

field experience with a multinational agency or an international NGO is highly desirable, as is proficiency in foreign languages. In addition, successful applicants should be in a position to make themselves available for deployment for periods of at least three months, usually at short notice.

RECRUITING KEY SKILLS

Recruitment in 2014 focused on the key skills and thematic areas, including language skills, most in demand by their partners. Fluency in French and Arabic was also a priority. A number of roles and areas of expertise were prioritised in the latest recruitment drive:

- Civil-Military Co-ordination Officer
- Gender Adviser
- Gender-Based Violence Adviser
- Protection Officer
- Child Protection Officer
- Information Management (including GIS) Officer
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Engineer

A total of 23 successful candidates have been selected, following the interview process in March, and they will now take part in the second stage of the recruitment process.

According to Pronch Murray, Irish



Recruitment in 2014 focused on the key skills and thematic areas.

MODULE 1 – PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The first week of induction training for Irish Aid's Rapid Response Corps will run from Monday 19 to Friday 23 May, at its headquarters in Limerick.

The five-day programme will include the following training sessions:

- Principles of Humanitarian Law
 - Disaster Response Law
 - International Humanitarian Law
- Protection/Child Protection in Emergencies
- Gender in Humanitarian Action;
- Enhancing the Quality of Programming
- Civil-Military Co-operation
- Rapid Response Initiative
- Personal Experiences of Standby Partnership Programme
- Health and Welfare in the Field
- Support for Development Workers and Volunteers
- UN Civil-Military Co-ordination

Aid's Development Specialist in the Emergency and Recovery Section, a two-week training course must be successfully completed by all candidates before they are invited to join the roster for deployment.

The first week of induction training for Irish Aid's Rapid Response Corps, starting on Monday 19 May, will be held at its headquarters in Limerick.

"There will be further training in the Curragh Camp during the second week," Murray told *'Emergency Services Ireland'*.



*For further information visit
www.irishaid.ie

VOLUNTEERS READY FOR RAPID DEPLOYMENT OVERSEAS

TWO VOLUNTEERS WITH THE RAPID RESPONSE CORPS, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM NORTH JORDAN AND THE PHILIPPINES RESPECTIVELY, SPOKE TO ELAINE HEALY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OVERSEAS AND WHAT MOTIVATED THEM TO SIGN UP TO HUMANITARIAN AID MISSIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

A combined interest in humanitarian rights and travel prompted Dublin-born Lisa McMunn to apply for her first position with the Rapid Response Corps in early 2012. McMunn (33) recently returned from North Jordan, where she worked for 12 months as a field officer in the Za'atari Refugee Camp, set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mafraq.

"From one day to the next, the role involved meeting with different organisations who were working in the camp, co-ordinating different areas," said McMunn.

"We looked after the distribution of items and shelter – getting people places to live. When everyone arrives at first, they are living in a tent and, in North Jordan, it gets pretty cold in the wintertime.

"We were trying to get everyone into a better standard of shelter, making sure they had heating and sufficient blankets – then going to visit the new arrivals, to make sure everyone arriving was in a reasonable state."

In her role as field officer, McMunn would go to the different distributors for food or non-food items, which could be gas heaters or blankets.

HUMAN RIGHTS INTERESTS

McMunn's interest in international human rights – in particular, refugee law – stemmed from her experiences travelling while in her twenties.

After graduating from NUI Galway in 2002 with a Degree in English Literature and Ancient Classics, she spent several years travelling, and decided to return to the university in 2006 to complete a



Lisa McMunn spent a year working with UNHCR in North Jordan, where she worked for 12 months as a Field Officer in the Za'atari Refugee Camp, set up by the UNHCR. She is now due to take up a new position in South Sudan.



UNHCR refugee camps in Jordan.

Masters in International Human Rights Law.

"When I came back from travelling, I felt that I might be interested in working in humanitarian response and development," she said. McMunn subsequently took up a position in Central America as an English teacher with a Salvadorian NGO.

"I wanted to see how I would work in that kind of environment and found I really enjoyed it, so I went back to do the masters to better qualify me to work full-time."

While completing her masters, McMunn opted to specialise in refugee law, but her initial experience upon graduating in 2007 took her into another area.

Her first role, based in Mexico, was as a programme assistant with Article 19, a British-run non-profit organisation dedicated to freedom of expression and protection of journalists.

From there, she moved to UNHCR, working as an associate protection officer in both Ethiopia and Venezuela. "I was interested in working with refugees, and the opportunity came up to work with Irish Aid for a year in Addis Ababa, and then I went on to another position with UNHCR in Venezuela."

REFUGEE PROTECTION WORK

"She was involved in refugee protection work – legal and social protection – helping refugees to get through the asylum system when they arrive in a country, and then helping to ensure whether or not the country has abided by certain rules.

"The UNHCR is there to ensure that these things are being done the way they are supposed to. So, if an individual is seeking asylum, they can go to someone who will offer them legal advice."

McMunn learned about the Rapid Response Corps through Irish Aid contacts she met during her time with UNHCR.

"I had been working in cities, more on the legal advice side, and I wanted the opportunity to live and work in refugee camps. Rapid Response Corps focuses mainly on emergency work, so it was an opportunity to do that, and I got on."



Vicki O'Donnell pictured with students in the temporary classrooms in the Philippines, where she was stationed for four months, working as an Inter Cluster Information Management Officer with UNICEF, in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013.

DIFFERENT DEPLOYMENTS

Rapid Response deploys people in different capacities, McMunn explained, varying from more general roles to engineers, public health professionals, environmental officers for water and sanitation projects, or in civil or military co-ordinators.

"The way the roster works is that the Rapid Response Corp will get requests – for example, following the typhoon in the Philippines, the earthquake in Haiti or a sudden conflict situation," she said.

"With my placement in Jordan, the Rapid Response Corps were sending people on a short-term basis. You need to

be able to deploy within 72 hours.

"When these issues happen in a certain area, different partners will send extra staff to support the UN in the initial stages. This is so there are a sufficient number of human resources available to run things, until they can be fully staffed themselves."

SECURITY AND STABILITY

Her work in North Jordan as a field officer meant a little bit of everything, from camp co-ordination to social protection. "We worked on establishing a decentralisation process in the camp to improve the refugees' access to services and improve



the security and stability inside the camp.

"Often, when you have huge numbers of people moving across the border, in the initial stages, it is chaos. Slowly, they start to put the systems in place and improve the services and overall standard of living."

She said that the camp was divided into districts and it was her role to support the overall camp manager. "I was covering two districts, which involved lots of different tasks.

"I find the work really interesting. For the moment, I am very happy doing what I'm doing."

McMunn, who is currently awaiting visa clearance to take up a new position in South Sudan, describes her work with the Rapid Response Corps as both rewarding and challenging.

PLAYING A VITAL ROLE

When Cork-based information specialist Vicki O'Donnell happened upon a magazine article about the work of the Rapid Response Corps four years ago, she realised that her skills could play a vital role in humanitarian co-ordination efforts worldwide.

O'Donnell, who had worked in marine research for 12 years, signed up to the Response Corps' roster of skilled professionals. She has since travelled to Lebanon, Somalia and, most recently, the Philippines, where she was stationed for four months, working as an Inter Cluster Information Management Officer with UNICEF.

"I had always presumed the Rapid Response Corps was relevant to engineers, medical and logistics people," said O'Donnell. "My background is in Geographical Information Systems and Information Management. It is about using tools like open source or proprietary software to deal with all types of information."

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

O'Donnell had worked on emergency response projects with the Irish Coast Guard and various port companies in her role as a marine researcher with UCC, helping to put in place support systems for emergency responses to oil spills and other incidents.

This experience would prove invaluable to her work with the Rapid Response Corps, helping aid agencies to adhere to the cluster approach introduced



These photographs, taken ten weeks after Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, reveal the level of destruction and devastation left in its wake in late 2013.



by the United Nations in 2006 to co-ordinate emergency efforts.

"Using Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in the Philippines as an example, when the government there invites the UN to help, they adopt the cluster approach," said O'Donnell.

"There are a number of clusters – for child protection, camp management, logistics, telecoms and WASH [UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene cluster].

"Each of these clusters is set up so that specialists can deal with the issues and, once they're set up, a lot of information will start to flow. Agencies on the ground, government agencies and rapid response agencies will do a rapid assessment of what's needed.

"You're dealing with very basic information coming in at this stage - a lot

of satellite information from people ringing you, and bits of paper being dropped on your desk, to word documents and maps," said O'Donnell.

CONSOLIDATING INFORMATION

Noting that different types of information could be coming in, she said that the job is to consolidate that in some way, to get the information out to partners in the first couple of days. "So, they can start planning where they're going to be working, what resources they need, what partners they can have – all that kind of information is really important.

"After the first couple of weeks, if everything is going well, proper monitoring systems can be put in place. But at the beginning, you need minimal, but accurate enough information, to try to find where

the emergency response should focus.

"You really have to be able to illustrate to your partners where they need to go and then to your donors as well, because you need to bring in extra money during the response, depending on how things are going."

WORKING WITH UNICEF

O'Donnell spent four months in the Philippines, helping to co-ordinate emergency response efforts to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. "I was based quite a bit in Manila and then down in the typhoon zone in Tacloban," she said.

"Normally, I'd be on the ground doing assessments. This time, because it was such a big disaster, I worked as an inter-cluster information manager, supporting 15 information managers on the ground across WASH, nutrition, child protection and education.

"I was supporting people that were dealing with all the data for those different clusters and inputting a lot of data into the monitoring systems that were being developed."

Since returning to Cork in February, O'Donnell has been working directly with UNICEF on the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) cluster. She left her job at UCC a year ago to concentrate solely on humanitarian projects, and hopes to divide her time

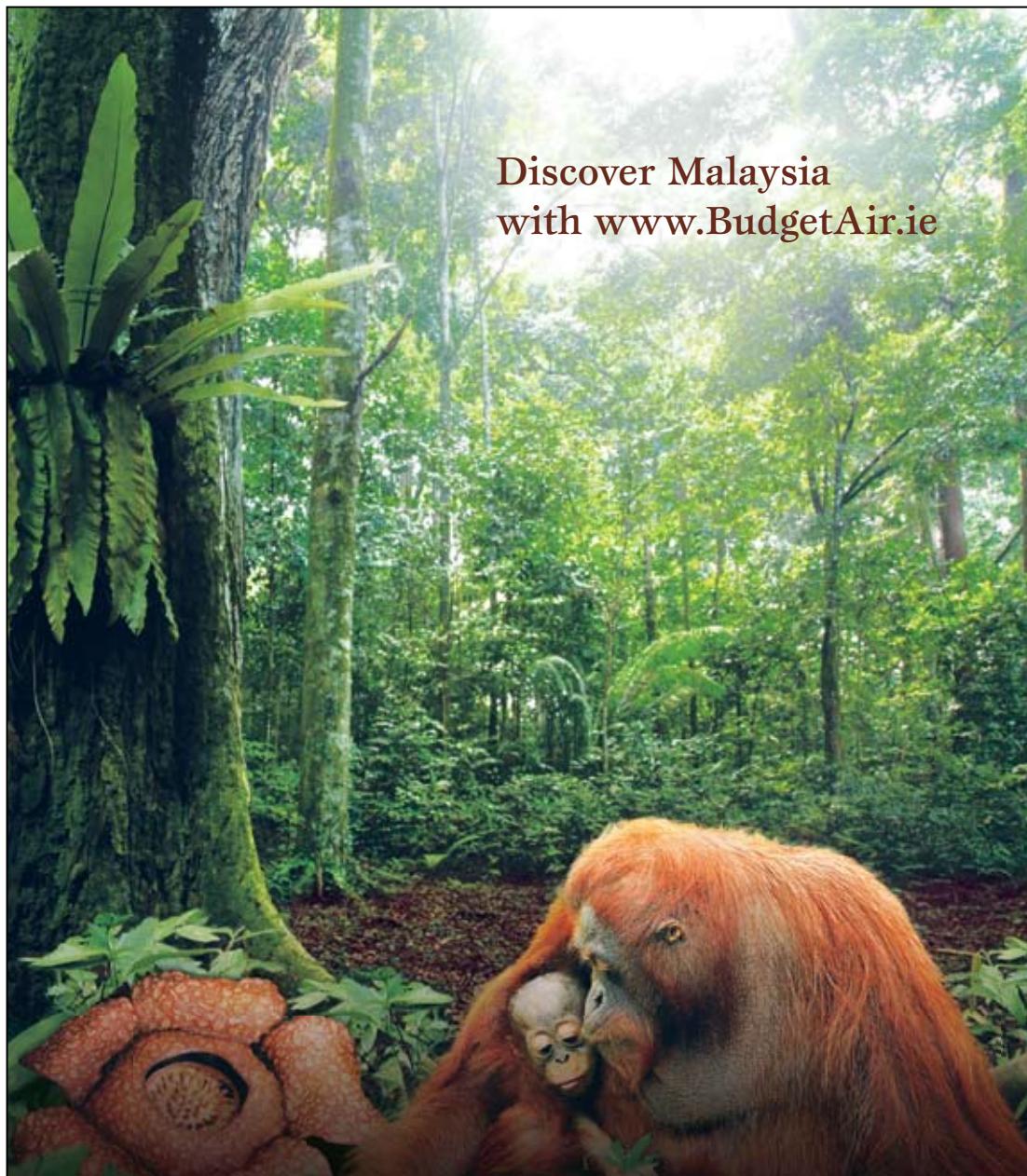
between emergency relief work overseas and humanitarian consultancy at home.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

"Every job has been completely different. It's really interesting and a huge learning experience everywhere you go. The people you meet are very interesting," she said.

"With the travel, there is a lot of hardship when you're living away for months on end either in a tent, a container or a hotel, but it is lovely to be away."

"And to be able to experience the variety of the people you work with as well as the hardship, because you are there for a reason and you can't get past that when you are living in a disaster zone."



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CORK TO LEAD THE WAY IN INCIDENT RECORDING

CORK CITY FIRE BRIGADE IS THE FIRST EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY IN IRELAND TO PURCHASE A NEW INCIDENT RECORDING AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM, FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF THE 'IRS Plus' INTERNATIONAL VERSION, WHICH HAS BEEN DESIGNED FOR ALL FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES/MISSION CRITICAL SERVICES WORLDWIDE, REPORT BY JOHN WALSH.

An internal project group from Cork City Fire Brigade is currently in the process of implementing the new 'IRS Plus International' incident recording and management system, which could have major benefits for the Brigade.

IRS Plus is one of the UK's main commercial incident recording systems. It is used by 30 per cent of English fire and rescue services to record the required incident information for government reporting, and to gather additional incident information that helps them to better manage their business.

Since IRS Plus international can be populated with user-defined, customisable incident questions, it is suitable for all fire services, sister emergency services and other mission-critical operations, worldwide.

Cork City Fire Brigade is deploying the 3tc Software solution as part of a wider move to modernise its systems. The system is currently being modified for the Irish market, and should be operational by mid-year.

The Brigade is currently served by the Munster control centre, one of three regional control rooms, which supports 10 fire authorities. In the near future, three new regional, mutually supportive CAD systems are to be deployed in Ireland as part of a national strategy.

IMPROVED SERVICE

"We are installing IRS Plus International to improve our service to our public and our staff, by being more knowledgeable about incident cause and prevention and better informed on any health, safety and welfare matters arising," says Cork City Fire Brigade's Assistant Chief Fire Officer



IRS Plus is used by 30 per cent of English fire and rescue services.



There may well be a level of interest in this product from other brigades, according to Cork City's ACFO David Spillet.

David Spillett.

"Essentially, it's a computer-based system, where we can record all incidents," Spillett notes. "IRS Plus will pick up some information from dispatch centres, thereby pre-populating some information, with the remainder being entered by fire officers."

Cork City Fire Brigade like the majority of Irish fire services currently operates a manual reporting system for recording incidents. "This new software system will allow us to analyse our day-to-day business much more rigorously," Spillett explains.

"We investigated a range of different options from various providers, and decided on IRS Plus International, having seen the system in operation in the UK and demonstrations here in Cork."

The internal project group is developing a set of incident questions in conjunction with 3tc Software. This will allow the fire brigade to gather invaluable data to report progress and performance at both local and national level, demonstrating a return on the public funding of the service.

In all, however, the system has needed "very little tweaking", according to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer: "The UK fire service has its own list of questions as required by their relevant government departments. We are in the process of modifying the questions to better match Irish regulations and procedures."

REPORTING PROGRESS

When the system is operational, it will make a big difference to incident recording, from road traffic collisions to flooding, throughout Cork City.

"Every incident we respond to, we will be able to record quickly, with all the relevant lots of information to hand," Spillett stresses.

"This will have a positive knock-on effect in providing exact up-to-date information on the type and nature of our incidents letting to ourselves locally and nationally, and ultimately the public and the national directorate know, we are doing day-to-day. It will be invaluable for reporting our progress and performance at both local and national level."

It should also have benefits in terms of incident planning, he notes. "We will be more knowledgeable about the cause of incidents and therefore, about possible prevention and mitigation measures," he

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS WITH 3TC SOFTWARE

3tc Solutions has been developing innovative solutions for public safety users for more than 30 years.

"Spanning command and control systems, location matching software, business intelligence, station end software, mobile data software and incident recording systems, 3tc Software focuses on development for future use and integration with existing systems to make organisations more efficient and reduce risk," according to a company spokesperson. For further information visit www.3tcsolutions.com



Software
Command. Control. Inform.

states.

"We will also be better informed on any health, safety and welfare issues of our staff that may arise. This will all feed into demonstrating a better return on public funding for our service. Ultimately, we get our funding from the public and we need to show people the day-to-day business that we are doing."

INTUITIVE SYSTEM

While stressing the fact that Cork City Fire Brigade is only in the early stages of incorporating the incident recording and management information system into their existing network, Spillett is hopeful that the system, once bedded in, will make a huge difference to the way they work.

"A year down the line, I would hope that we have a very easy, intuitive incident recording system in place, allowing us to demonstrate more incident information, highlighting our service to the public through key performance indicators," he sums up.

"We'll be able to say exactly what we have achieved in terms of stats for every type of incident. We want more information, better information and we will be able to achieve this and to present all of this information to anyone who requests it."

He feels that other fire brigades across the country will be watching the results from Cork with interest.

"Cork City Fire Brigade has investigated a number different types of systems and options and we feel this is the most appropriate to us," he says. "There may well be will probably a level



"We believe this new model will be of interest to other fire services in Ireland." – David Todd, CEO

of interest in this product from other brigades, as there are approximately 30 per cent of brigades in the UK who use this system."

TRIED & TESTED TRACK RECORD

3tc Software is also expecting enquiries from other Irish brigades. "We believe this new model will be of interest to other fire services in Ireland," says its CEO David Todd.

"With a tried and tested track record in incident reporting and a supportive professional user base, now is the time to go global with our IRS Plus technology. Its flexibility makes it suitable for any, mission-critical environment, worldwide."

"IRS Plus is an essential tool for the development of any chief fire officer's integrated risk management plan," adds 3tc Software chairman and former chief fire officer, Phil Toase. "It helps them to optimise their service's performance in times of austerity by providing the right information, in the right place at the right time."

MEDICS RESPOND TO IMMEDIATE CARE TRAINING PROTOCOLS

A PRE-HOSPITAL IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE TRAINING INITIATIVE, DEVELOPED ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, WILL PROVIDE GPs AND GP REGISTRARS WITH UPDATED AND BEST PRACTICE EMERGENCY CARE PROTOCOLS AS WELL AS THE CONFIDENCE TO DELIVER THE PRACTICAL SKILLS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THEM, WRITES COURSE FOUNDER BRIAN CARLIN.

The new Immediate Medical & Emergency Care (IMEC) course has introduced a new form of GP assessment to ensure that competencies are achieved. This is good news for doctors, the patients and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

The first IMEC course, which has been developed in association with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), was held in Dublin in February, while the second one takes place in Sligo on 20-21 June.

The IMEC faculty is an integrated group that reflects the 'journey' the patient goes through (adult and children). Therefore, we have Advanced Paramedics, GPs, ED Nurses, ED Doctors and paediatric teams from Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin all supporting the GP who work in this environment.

TRAINING NEEDS

So, what essentially are the training needs of GPs and GP Registrars when it comes to emergency care in their own practices? I must acknowledge Dr Seamus Clarke (GP), who was one of my students on the MSc EMS (Immediate Care) course in UCD, and this work on the training needs formed part of his thesis.

The ICGP curriculum for GP training requires GP Registrars to be competent in managing common medical or surgical emergencies in general practice.¹

This is an expectation of many GP training organisations, such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Canadian College of Family Physicians, of GPs in training.^{2,3}

Traditionally this was achieved by GP Registrars acquiring experience in emergency departments as part of their structured training scheme. Emergency



Participants at the first IMEC course in Dublin in February – this is competency-based course where the student-centred approach allows for hands-on practice.

care taught in these posts is not always easily transferable to a general practice setting. A course, such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), has a clear hospital practice focus compared to general practice but is frequently undertaken by GP Registrars.⁴

However, it is not unusual now to find GP Registrars who have not worked in emergency departments⁴.

Such posts are no longer obligatory on some schemes and GP Registrars also have varying lengths of time spent in these posts either as part of the schemes or with prior experience.

Exposure to 'emergencies' in general practice may vary widely depending on the training practices location.

The resources to deal with emergencies in a general practice and in an emergency department differ greatly.

GP Registrar Emergency Medicine Placement



Figure 1

GP Registrar Emergency Medicine Placement Duration

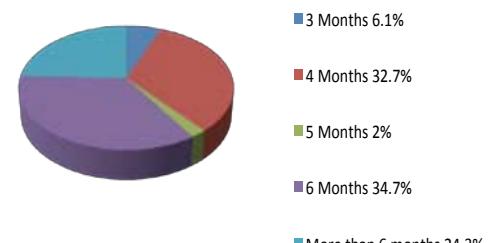


Figure 2



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Carlin has developed an Immediate Medical & Emergency Care (IMEC) course, in association with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP). With the first course having been recently delivered in Dublin, the second one is due to roll out in Sligo in July.

He is the clinical lead for the immediate pitch-side care of the Premier League in the UK with responsibility for the medical responses from the 92 clubs. He is also the senior clinical educator for the International Rugby Board.

Carlin's interest in sport has led him to develop the programme and the current Standard Principles of Resuscitation & Trauma in Sport (SPoRTS) course, which is facilitated through RCSI FSEM and endorsed by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

His role within RCSEd FPHC includes the role of interviewing anyone who is intending to sit the Diploma or Fellowship in Pre-Hospital care (DIMC/FIMC) with a view of securing a place on the exam.

Carlin is a former lecturer at the School of Medicine & Medical Science in UCD. He was the programme lead/co-ordinator for the MSc EMS (Immediate Care) programme. He has previously been responsible for training and education programmes for GPs working in remote and rural Scotland. Many immediate care schemes were developed there to support the Scottish Ambulance Service achieve ORCON standards and deliver a higher level of care, including the provision of 'Treat and Leave/Refer' protocols for first responders.

REALISTIC SCENARIOS

The initial treatment and stabilisation of patients with emergencies within general practice should commence prior to hospital transfer and definitive treatment. In order to bring about a standard approach to the management of emergencies in general practice, ICGP has developed its own course.

The Immediate Medical & Emergency Care Course (IMEC) covers the management of common medical, surgical and paediatric emergencies relative to the GP environment.

Pre-course materials and support are provided prior to the two-day intensive practical-based course with the format on workshops, skills and scenarios. This course is aimed at the realistic emergency scenarios that the GP is likely to face at some point.

The course will provide certification through accredited organisations such as the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) and the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC).

Upon successful completion of the course, candidates will be awarded the Cardiac First Responder-Advanced (CFR-A) certificate.

In addition, the course is endorsed by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. We are confident that the programme will provide GPs and GP Registrars with knowledge in up-to-date, best practice emergency care protocols as well as confidence to deliver the practical skills necessary to implement them.

It is also the intention of ICGP to run biennial 'master classes' at national events to facilitate new course updates and CFR-A re-certification.

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FURTHER CRISIS FOR DUBLIN'S HOMELESS AS CENTRE CLOSES

AN EMERGENCY HOMELESS CENTRE, OPENED BY DUBLIN CIVIL DEFENCE EARLIER THIS YEAR, HAS BEEN FORCED TO CLOSE ITS DOORS DUE TO A LACK OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES. NOW WITH A MAJOR ESCALATION IN THE NUMBERS SLEEPING ROUGH ACROSS THE CAPITAL, THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE HOUSING-LED APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS, REPORT BY ELAINE HEALY.

Commenting on the 20-bed facility, which has been in operation in Dublin Civil Defence headquarters on Wolfe Tone Quay since 10 January, a spokesperson said the organisation would not be in a position to continue running the service indefinitely, due to "other commitments".

According to Dublin Civil Defence Officer James McConnell, they would not be a position to run the service past April. "We have too many other commitments. On average, we have over 1,500 community events and it's our volunteers who man this centre. We have four volunteers there every night, seven days a week."

Official figures released in December 2013 by Dublin Region Homeless Executive found that the number of people sleeping rough in the capital had doubled since April 2013.

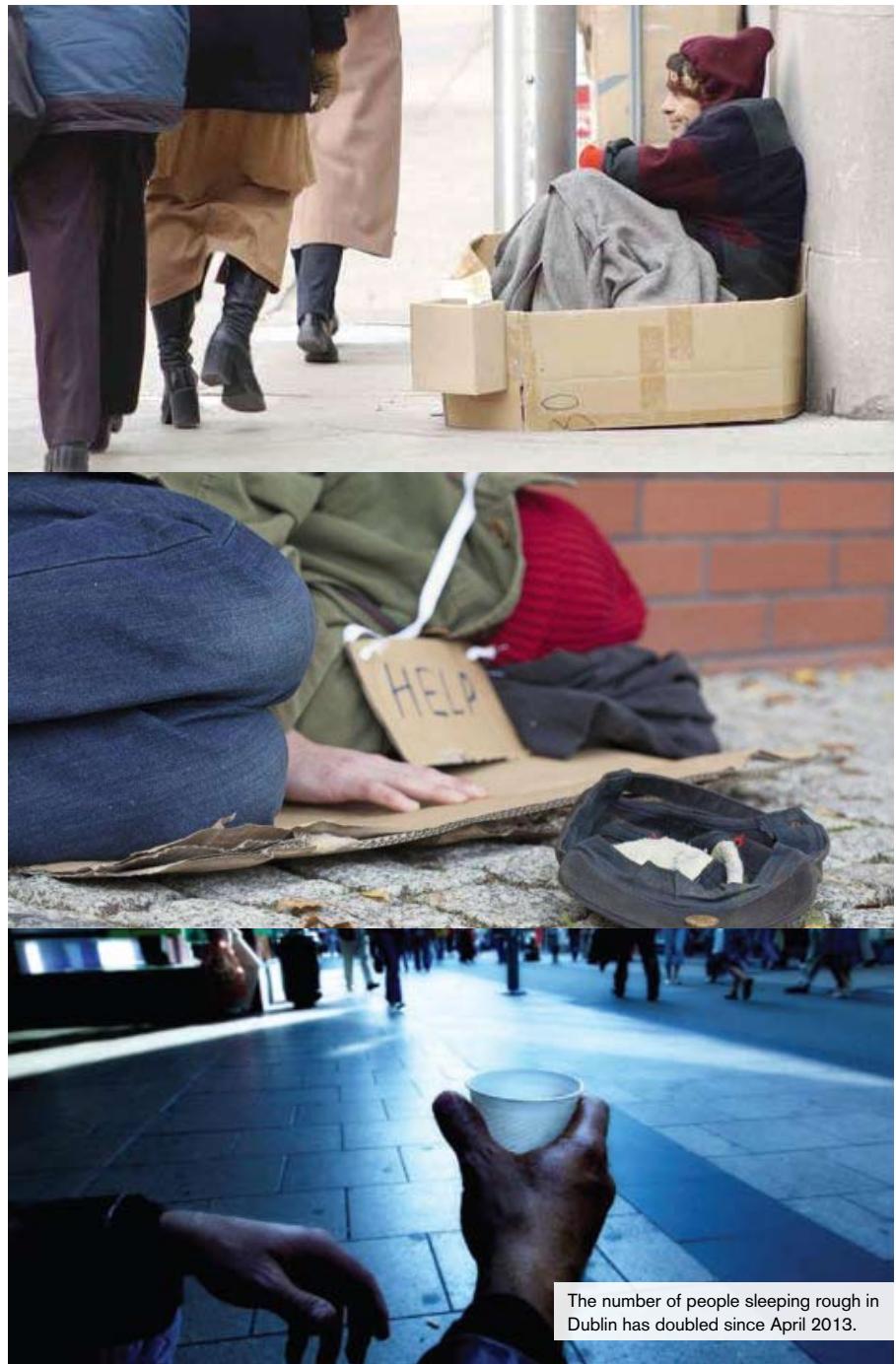
The Executive found that a minimum of 139 people were sleeping rough across the Dublin region, compared with 94 in April 2013.

HOMELESS SHELTERS

On average, it said that six individuals, who were new to homeless services, had presented on a daily basis in Dublin in 2013, with only two individuals departing homeless services into housing.

Residents at Dublin Civil Defence Wolfe Tone Quay shelter had been allocated beds on a day-by-day basis via Dublin City Council's free homeless helpline.

"This room has 20 army cot beds," said McConnell, "they come in at 9pm, pre-booked mainly through Dublin City Council's homeless freephone number.



"There are a number of homeless shelters around the city, there is a pool of beds and they are assigned a bed. When they came to us, they got tea, coffee and sandwiches, and we finished at 9am."

McConnell said the service operated in the same way as major incident emergency centre.

"We are a back-up to the emergency services, including fire, rescue, medical and welfare, so as an emergency response, it's something we'd be very involved with," he said.

BACK-UP SERVICES

Dublin Civil Defence has 350 volunteers, ten rescue boats, 16 fire trucks and a fleet of 73 emergency vehicles, said McConnell.

The organisation's primary role is to provide back-up to the professional emergency services in the event of fire, flooding, medical and fire emergencies.

Also within its remit is the provision of auxiliary welfare services to assist people following an emergency or crisis, where there is an ongoing need for basic services, like hot meals, drinks and caring support.

This is the service which has been in operation since early January in Dublin Civil Defence's Wolfe Tone headquarters, where McConnell said, the organisation was responding as it would "to any other emergency".

"We got a call from the Dublin City Council Homeless Executive just before Christmas to say that the number of homeless people on the street had doubled and could we do anything to help out," noted McConnell.

"Three years ago, we had provided shelter for five months during the heavy snowfall, and we've also provided shelter where people have been evacuated due to a fire or flooding.

"This time, it's down to the number of homeless on the streets. In a year, the number has doubled, with twice as many people living on the streets last Christmas than the previous year."

SIGNIFICANT STRAIN

Dublin Simon Community chief executive Sam McGuinness said the rise in Dublin's homeless population was placing a significant strain on the relevant support services.

"The need for accommodation and assistance for those with nowhere to go,

The Homelessness Policy Implementation Team will comprise assistant secretaries from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Social Protection, the HSE's Director of Primary Care, Dublin City Manager and another county or city manager.



and whose existence has become harsh and dangerous, is the highest we have ever seen," said McGuinness.

"What is extremely worrying is that many people who have accessed our emergency accommodation do not have the suitable housing they require.

"In present uncertain times, with limited emergency accommodation, housing shortage, rent increases and rent allowance restrictions, the pressure for beds is frantic. People are now compelled to stay longer in poor emergency facilities or resort to sleeping in doorways and squats."

HOUSING-LED APPROACH

In February, the Government approved measures proposed by Minister for Housing and Planning, Jan O'Sullivan, to implement a housing-led approach to homelessness.

The move followed the recommendations of the Homelessness Oversight Group, which presented its first report to O'Sullivan in December, in response to what she called



Dublin Civil Defence officer James McConnell said they're not in a position to run the service past April, due to other commitments.

the "considerable pressure on homelessness services in recent months".

O'Sullivan said the measures would ensure the closure of "expensive private emergency accommodation beds" in extensive use at present, and would include the establishment of a Homelessness Policy Implementation Team.

"I believe that long-term homelessness can be eliminated by 2016; to achieve that goal it is vital to source a steady supply of suitable permanent accommodation," said O'Sullivan.

"That is an essential part of a housing-led approach to homelessness. We will now put in place a practical plan to access this accommodation and support people in new tenancies."

TASKS TO IMPLEMENT

The Homelessness Policy Implementation Team will comprise assistant secretaries from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Social Protection, the HSE's Director of Primary Care, Dublin City Manager and another county or city manager.

Supported by an implementation unit, one of its first tasks will be to publish a structured, practical plan to make the transition from shelter-led to a sustainable housing-led approach.

It will also aim to provide for adequate short-term accommodation to eliminate the need to sleep rough, while sequencing the closure of expensive private emergency accommodation over the medium term.

COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORT

McGuinness agreed that a housing-led approach would be key to tackling the recent rise in homeless figures, but added that complementary support services were also needed.

"Tens of thousands of us are just one



Dublin Simon Community's chief executive Sam McGuinness said the rise in the homeless population was placing a significant strain on the relevant support services.

pay cheque, one social welfare payment, one family problem, one health diagnosis, one mortgage repayment away from becoming homeless," he said.

"Our focus is on housing as the primary step in responding to a person's homelessness.

"We are cognisant of the fact that

bricks and mortar alone will not solve homelessness."

The CEO of Dublin Simon Community said that their efforts will be enhanced by "offering support to those who move on from homelessness and by providing preventative measures ensuring people do not become homeless at all".



The Government has approved measures proposed by Minister for Housing and Planning, Jan O'Sullivan, to implement a housing-led approach to homelessness.

POLICE OVERSIGHT AND SCRUTINY CENTRAL TO CONFIDENCE BUILDING

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFIDENCE IN POLICING WERE DEBATED AND DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING A RECENT CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD IN BELFAST. AND IN LIGHT OF EVENTS WITHIN AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN CALLS FOR A SIMILAR AUTHORITY TO BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE GARDÁI.

Bringing together representatives from the statutory and community sector, senior police officers and a number of keynote speakers including Sir Keir Starmer (former Director of Public Prosecutions in England and Wales), the conference also provided the backdrop for the launch of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's 2013 Human Rights Annual Report and the 2014-2017 Annual Policing Plan.

Since 2001, policing in Northern Ireland has been subject to a significant programme of reform. The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), made up of political and independent members, has been central to that change programme.

Speaking about the conference which took place in Titanic Belfast on 25-26 March, the Board's chair Anne Connolly outlined why debate and discussions on the factors that influence confidence in policing are so important. She also explained how oversight and scrutiny of policing can be confidence builders, drivers and enablers.

"The architecture and framework established for police accountability and oversight in Northern Ireland has undoubtedly allowed community confidence to grow. But it is important to take stock, listen to views and look at where improvements can be made and how the Policing Board can help build police community relations."

ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The chairperson noted that the Board has a unique and important statutory policing oversight responsibility, but also stressed the importance of exploring views on the role of accountability in improving police effectiveness and service delivery.

"An effective Policing Board is central



Discussing the key challenges and mechanisms in place to ensure accountability of policing were (l-r): Dr Maurice Hayes, former Patten Commissioner; Gearóid Ó hÉára, Independent Member of the Policing Board; Brendan McGuigan, Chief Inspector of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate; Sir Keir Starmer, former Director of the Public Prosecution Service in England and Wales; Deborah Watters, Independent Member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, and Dr Michael Maguire, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

to the credibility of the PSNI. We are all very proud of the progress made on policing. And whilst we have well passed the ten-year milestone of the new beginning to policing, we are about to move forward into a new phase with senior officer changes at the top of the PSNI."

PSNI's chief constable Matt Baggott and his deputy Judith Gillespie are due to step down, and the Northern Ireland Policing Board will make new appointments to fill both positions respectively.

"The model on which policing change has been founded in Northern Ireland has undoubtedly supported confidence building. The Board's oversight role and the Police Ombudsman's responsibility for independent investigation of police complaints are now well established within our community.

"People have also become more connected to policing through the work of policing and community safety partnerships – and the local accountability this brings to policing. The damage that can be caused to trust and confidence in policing institutions can easily be shaken and public viewpoints founded.

"Within the context of Northern Ireland we know that policing has some unique challenges but the issue of confidence is one that affects all policing services. Public confidence is hard won and easily lost and that is why the issues considered during this conference are so important."

HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS

During the two-day conference, the Board also published its 9th Human Rights Annual Report, which assesses how the police have met their responsibilities under the Human Rights Act. The report includes a review of 14 key policing areas including Training, Policy, Complaints, Discipline and the Code of Ethics, Use of Force and Covert Policing.

The PSNI was the first police service to have a statutory duty to comply with human rights provisions and the work taken forward by the Board in scrutinising this area has been seminal.

Connolly said: "A human rights-based approach to policing has been shown to enhance public confidence and integrate the police into the community. With the co-operation and knowledge of the community it serves, police are better equipped to fulfil their statutory duties."

PLANNING THE FUTURE OF POLICING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Policing Board has published its latest policing plan which sets out the strategic priorities and objectives for policing for the next three years and a range of shorter term targets to be met by March 2015.

NIPB's chair Anne Connolly said: "In setting the Plan, the Board has put in place a range of measures which are both realistic and stretching, in a framework which will allow the PSNI to achieve improved performance across all areas, and will contribute to increasing public confidence in the PSNI.

"We have consulted with a range of key stakeholders in the community and the outcomes identified reflect the concerns of the community and the challenges faced in delivering effective and efficient policing to our community. In response to the views of the public, the plan sets out challenging targets for the PSNI to both reduce overall and increase the percentage of perpetrators brought to justice through positive crime outcomes."

Outlined in the plan are targets set to increase outcome rates for hate crimes and those with a domestic motivation. As detections for domestic abuse is an area of concern, there is a target set to increase outcomes rates for crimes with a domestic motivation by seven percentage points. The plan also sets out measures to improve the quality of engagement and service provided to vulnerable groups which include children and young people, older people and those who are victims of sexual exploitation, serious sex crime, hate crime and domestic abuse."

Justice Minister David Ford described the 2014-2017 Policing Plan as the main tool for holding the police to account and delivering positive outcomes for the community. "The plan is an important driver of confidence. It links with my priorities for safer communities, and faster, fairer justice and aligns with key Programme for Government commitments around tackling anti-social behaviour."

Minister Ford added that the plan supports the work of justice partners in delivering for victims and witnesses and supports the strategic direction for the Justice Department around reducing offending and community safety.

PSNI Chief Constable Matt Baggott commented that this plan takes forward the learning and successes of the past four years and is focussed on continual improvement.

"There has been unprecedented success against crime and other challenges such as terrorism and disorder. Despite the many dilemmas faced by the PSNI over the past year in particular, burglary, anti-social behaviour and violence on our streets have fallen significantly, while confidence in local policing is at its highest ever levels," he concluded.



Chief Constable Matt Baggott, NIPB Chair Anne Connolly and Justice Minister David Ford MLA.

To date the PSNI has implemented 196 recommendations outlined in the Board's Human Rights Annual Reports since 2005. It has also accepted over 70 recommendations made in the Board's four Human Rights Thematic Reviews.

"This demonstrates the Board and the PSNI's commitment to ensuring that a human rights culture becomes embedded within the organisation. Maintaining that culture is an ongoing commitment," concluded the NIPB chair.

NEW NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS

COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS HOPE TO SAVE 200 LIVES FROM CARDIAC ARREST WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR, DELEGATES WERE TOLD AT 'RESPOND 2014' – THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS, WHICH WAS HELD IN TULLAMORE, CO. OFFALY. GRACE HENEGHAN REPORTS.

CFR Ireland – the national network for community first responders (CFRs) was launched at 'Respond 2014'. When it's fully up and running, the national network will link all CFR schemes in Ireland and offer support for the establishment of new schemes.

'Respond 2014' was the first such conference for CFRs in Ireland, organised by the National Ambulance Service in association with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC), Wicklow Cardiac First Responders, the Irish Heart Foundation and the Centre for Emergency Medical Science at UCD.

There was a phenomenal turn-out of over 300 CFRs to the one-day event in March, which showcased the best of CFR activity in Ireland and provided evidence-based updates for first responders. As the number of CFR schemes around Ireland grows, the need for a focus of advice and support is becoming ever more apparent in the context of a national approach.

In addition to an opportunity for networking and sharing experiences, 'Respond 2014' featured national and international experts in the field of resuscitation such as Dr Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director of the National Ambulance Service, and Prof Bryan McNally of the CARES programme in Atlanta.

The conference also featured a series of skills workshops, which allowed new and established schemes to ensure that their skills and equipment meet current best practice.

TEAM-BASED APPROACH

Addressing delegates at 'Respond 2014' in Tullamore, Co. Offaly in March,



Dr David Menzies, chairman of 'Respond 2014' pictured with the team, following the conclusion of the conference in the Tullamore Court Hotel on 1 March. Plans are already in the pipeline for 'Respond 2015' and a new website www.cfr.ie has been set up..



Martin Dunne, NAS Director, said they're currently developing a team-based approach to every responder organisation.

Martin Dunne, Director of the National Ambulance Service, said the NAS is currently developing relationships, networks and a team-based approach to every responder organisation.

"We are reconfiguring command and control centres within the NAS, developing a menu of response models

and types, training staff to be focused on the right level of care to the patient and the right level of clinician to be able to respond.

"We also have response time targets that we are doing our best to achieve, given the environment in which we are working, and due to that this is the reason

we have had to change our models. Our new intermediate care ambulance services allows inter-hospital and nursing homes transfers and discharges.

"These have to be done and are as important as every other job that we do. We have also implemented emergency response cars and different types of response vehicles within the regions. Essentially, the patient is at the forefront of everything."

With community first responders being the first port of call in relation to the 'Echo Delta' calls, Dunne said the ambulance service aims to develop this even further. "Alongside the Irish Heart Foundation and the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) our commitment is there to develop this and ensure that local communities will have responder schemes available. The CFRs are trained and registered to the required level to do the job in a safe way. We will do everything we can to assist them.

"We will also encourage as many responder schemes to let us know where they are so that we can then put them onto the new command and control infrastructure that we are building, so that we will be able to develop the new technology to incorporate Apps Responders, so there's a two-way system of communication."

Dunne told community first responders that the NAS aims to ensure that the technology being built currently will be able to deal with any of these issues. "We want to give you the confidence that back-up is on the way and where this back-up is coming from."

WICKLOW RESPONDERS

As one of the longest-established CFR schemes, Wicklow Cardiac First Responders have been contacted by new groups around the country seeking advice and support as they establish new schemes.

John Fitzgerald of Wicklow Cardiac First Responders, who was one of the conference organisers, said it is now time for CFR networks to bring all their accumulated experience together as new schemes strive to get off the ground. "CFRs from around the country put a lot of time and effort into launching and running schemes, and we feel that if all this energy is channelled in the same direction, it will be very powerful," he added.



John Fitzgerald of Wicklow Cardiac First Responders, said it's time for CFR networks to bring all their accumulated experience together as new schemes strive to get off the ground.

Fitzgerald, who is a founding member of Dunlavin Community First Responders in Wicklow, said his group is CFR-enhanced and responds to chest pain calls and strokes calls as well as cardiac arrest. "Linked to the ambulance service we are part of the Wicklow Cardiac First Responders – the umbrella group for first responder groups in the county. A total of 30 CFR-enhanced groups in Wicklow are all linked to the national ambulance service and are spread right across the county from Bray in the north to Arklow in the south right across to regions such as Carnew, Ballyconnell and Blessington. Three new groups are also due to go live in the county."

In terms of training, there are 40 instructors within the CFR scheme in addition to Red Cross instructors, occupational first aiders and personnel from the Order of Malta. "We draw on every resource we can to train and we don't charge for training. We have two training weekends every year – one in April and one in October."

He explained that every CFR group in the county has one kit bag that includes an AED, oxygen, a suction device for suction of the upper airway, aspirin and the emergency mobile phone. "Wicklow Cardiac First Responders have attended over 2,500 call-outs within the last nine years across all of these groups. We have an average response time across the scheme of less than five minutes."

Fitzgerald said that all CFR groups within Wicklow Cardiac First Responders are 100 per cent self-financed. "So, there are no top-up payments, expense

accounts, cars or pensions, only heart! Seriously, it's the communities in the county that keep us going, in addition to some funding from Wicklow County Council from time to time. We also received some funding from the HSE some years ago to train some new instructors. But overall it's run a shoestring."

When community first responders are not busy in Wicklow, he explained that they undertake information nights, community awareness and community training, stroke awareness campaigns with IHF publications, in addition to fundraising for the Foundation.

"Three years ago we started a project to fundraise for PAD (public access defibrillators) schemes in addition to the kit bags in our communities. This helps with community awareness."

"This year we have visited a number of secondary schools in the county using the Heartsaver Family and Friends DVD. In terms of the chain of survival, at the end of the day it doesn't matter who's pushing on the chest, it just matters that it happens as quickly as possible, before the ambulance service arrives."

In his concluding remarks, John Fitzgerald paid tribute to the support from PHECC, Brigid Sinnott in the Irish Heart Foundation, Martin Dunne in the National Ambulance Service, in addition to the paramedics and advanced paramedics. "Without this support we could not and would not be able to continue. We don't have a monopoly on goodwill and community service, it's to be found everywhere!"

AMBULANCE SERVICE TO CENTRE ON GREATER CFR INTEGRATION

THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE, DR CATHAL O'DONNELL, TOLD DELEGATES AT 'RESPOND 2014' THAT THE NEW NATIONAL CONTROL CENTRE, DUE TO OPEN IN MID-2015, AIMS TO FACILITATE A GREATER LEVEL OF INTEGRATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDER GROUPS AND THE AMBULANCE SERVICE ACROSS IRELAND IN THE FUTURE.

A new National Control Centre in Dublin is due to open its doors in Tallaght in Dublin by mid-2015, with a regional division based in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal.

According to Dr Cathal O'Donnell, medical director of the National Ambulance Service, this single control centre will be based on these two sites essentially. "We envisage that the control centre will be fully operational by mid-2015. When that is opened and the technology systems are in place, we will be in a much better place to properly integrate CFR groups right around Ireland in a very meaningful way.

"We are absolutely fully supportive of CFR schemes, and when our national control infrastructure is in place next year it will allow us to integrate with responder schemes in a really meaningful way nationwide."

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Dr O'Donnell, who was a keynote speaker at 'Respond 2014' – the first conference for community first responders, which took place in Tullamore, Co. Offaly in March – outlined the perspective of the National Ambulance Service on improving cardiac arrest outcomes.

"In terms of full survival rates from cardiac arrest in Ireland, the figures are not great compared to international rates. We have some work to do and we need to do better. But the challenge for both the ambulance service and the CFRs is how to achieve this.

"The chain of survival aims to optimise each individual component. Within the ambulance service we are working on a project to improve outcomes from cardiac arrest which we will hopefully launch later



Integration is a big challenge for the National Ambulance Service, its medical director Dr Cathal O'Donnell told delegates at 'Respond 2014' in Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 1 March.

on in the year."

In terms of response times for cardiac arrest, he described the numbers bandied about in the media and other outlets of between eight and 19-minute response times as "nonsense". He added that the true figure is nearer to three or four minutes, noting that if good life support and defibrillation is not available within that timeframe then it's useless.

"However, from the point of view of the NAS, responding from the 98 ambulance stations around the country remains a big challenge for us, and realistically we are never going to get there within three or four minutes in lots of cases, depending on early CPR or early defibrillation.

"Early CPR and early defibrillation are vital components in the chain of survival. Bad CPR is better than no CPR, but if we are doing CPR it needs to be of high quality, because that has very significant implications for patient outcomes."

IMPACT ON PATIENT SURVIVAL

He noted that any interruption in chest compressions – no matter how short – will have a significantly negative impact on a patient's survival. "So, for example, a 10-second pause in chest compressions will reduce the probability of ROSC (Return of Spontaneous Circulation) from 50 to 15 per cent which is very significant."

Whilst acknowledging that it's easy to

get distracted when treating a cardiac arrest, "but if you do, you're not serving the patient very well". Good quality and uninterrupted chest compressions will make a significant contribution to returning a neurologically-intact patient back to their families in the days following cardiac arrest, he added.

"To ensure high quality CPR is a challenge faced by the emergency services around the world and I don't think anyone yet has cracked it. The big thing for us is Dispatch CPR – treatment starts the moment that phone rings in the control centre.

"We have a very sophisticated triage system in all of our control centres around the country, and our call takers will take all '999' callers through very structured questioning. If they determine this call is a cardiac arrest or likely to be one, the caller will be instructed on how to do CPR over the phone."

UNIFORMED RESPONSE

O'Donnell recalled attending a number of call-outs where CPR was being carried out by a lay person, who was instructed by the dispatch centre at the other end of the phone.

"It's been effective and the point is that it's being done, whereas years ago this was never done. However, it's still not the same as having a trained person delivering CPR."

Other strategies looked at by the NAS have been the possibility of getting other uniformed services to respond. "Certainly in other countries, such as North America, this is part and parcel of how things are done, with involvement by the fire and police services. So, public access defibrillation (PAD) is something that needs to be addressed.

"However, if we are serious about consistently getting good quality CPR and defibrillation at an early stage the best answer is to get CFR groups linked in with the National Ambulance Service and to respond within a short timeframe. This is where we need to go and have been going with CFRs and other voluntary groups."



Dr Cathal O'Donnell, NAS Medical Director, pictured here with his fellow keynote speaker Prof Bryan McNally during a 'Q&A' session at 'Respond 2014'.

PROPER CFR TRAINING

According to the NAS medical director, community first responders are a very important part of the solution. "The community; base is absolutely fundamental, communities looking after themselves and assisting us in looking after those in their communities. The short response times that this brings is also fundamental. An important element is that CFR groups are properly trained."

However, he said that this also presents challenges such as the cost of setting up a CFR group with equipment, training and materials. "There is also the issue of sustainability – community groups are enthusiastic to get on board with us and then the phone may not ring for very long time. The issue of safety is also one that doesn't get quite the emphasis that it should. For example, in terms of dealing with infectious disease – people responding to a situation where there are bloods or bodily fluids at the scene, coupled with the safety aspect of driving to a scene in a private car in a highly charged situation."

There are challenges from the NAS perspective, he pointed out, such as ensuring that the quality of the care provided is good in addition to the good upkeep of skills.

"Safety again is paramount because we don't want to send personnel into a situation where there is a safety issue. The last challenge for us is how we can show

our appreciation to CFRs and the work that they do for us."

INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

Integration, he admitted, is a big challenge for the NAS. "We have rolled out a project where we are rationalising and consolidating our control centres and dispatch networks.

Five years ago we had 13 control centres; today we have six and next year we will have one centre on two sites. Part of the issues in the past have concerned the technology employed.

"Specifically with regard to CFRs, what it means is that if a call taker in the dispatch/control centre is managing a cardiac arrest situation there is a lot going on there – taking the call, delivery the pre-arrival instructions, dispatching an ambulance and advanced paramedics.

Sometimes it is time consuming for call takers to remember there's a CFR in that area, and it may entail looking up their contact details, so much so that with the best will in the world this will not happen."

He believes the only way for this to happen consistently is to have it built into the technology such as text messaging and the App.

"We are currently going through a very significant change in how we control and dispatch our resources. Until such time as we are through that, then our ability to seamlessly integrate CFR groups in every part of the country is not quite there yet."

US PROJECT 'CARES' ABOUT DATA COLLECTION

PROF BRYAN McNALLY OF EMORY UNIVERSITY IN ATLANTA, WHO IS THE PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR OF THE CARES (CARDIAC ARREST REGISTRY TO ENHANCE SURVIVAL) PROGRAMME IN THE UNITED STATES, PROVIDED A KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION AND HOW THESE CARDIAC ARREST REGISTRIES CAN AND DO IMPROVE OUTCOMES.

Like his fellow 'Respond 2014' keynote speaker Dr Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director of the National Ambulance Service, Prof Bryan McNally has huge experience in the area of first response, as both a responder and as an EMS director.

Firstly as an EMT and then as a paramedic before becoming a physician in New York City, Prof McNally said the first three links in the chain of survival – Early Access, Early CPR and Early Defibrillation – are making the most difference in terms of a patient's survival.

"That's not to say the other link – Early Advanced Care – is less important."

In providing an update on the CARES (Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival) project, he said the key message on their brochure is that improving emergency cardiac care saves lives. "It's not a new message but it's one on which we wish to focus."

PRE-HOSPITAL TRIALS

Pointing to the results of a number of trials in Ontario's pre-hospital support settings in 2004, he said that communities who collected data over the course of time always transitioned from providing BLS (Basic Life Support) to ALS (Advanced Life Support) care.

"The studies found that the first three links on the chain of survival – had the most impact in the treatment of a patient suffering from cardiac arrest.

"Showing the chain of survival at different schema, the better the quality and high performance CPR provided will make a significant difference to a patient's chances. The first three to four minutes are the most important – CPR bides you time to do more successful defibrillation

and the sooner that electricity can get to the patient the greater the outcome."

The key message, according to Prof McNally, is that metrics are vital when analysing the levels of care. "The first step is the collection and analysis of data for cardiac arrest and general emergency care. If you don't have any outcome data how do you improve the performance in the system?"

DATA COLLECTION

The American Heart Association (AHA) continues to stress the importance of measuring, benchmarking and feeding information on the levels of performance. "We can do a much better job in both the pre-hospital and hospital settings and also in the quality of CPR."

With a much greater awareness now of the importance of data collection, he said that the goal of carers is to help communities collect data. "The AHA

recognises the importance of making cardiac arrest a reportable disease so that the data has to be collected. The idea is to work with those communities who understand the importance of this." He said that telephone CPR is one area the programme aims to introduce into the communities across the United States.

"We really need to concentrate on the majority of events which occur in the home, so doing telephone CPR to get the family members engaged and dispatching the community first responder to the scene will have the greatest impact to the patient's outcome in the short term.

"In terms of our trend data, we're tracking all those who participated in the cardiac arrest registry since 2010.

"We are seeing an improvement in the number of bystanders who are the first to start CPR on the patient until the first responder or EMS personnel arrive on the scene."



The key message, according to Prof Bryan McNally, is that metrics are vital when analysing the levels of care.

UCD TO CONSIDER THE MERIT OF STUDY ON FIRST RESPONDERS

UCD'S MERIT (MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONDERS INTEGRATION AND TRAINING) PROJECT IS CONSIDERING A FIVE-YEAR STUDY ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS, ACCORDING TO PROJECT MANAGER MAIREAD EGAN. SHE ALSO TOLD DELEGATES THAT UCD WILL WELCOME ITS FIRST INTAKE OF STUDENTS TO A NEW FOUR-YEAR BSc DEGREE IN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SCIENCE IN SEPTEMBER 2015.

The MERIT (Medical Emergency Responders Integration and Training) Project is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. The project was established in UCD in December 2004 with funding provided by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council and the Department of Health. The project's aims include the establishment of structures to train, equip, monitor and integrate GPs into delivery of agreed aspects of pre-hospital emergency care.

To date, over 500 GP surgeries around Ireland participate in UCD's MERIT Project. The project runs one-day immediate care courses for GPs throughout Ireland, across a range of specialities such as cardiac, trauma, thrombolysis and paediatrics.

According to MERIT project manager, Mairead Egan, the project has 100 per cent coverage in the Republic of Ireland. "There are 2,600 GPs in Ireland across 2,000 practices – one third of the practices are sole practitioners and MERIT has managed to take on board over 500 of those practices. It means that 508 GP practices in Ireland are equipped and trained to manage cardiac and trauma rescue in the community," she told community first responders at the recent 'Respond 2014' conference in Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

"UCD has been doing this for many years, long before CPD (Continual Professional Development) for GPs was formally introduced. We contribute to every module in undergraduate medicine from CFR to ALS; while our other main strand is in Research & Development."

In addition to the provision of training for GPs, the MERIT Project also rolls

out training programmes for paramedics and advanced paramedics, such as the Diploma in Emergency Medical Science. "We also have a number of Masters and PhD programmes underway and these higher degrees are becoming increasingly popular among advanced paramedics and healthcare providers," noted the project manager.

RURAL VERSUS URBAN

The July 2013 'Cardiac Arrest Management in General Practice' Handbook looked at GPs who managed cardiac arrest over a five-year period; 495 practices signed up to the study and got a defibrillator. In return for two days of training they agreed to collect data for the MERIT Project and to note whether or not they had been involved in a cardiac arrest situation in their areas.

"The results published in the 'British Medical Journal' revealed that out of the 495 practices studied a total of 178 (36%) were involved in the CARA (Computer Assisted Resuscitation Algorithm) attempt; 13% reported more than three incidents over the five-year

period; discharge from hospital was over 18% – so that 45 patients out of the 272 survived cardiac arrest and could go home."

She claimed that rural GP practices tend to experience twice as many events as urban and mixed practices. "However, the survival rates across all areas were the same. Due to the results of the data, we are now able to decide where defibrillators should be placed in remote areas or where they are being used."

According to Mairead Egan, cardiac first responders have a very important role to play in the care of the people in their communities.

"We are now also considering a five-year study on role and value of CFRs, similar to the pilot GP study that is currently underway to target GPs in specific areas who have agreed to be called by the ambulance service in the event of a cardiac arrest.

"So, the take home message from our study is that there is a significant contribution by lay responders to cardiac arrest management in the community and long may it last!"



TRADE EXHIBITION AT 'RESPOND 2014'

A NUMBER OF LEADING SUPPLIERS OF PRE-HOSPITAL EMERGENCY CARE EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED THEIR WARES AT 'RESPOND 2014'

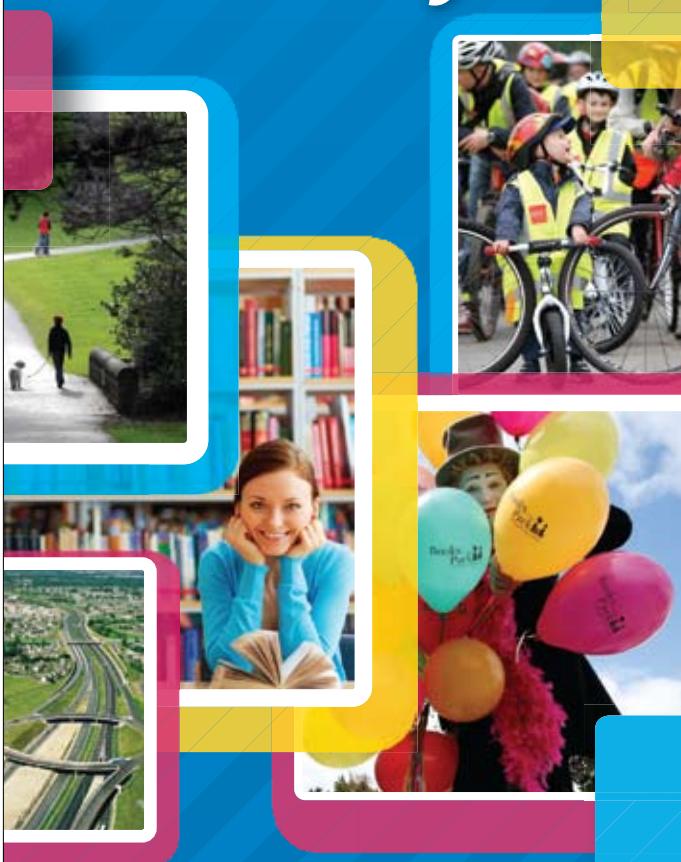


(All 'Respond 2014' photographs courtesy of Bray CFR)



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DON'T BE HASTY, PRACTICE ROAD SAFETY

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO THANK AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA, DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE, HSE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE AND THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY FOR THEIR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE ANNUAL ROAD SAFETY EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS.

These campaigns are hugely important for raising awareness and providing continued road safety education in areas such as walking, cycling, dangers of speeding, mobile phone usage and visibility.

Representatives from the principal emergency services showcased their professionalism and training to the students on our local campuses by staging a simulated two car collision.

This was to bring home the real impact of car accidents to the young drivers particularly targeting the 18-24-year age groups where accident statistics show the highest fatality rates.

Children and parents were invited to have a look around the safety equipment carried on emergency vehicles at the 'Open Days' held at the local fire station. They got to sit in the vehicles and try the "blues and twos" and also enjoy a 'meet and greet' with all the local safety teams.

Safety messages were given in person by members of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Gardaí, fire and ambulance personnel.

Over 600 children accompanied by parents and guardians visited the 'Open Day', with each going home with a hi-viz goody bag containing a safety vest, road safety colouring book, a set of emergency bicycle lights and a piece of candy.

These events serve to highlight the co-operation between all the agencies and their ability to work well with the local community.

The events also reinforces the commitment by the participants to delivering a unified pro-active safety message to ensure that our communities remain safe now and into the future.

SCOTLAND TO SET THE SCENE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE WEEKEND

THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS WILL PROVIDE THE BACKDROP FOR THE UK AND IRELAND MOUNTAIN RESCUE BIENNIAL CONFERENCE ON 12-14 SEPTEMBER, WHICH WILL SEE MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND COME TOGETHER TO SHARE AND BUILD ON BEST PRACTICE THROUGHOUT THE RESCUE COMMUNITY.

Mountain rescue in Ireland and the UK is often undertaken in some of the most remote and potentially hostile environmental conditions experienced by the emergency services.

Highly professional mountain rescue volunteers are organised in teams across the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. Teams train to a very high standard and are always ready to assist people any time, any day, and in any weather.

Every two years the UK and Irish Mountain Rescue community holds a conference; in 2014 it comes to the village of Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park in the Scottish Highlands.

The conference will combine a mixture of outdoor workshop sessions and indoor lectures building on best practice within the volunteer mountain rescue community. The weekend event on 12-14 September will be organised by Scottish Mountain Rescue.

INDOOR-OUTDOOR PURSUITS

With just five months to go before the conference takes place, over half the number of places at the UK & Ireland MR conference have been sold. Lead conference organiser Martin McCallum said that a small team is working hard to make this the conference to remember.

The conference will include a talk from extreme climber Andy Kirkpatrick, workshops led by world famous climber Dave MacLeod and a wide range of outdoor-based skills sessions in Cairngorms National Park.

Up to 400 top mountain rescue experts from Ireland and the UK are expected to attend the conference, including team leaders and team members

WORKSHOPS TO KEEP TRACK OF BEST PRACTICE

The two-day gathering of mountain rescue volunteers will involve up to 30 small group workshops organised across the following five 'tracks', as diverse as canyon rescue, river bank-side searching, rope work and mountain safety topics:

1. **Technical Land Rescue:** Rigging for rescue, 4x4 vehicle recovery to mountain biking.
2. **Water Rescue:** Technical water-related issues, such as canyon rescue and riverbank searching.
3. **Medical:** Casualty management and the latest thinking on treating the hypothermic casualty.
4. **Human Factors:** Developing rescue leaders to best practice in rescue trauma counselling for volunteer rescuers.
5. **Search:** Search management skills and tools.

There will also be indoor sessions in the management of big multi-team, multi-agency searches as well as workshops on the more traditional mountain roles of searching and medical care of casualties. Each workshop is repeated over the weekend so delegates get to design their own conference.

who make up the voluntary mountain rescue, cave rescue and search and rescue dog associations in Ireland and the UK.

The main meetings, delegate accommodation, exhibition space and some of the workshops and lectures will be held in the Highlands Hotel at the Macdonald Aviemore Resort in the heart of the village.

Also invited are affiliated bodies such as the military search and rescue, members of the police, ambulances services, fire and rescue services, government resilience officers, coastguard and the search and rescue teams.

A civic reception will be held on Friday 12 September. Amongst the invited guests

Mountain Rescue UK & Ireland Conference 2014



THE GATHERING

will be ministers from UK and devolved governments; MPs and MSPs; chief police officers from Scotland and military heads, in addition to leading figures in mountain rescue.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Email: MRGathering2014@mountainrescuescotland.org

Website: <http://mrgathering2014.mountainrescuescotland.org/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mrgathering2014

Twitter: www.twitter.com/MRGathering2014

COME ON DOWN FOR ARMED FORCES DAY!

NORTHERN IRELAND'S ARMED FORCES DAY ON 21 JUNE IN NEWTOWNARDS, CO. DOWN HAS BECOME A MAJOR FEATURE ON THE CALENDAR THROUGHOUT IRELAND, WITH SUPPORT FROM VETERANS, ASSOCIATIONS AND BLUELIGHT SERVICES FROM CORK AND KERRY.

Organisers and hosts for this year's Armed Forces Day in Northern Ireland on Saturday 21 June are planning to use the opportunities given by the new venue in Co. Down, to give the general public a unique opportunity to get right into the middle of military action.

The NI Official Armed Forces Day is being hosted by Ards Borough Council and the event will make full use of the towns' airfield with a major re-enactment of a hostage scenario showing military response across the three armed services and across the variety of trades and skills available across forces.

A special invitation has gone out throughout Ireland to veterans of the D-Day landings to be 'Guests of the Day' by Ards Borough Council.

They will get VIP treatment for the parade and the unique capability display putting the public right in the centre of the action.

FEELING THE ACTION

"Our aim is to get the public right into the middle of the action," said Commander John Gray RN. "From the moment hostages are taken to the arrival of airborne assault troops and subsequent ground action, through to recovery, we want those coming along to see, hear and feel the action."

"It may look good on computer screens or in the movies but to take it to the next dimension is going to be quite an experience for everyone," he added.

"Naturally, there has to be a great deal of choreography with emphasis on health and safety but by careful planning we should be able to let Northern Ireland see at first hand the incredible skills that have been put into use in operations around the world by regulars and reserves serving here," he said.



Mayor of Ards, Councillor Stephen McIlveen pictured with members of the Air Corps, Army and Navy.

LONG MILITARY LINKS

The Mayor of Ards, Councillor Stephen McIlveen says the Borough is delighted to be hosting this year's official event for Northern Ireland.

"Newtownards has long military links – not only as home to the Royal Artillery Reserves but also with strong links to the Irish Guards and the Royal Irish Regiment," he explained.

"It is also home to the Somme Museum on the edge of the Clandeboye Estate where US troops completed final

training in Northern Ireland before the D-Day landings.

"Newtownards was also the home to Lt Col 'Paddy' Blair-Mayne – the most highly decorated soldier of the Second World War and co-founder of the Special Air Service with Colonel David Stirling.

"We are determined to put our fullest support behind events on 21 June so that it is a day of respect, of fun, of entertainment and of memories for everyone coming along," he added.

€5M CONTRACT FOR CRITICAL HEALTHCARE

Critical Healthcare has secured a €5 million contract to provide emergency and non-emergency medical products and services to the National Ambulance Service. The company's innovative e-solution – Medlogistix – was also its tour de force in winning the recent 'Innovator of the Year' accolade at the SFA National Small Business Awards for 2014.

REPORT BY GRACE HENEGHAN.

Critical Healthcare, the Kilbeggan-based company which manufactures and distributes a range of emergency medical products and services to ambulance providers, fire services and the pre-hospital market in Ireland, the UK and Scandinavia, has been awarded a nationwide contract with the National Ambulance Service.

Worth in the region of €5 million the three-year contract will see the company providing a managed solution for the purchase and supply of emergency medical supplies and patient consumable products for up to 100 ambulance stations throughout Ireland on behalf of the HSE.

Critical Healthcare will utilise a bespoke and innovative web-based management system, developed in-house, called Medlogistix to fulfil the contract. This unique web portal is aimed specifically at the healthcare market and offers a fully managed solution for the procurement, stock management and delivery of medical products across multiple locations. The system also offers in-depth reporting metrics.

NORTH LEINSTER PILOT

An 18-month pilot programme, which was run by Critical Healthcare within the HSE North Leinster Ambulance Service, demonstrated cost efficiencies in excess of 30 per cent of their annual spend.

According to Dr Anne Cusack, managing director of Critical Healthcare, the Medlogistix system quickly measured and identified cost-saving measures for the service. Following the pilot programme, the company tendered for the nationwide contract, which it was recently awarded. "Critical Healthcare has now rolled out both the system and the consumable product range to over 90 ambulance stations nationwide."



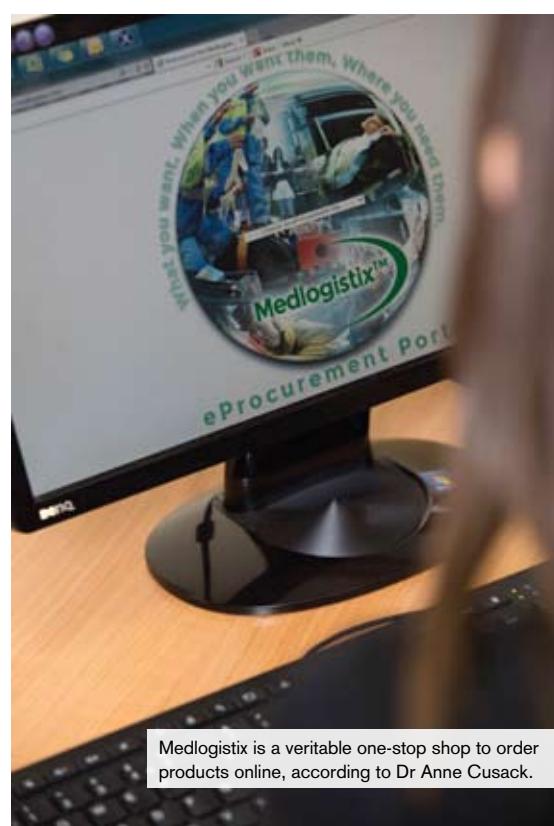
Dr Anne Cusack pictured with Seamus Reilly, the co-founder of Critical Healthcare.

"Medlogistix is a veritable one-stop shop to order products online etc...the benefits are the significant cost-savings on the product itself and it also offers a standardised service on the range of products, so that all ambulance stations use the same products."

The brainchild of Critical Healthcare, the web-based management system was borne out of feedback received from EMS and ambulance personnel at the frontline. "Their greatest concern was the cost of the products, the fact that different ambulance stations were using different products, and accessing reliable, robust information on product usage."

JUST-IN-TIME SERVICE

She explains that this system also offers the ideal 'Just in Time' service, rather than



Medlogistix is a veritable one-stop shop to order products online, according to Dr Anne Cusack.

'INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR' AWARD FOR 2014

Critical Healthcare was recently awarded 'Innovator of the Year' for 2014 at the Small Firms Association (SFA) National Small Business Awards.

Enterprise Ireland sponsored this category, which was one of seven category awards presented at the 10th SFA Awards ceremony in Dublin.

The company received the award in recognition of its web-based management system Medlogistix – the e-health contract for the procurement, stock, delivery and reporting metrics of products across multiple locations, in addition to Duramedic, an own brand medical consumable range and MediQuilt, a patented infection control solution.

Established in 2000, Critical Healthcare now manufactures and distributes over 5,000 medical and products to healthcare services and retail markets. The company currently employs 13 full-time and two part-time staff.

To facilitate the new €5 million

contract with the National Ambulance Service, Critical Healthcare recently took on board four additional employees since December 2013. According to Anne Cusack, this will see them through the first half of the year, and she added that hopefully the second half will see a further staff intake.

The company's core customers include the National Ambulance Service, Dublin Fire Brigade, Dublin City Council, the Irish Red Cross, and a range of pharmacies and hospitals such as St Vincent's Private, the Galway Clinic, Barringtons Hospital and Ulster Independent Hospital.

In addition to the recent SFA National Small Business Award, Critical Healthcare has also won the 'National Procurement Award – Healthcare Category 2012' – in recognition of the Medlogistix system.



Pictured at the awards presentation Trinity College Dublin (l-r): AJ Noonan, SFA chairman; Dr Anne Cusack, MD of Critical Healthcare, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD; Seamus Reilly, co-founder of Critical Healthcare, and Tom Hayes, Divisional Manager of Micro Enterprises and Small Business Division, Enterprise Ireland (award sponsor).



Dr Anne Cusack, MD of Critical Healthcare, pictured with Avril Crowley, customer service manager, Liam Young, Export Manager, and co-founder Seamus Reilly.

storing stock locally which also frees up space and the need for stock management. "Medlogistix has been in operation across all HSE ambulance stations nationwide since the second week in December 2013. This HSE contract will open doors to other areas and sectors in the future.

"We have recently signed up Medical – one of Ireland's private ambulance operators," Dr Cusack says, adding, "We are also in discussions with a private hospital and a voluntary organisation who are both interested in taking the system on board in the future.

"Medlogistix, which replaced the company's TenderNet system (used by Dublin Fire Brigade), is a more sophisticated system and offers a greater range of metrics.

COST-TIME EFFICIENCIES

The contract between Critical Healthcare and the ambulance service will run for an initial 36 months and can be extended for a further 24-month period.

The MD of Critical Healthcare says the solution offered by her company will ensure significant cost and time efficiencies for the ambulance service.

"A significant amount of rostered time is taken up with managing the ordering and delivery of consumable products in each ambulance station. By introducing a web-based solution such as Medlogistix, one scheduled order can be placed each week, thereby reducing the administration costs incurred by the HSE and improving the overall efficiency of the ambulance service."

CONSUMABLE PRODUCTS

The company is also supplying the ambulance service with a wide range of medical consumable products required by paramedic or first responders to diagnose, resuscitate and rehabilitate a patient. These products include dressings, bandages, oxygen masks, blood glucometers, gloves, defibrillator accessories, burn gels, head immobilisers, syringes and needles.

A number of these consumable products will come from the Duramedic range, which have been developed in-house by Critical Healthcare. The range includes a unique patented product called MediQuilt, which is a reusable three tog quilt with an anti-bacterial and biodegradable disposable cover.

MediQuilt is manufactured by Critical Healthcare at their Kilbeggan-base in Co. Westmeath. It fulfils the infection control policy of both the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the NHS, which dictates that for every patient transfer, there should be a complete change of linen, ensuring a seamless system of infection control.

The Duramedic range was developed in response to customer requirements for a consumable range of products that offers choice, value and quality.

The range also offers product quantities dictated by customer needs as opposed to generic pack sizes, ensuring further cost efficiencies for the buyer.

EXPLORING OVERSEAS MARKETS

Critical Healthcare strives to be the first choice for emergency medical professionals in Ireland and abroad, according to its managing director. "We are currently growing 20 per cent year-on-year within the Irish market, and have been trading with a number of private ambulance operators in the UK since 2013, as well as putting MediQuilt on trial across a number of NHS Trusts there."

On the European front, also looking towards Scandinavia, in particular at Finland and Denmark. "We

are hoping to introduce MediQuilt as well as the Duramedic product range to these overseas markets in the coming year. The Medlogistix model will be introduced once we have traction in the UK."

In conclusion, she says that they intend to continue rolling out their innovative products into the export market,

particularly mainland Europe.

"In addition, we are also committed to working with healthcare professionals to continue designing and developing new products and services to ensure a safer and risk free environment for service providers and, most importantly, the patient."



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TAKING THE LEAD IN FUNDRAISING RUNS FOR IRISH GUIDE DOGS

THE IRISH GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO RUN IN THE UPCOMING MARATHONS IN DUBLIN AND CORK, IN ADDITION TO ITS OWN 'KINSALE10' RUN. FUNDRAISING PACKS FOR THE BOTH THE MINI AND MAJOR MARATHONS HAVE NOW BEEN UNLAOISED BY THE NATIONAL CHARITY.

The Irish Guide Dogs' 2014 Running Ambassador Geraldine Looney (37) will run in the Cork Women's Mini-Marathon in September in aid of the national charity and hopes to encourage people to do the same.

She became vision-impaired at the age of 16 following an accident. Initially, she trained with Irish Guide Dogs in 1994 learning to use the long-cane. When a shoulder injury began affecting her long-cane use, Rooney was matched with her guide dog 'Irv', a Labrador X Golden Retriever.

"I've always been quite sporty and running has become such a big thing now, you have great camaraderie with the people you run with. It's always easier to train when you have a goal to aim for."

She will post regular updates on the Irish Guide Dogs' Facebook page and give updates on her latest training successes and challenges, as well as words of motivations for others participating in their first running event.

She recently began training for the mini-marathon with sighted guide Kieran Reilly, and they keep pace with one another by each holding an end of a hairband.

"The element of trust is huge. I tried running a few months ago but I had a fall and it didn't go well. Getting over the fear in the beginning was a big thing for me, but it's made me more determined to get up and do it."

MARATHON EFFORTS

Irish Guide Dogs is looking for people to join Geraldine Rooney and run for the charity at different marathons all over the country.

The national

charity is more than 80 per cent funded by the public and recently had to close



its waiting list for the Assistance Dog Programme for children with autism due to an overwhelming demand.

"We aim to get 250 women to run the Dublin Mini-Marathon in June and 300 in Cork," said Louise O'Sullivan Geary, community fundraising manager with Irish Guide Dogs. "We need your support to be able to train as many people like Geraldine as possible and give people more independence and mobility in their life."

Geraldine Rooney has some words of encouragement to anybody thinking of getting moving for Guide Dogs. "Go for it!" she says. "There's huge personal benefit and Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is such a worthy cause. I've benefited from their services for 20 years, first from long cane training, and now I have my guide dog 'Irv'.

"I'm very grateful to the support I've received from Irish Guide Dogs during all this time. The freedom and independence they've facilitated for me has been enormous."

'KINSALE10' RUN

Early bird registrations are now open for the 'Kinsale10' run on Saturday 31

ROUND OF A PAWS FOR IRISH GUIDE DOGS....

- The lifetime cost of a guide or assistance dog is €38,000.
- Services are provided by Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind free of charge.
- Over 85% of its income comes through voluntary donations.
- It costs over €4 million annually to sustain the charity's services.

August. Register at www.kinsale10.com

The proceeds will go to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, and will help the charity to offer a comprehensive suite of services.

This will enable both blind and vision-impaired individuals and families of children with autism to achieve increased independence and an improved quality of life.

*Fundraising packs for mini and major marathons are free to order from Irish Guide Dogs.

For more information visit www.guidedogs.ie/open24/ Lo-Call 1850 506 300 or email fundraising@guidedogs.ie. Donations of €2.50 can be made to the charity by texting 'WOOF' to 57500.

DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE CONTINUES MISSION WITH ACTION IRELAND TRUST

MEMBERS OF DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH ACTION TRUST IRELAND TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE TRAINING AND RESOURCES OF LOCAL FIRE SERVICES IN LESOTHO SINCE THE FIRST PROJECT STARTED THERE IN 2011. FOLLOWING THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MISSION TO DATE, THE CHARITY IS ALREADY PUTTING PLANS IN PLACE FOR NEXT YEAR'S RETURN VISIT TO AFRICA.

Action Ireland Trust (AIT) – a not-for-profit charity that has grown out of Portmarnock Community School and North County Dublin – has developed into a strong skills-exchange based programme with capacities building for the local communities of Lesotho.

In 2011, AIT started work on a number of projects in Maseru (Lesotho's capital is a kingship landlocked by South Africa) in the areas of education, training, development, healthcare and agriculture.

The charity's vision has been developed, based on advice from the Irish and Lesotho Governments and in

line with UN Programmes and Irish Aid Programmes, for assisting developing countries.

The main focus is to tackle youth unemployment through education programmes on various levels in different sectors.

This year saw AIT's project school, Hlalele High School, finish in the top 20 schools in Lesotho – a huge achievement since the project only began in 2011.

MOST SUCCESSFUL MISSION
Dublin Fire Brigade firefighters Mark Wilson and Hughie O'Leary, from Foxtrot Watch (Finglas Station), who have been

part of the AIT team since 2011, recently returned home from the most successful Lesotho mission to date.

"The Dublin Fire Brigade partnership with Action Ireland Trust is a successful exchange of skillsets in order to develop and improve training and resources of local fire services in Lesotho," according to Mark Wilson.

"The difficulty in Lesotho is that there is no independent fire service, with very limited resources, infrastructure and no communication between local authorities. Through Action Ireland Trust, we provide the skills needed to drive, develop and implement structures through three



Hughie O'Leary and Mark Wilson, Dublin Fire Brigade's partners from the Foxtrot Watch (Finglas Station) pictured with some volunteers from Lesotho's local fire services.



Dublin Fire Brigade trained volunteers in fire drill scenarios in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho.

modules of fire prevention, fire education and operation (fire response)."

Wilson described their experiences since 2011 as being very much a learning curve of training and fine tuning in small blocks to deliver such skillsets. "The local firefighters are like sponges; they are ready to soak up all the information and learn. They are so welcoming and treat you like part of the family. That's what's nice about the fire service, they always take care of their own!"

He said this year's project was extremely intense: "We had training of four stations, implementing three modules, over 10 days. We spent two days in each station and it was a huge success – the real-life reconstructions got the firefighters to put their new skillsets into action. Having local news stations there really made it a community awareness project, where locals could watch and learn for themselves."

FORMING VITAL BONDS

"On a personal level, the missions to Lesotho are eye-openers," he continued. "We think we have issues here in Ireland but our problems are minute in comparison. It is fantastic to be part of a project of forming the bond and helping these firefighters work and live."

"Going forward from here, it's all about linking, communicating and learning: the maintenance of skills and furthering development to help Lesotho

services overcome any obstacles."

In complimenting the project work undertaken by members of Dublin Fire Brigade, Siún Fitzgerald, spokesperson for AIT, said the charity values its partnership with DFB.

"Their projects allow a community to become independent and provide a vital service for themselves. We are always looking for volunteers ready to share their skill sets. Working in the sectors of health, education, construction and agriculture, a broad range of skills are necessary," she added.

THE 2014 PROJECT

In addition to the Dublin Fire Brigade members' achievements, this year's trip to Lesotho by AIT saw its team of 88 volunteers complete new kitchen and sanitation facilities, ICT and music room at the local high school. The local hospital has also been transformed with additional wards and kitchens now fully decorated and 90 per cent of the hospital re-roofed.

Furthermore, two anaesthetic machines donated by Beaumont Hospital will be of significant and critical assistance to the surgical team at St Joseph's Hospital, where they serve a population of over 120,000 people, many of whom suffer with HIV, AIDS and TB. A container also arrived with goods valued at over €1 million, including a potato planter, medical equipment, hospital supplies and school books supplied by Folens.

Significant long-term partnerships have been established between AIT and the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation, Deputy Prime Minister and Fingal County Council and the Ministry of Education, Training and UNICEF.

The RCSI Bahrain team, led by Maeve Royston, which includes medical and nursing students, participated in a wide range of activities at St Joseph's Hospital and Roma Nursing Training College. Their initiative in assisting the Nursing Training College to develop curriculum content brings another capacity building element to Lesotho, and is critical in the fight against HIV, AIDS and TB.

HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

It will result in increasing the number of nurses and healthcare assistants throughout Lesotho, particularly in remote rural villages. In conjunction with Mark Wilson of DFB, the RCSI ran a training day in CPR and Life Support, a course that is believed can be developed to train young unemployed people in rural villages as first responders.

At St Joseph's, the out-patients' clinics sometimes ran from 9am to 5pm, with patients queuing throughout the day in over 30 degrees of heat. Meanwhile, the medical team and dentist also continued to support the primary care model in rural clinics, one of which is located more than two hours from the hospital, high in the mountains.

The medical team provided a great service to many needy people in these incredibly remote villages. Many parts of Lesotho are still only accessed by either off road vehicles, motorbikes, ponies and sometimes by flying doctors. The remoteness adds to the health risks for the population and results in high rates of mother and child mortality.

LEARNING LIFE SKILLS

Throughout the two-week visit, students from Portmarnock Community School (PCS) participated in a host of activities, including sport, music, culture, construction, clinics, planning and development and agriculture.

According to Siún Fitzgerald, spokesperson for AIT, both Portmarnock Community School and the charity “provided a great platform for these young men and women to experience many aspects of life in Africa, while also giving them the opportunity to learn important life skills from the many adults they met, helping them to become strong young adults, leaders and create an opportunity for entrepreneurial skills development”.

The educational programme had a strong emphasis on science, in preparation for the new science facility at Hlalele. Lennox Scientific, through Paul Harbison and Andy Peppard of Fisher Scientific, donated €5,000 worth of science equipment and resources, which will go a long way towards delivering an important educational resource.

Ireland also donated a new potato planter, which will mean that much larger areas can be planted and supply a significant crop, leading to commercial viability in the not-to-distant future. As food security is one of the charity's key agendas, and in line with Irish Aid and the UN development programmes, the agricultural element will continue to be a key part of AIT's development programme.

One of AIT's directors started a breakthrough initiative in swim coaching. Over three days, 16 local teenagers were taught how to swim, with the assistance of the Irish students. Lesotho has many rivers and lakes and, unfortunately, drownings are the fourth highest cause of death in Lesotho.

Even Lesotho's King Letsie III has voiced concerns over the many drownings in recent months. The sports partnership with the Lesotho Government may now see swimmers travelling to Ireland in due



This year AIT's project school – Hlalele High School – finished in the top 20 schools in Lesotho.

course.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

AIT's construction team carried out the largest number of projects ever undertaken on one mission. In Hlalele High School, the team built a brand new kitchen and toilet block. Previously, there were only two toilets on the school grounds for over 450 students, so the new block, consisting of male and female toilets, will make a very significant difference for the pupils of Hlalele.

The old kitchen hut had no ventilation, which made it a fire a safety hazard and regularly resulted in smoke inhalation for staff members. The new kitchen built by the AIT volunteers has four chimneys, which will dramatically improve matters for kitchen staff.

Furthermore, the science block that was constructed by AIT last year was wired for electricity as part of the 2014 construction project, along with several of the staff accommodation houses at Hlalele.

The construction team in St Joseph's Hospital refurbished the hospital's kitchen, rewired and installed new lights along the main corridor and wards, decorated several wards of the hospital and re-roofed the TB ward. Renovating the kitchens was a huge success as St Joseph's Hospital caters to a population of 120,000 people, including a mother-in-waiting clinic, a maternity ward, a paediatric ward and a TB ward.

In the winter, the hospital tended to become quite dark due to insufficient lighting, with the result that night staff had

to use torches when on rounds. However, the rewiring and installation of new lights along the main corridor of the hospital will improve matters for patients and staff.

Meanwhile, two builder volunteers and many student volunteers from Portmarnock built a playground and play area for the children at St Angela's Cheshire Home for Children with Disabilities, which has proved hugely popular.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Fingal County Council ran a series of training days on mapping, GIS, GPS surveying, spatial planning and general training in how to create city and national strategic plans for a developing country.

An historical Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Fingal County Council and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Lesotho Government to create a relationship of continued support of the planning and development departments around Lesotho.

This is the first time an Irish local authority has signed an MoU with an African country.

A further significant agreement was also signed between AIT and the Ministry of Sport Gender Youth, along with the Health Ministry, who would like to develop a call centre as a primary care resource to tackle healthcare and first aid issues in remote areas.

Basically, villages will have trained health workers, mainly young men and women who can contact a centrally located medical team, who in turn can

advise as to the appropriate response to the situation described by the health worker.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Following Fingal County Council's historic MoU, the AIT team concluded months of work with the Lesotho Government and UNICEF to jointly provide Early Learning Development centres in Lesotho; Ha Hlalele is the pilot project.

Early childhood education is a critical dimension to any educational programme, nationally and internationally. UNICEF believes early childhood education is key to tackling poverty. Within the realm of education, up to the five-year-old mark is critical in terms of childhood development and long-term education.

AIT has partnered with UNICEF, The Catholic School's Secretariat Lesotho and the Ministry of Education and Training in delivering facilities and resources in this area over the coming years.

The Irish Ambassador to Lesotho, Gerry Gervin accepted applications for funding and to include AIT in the Embassy's Discretionary Development Fund, which will be of major assistance to its projects at Ha Hlalele and St Joseph's Hospital.

Unfortunately, though, the Irish Embassy in Lesotho is due to close, with the South African Embassy taking over its responsibilities. However, AIT has started a number of partnerships with other organisations such as Action Lesotho (www.actionlesotho.ie). This body is involved in community development and training in areas like agriculture and homestead gardening, education and enterprise development.

These partnerships should ensure that the Irish flag will continue to fly in Lesotho and that the long-term and historical relationships built up over many years will be protected into the future.

2015 PREPARATIONS

Before the next mission takes place in February 2015, Dublin Fire Brigade, will carry out training programmes with AIT's volunteers here before they head out to Lesotho.

Each year the charity brings 30 students from Portmarnock Community School students, in addition to 40 to 50 skill-set volunteers. And Siún Fitzgerald says it's therefore very important that they are trained in safety and first aid.

DFB DRILLS HOME FIRE SAFETY TRAINING IN LESOTHO

The 2014 trip saw Dublin Fire Brigade's role in training and raising awareness in fire prevention elevated to a new level.

The local fire service at Maseru completed an extremely life-like fire drill. The DFB team used smoke grenades to create an apparent fire situation and hid a mannequin in the local fire station in the centre of Maseru.

A dramatic rescue of the mannequin ensued, with the local fire service using breathing apparatuses and live hose reels to bring the mock fire under control in minutes, all televised by the National Lesotho TV in dramatic style.

Their training programmes resulted in the DFB team travelling long hours to many other cities in Lesotho, where now over 30 officers are now undergoing intensive training.



"Some of us will take a trip out again in June for further planning before the large volunteer mission each February. This year has been particularly exciting for us in terms of development with a lot of projects and prospects to come. We signed three MOUs on the 2014 trip which has firmly planted our feet for growth as an organisation in Lesotho."

Action Ireland Trust also won the Fingal Chamber of Commerce 'Not-For-Profit Organisation of Excellence' for 2013 which, she said, has opened up a lot of doors for the charity.

Photography courtesy of Hannah McCabe, Action Ireland Trust.

For further information:
www.actionirelandtrust.ie
[www.facebook.com/
actionirelandtrust](http://www.facebook.com/actionirelandtrust)
www.twitter.com/ActionIreland



INNOVATIVE LIFELONG LEARNING AT IT CARLOW

IT CARLOW OFFERS A NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES SPECIFICALLY TAILOR-MADE TO EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS, WHICH COMBINES LEARNING FROM A LIFETIME OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES AT THE FRONTLINE WITH ACADEMIC THEORY.

Responding to industry needs and collaborating with industry professionals and agencies constitute an essential element of the IT Carlow ethos in engendering a culture of lifelong learning in organisations.

All programme learning outcomes support the graduate to enhance his/her decision-making process, thereby allowing them to examine organisational opportunities, choices and solutions from operational to strategic levels, ultimately growing their role within the workplace.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The following programmes for emergency services personnel are available:

*Certificate in Media Communications

IT Carlow and Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service collaborated recently to develop this course for fire and emergency services personnel.

The programme has a strong hands-on practical element and prepares candidates for media interactions across a number of different settings.

*Bachelor of Business in Emergency Services

This programme is an ideal opportunity for all fire professionals, irrespective of their grade or responsibility, to underpin their life experience with academic theory and understanding.

Hectic lifestyles impact on learning, so this degree programme gives the student an opportunity to receive an academic exit award at the end of any of the academic stages of the programme; e.g. a Certificate after Year 1, a Higher Certificate after Year 2, Ordinary Degree after Year 3, or Hons Degree after Year 4.

*Certificate in Fire Services Management

Designed in conjunction with Dublin Fire Brigade, as part of its sub-officer



2013 Graduates of the Bachelor of Business (Honours) Emergency Services

(Front row l-r): Brian McQuaid, IT Carlow's Head of School of Engineering; Pat Fleming, CFO DFB; Michael O'Reilly, ACFO DFB; John Moody, William Maher and Brendan McNicholas; (Middle row l-r): Stephen Wylie, Frank Murphy, Stephen Dillon, Terry Meehan, Ray Murray (Back row l-r): Hughy O'Leary, Colm Kershaw, Greg O'Dwyer, Con Flanagan, Richard Currie and Peter Navan.



2013 Graduates of the Certificate in Fire Services Management

(Front row l-r): Brian McQuaid, IT Carlow's Head of School of Engineering; David Denieffe IT Carlow Registrar; Keith Leeson, Paul Keogh, Mathew Connellan; Michael O'Reilly, ACFO DFB; Pat Fleming, CFO DFB; Derek Cheevers, Dennis Keeley ACFO DFB; (Middle row l-r): Martin Mc Cabe, Thomas Doolan, Peter Sherlock, Francis Kelly, Brian Gunning, Conor Molloy, Siobhan Talbot (Back row l-r): Dermot Murray, Garrett Fitzpatrick, Mark Fay, Cormac Cahill, Anthony Hobbs, Brian Lynch, Noel Jackson, Conor Keegan

training programme, the course develops the student's capability in first-line management, fire safety science, fire safety law as well as introducing academic research via a work-based project.

Graduates are eligible for exemptions on a range of modules on the Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Emergency Services.

PRIOR LEARNING RECOGNISED
IT Carlow recognises formal certified learning for which credit has been

achieved through a higher education institution or other education/training provider.

This articulates with the National Framework of Qualifications or experiential or uncertified learning gained from life and work experience.

This recognition of prior learning may be used to gain entry to an advanced stage of a programme of study.

For further information email III@itcarlow.ie or phone 01-6373939.

INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES WHO HAVE MADE AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO IRELAND'S AVIATION SECTOR ACROSS 18 CATEGORIES WILL BE GIVEN DUE RECOGNITION AT THE INAUGURAL AVIATION INDUSTRY AWARDS, SCHEDULED TO BE PRESENTED IN DUBLIN ON 10 JUNE.

Ireland's inaugural aviation industry awards, which were launched earlier this year, will celebrate excellence within the Irish aviation industry and its significant contribution to the country's economy.

The aviation industry has created over 26,000 jobs in Ireland with a €4.1 billion input to the country's economy. Some of the world's largest airlines and companies, which are responsible for half of the world's aircraft leasing, are based here in Ireland. As mentioned at the outset, between them they contribute over €400 million in tax, with a similar amount paid by firms in the supply chain for the sector.

Aviation contributes €4.1 billion to Ireland's GDP; this comprises €1.9 billion directly from aviation, €1.3 billion through the supply chain and €900,000 from associated spending by people employed in the sector.

Tourism also depends on aviation and it accounts for a further €5.3 billion in GDP and 180,000 jobs.

Ireland's inaugural aviation awards will be



presented across a total of 18 categories, ranging from Aviation Company of the Year, Airport Achievement, Safety, Aviation R&D, Education & Training, to People Development and Customer Service.

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leo Varadkar will attend the awards ceremony on Tuesday 10 June.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.aviationawards.ie
Twitter: www.twitter.com/AIAward
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Aviation-Industry-Awards/

THE JUDGING PANEL

Divided into two panels, the nine judges will review allocated entries and rate from first to last. Scores are then collected and collated, with the entrant receiving the highest overall score declared the winner of that category. Winners will be presented with their trophies at the awards ceremony on Tuesday 10 June in the Double Tree by Hilton (formerly the Burlington Hotel) in Dublin.



Donie Mooney –
Judging Co-ordinator



Major General Ralph
James, Deputy Chief of
Staff, Defence Forces
Ireland



Aoife O'Sullivan, Head
of Aircraft Finance,
Kennedys



Noel Browne, Non-
Executive Director, Aviation
Securitization



Noel Browne, Non-
Executive Director,
Aviation Securitization



Dr. Eoin Reeves, Senior
Lecturer, University of
Limerick



Gerard McNamara,
Founder & CEO,
Schuman Associates



Hemant Mistry, Director
Airports & Fuel, IATA



Nicholas McDonald,
Associate Professor, Trinity
College Dublin

18 AWARD CATEGORIES

- Aviation Company of the Year Award
- Outstanding Contribution to Irish Aviation Award
- Aircraft Operator Award
- Airport Achievement Award
- Upcoming Aviation Professional Award
- Aviation Sustainability & Environment Award
- Aviation Education and Training Award
- Aviation Innovation Award
- Aviation Leasing Achievement Award
- Aviation Legal Achievement of the Year Award
- Aviation Export Award
- MRO of the Year Award
- Aviation R&D Award
- Aviation Support Services Award
- General and Sport Aviation Award
- Safety Award
- People Development Award
- Customer Service Award

COMMISSION KEEPS AVIATION INDUSTRY WELL GROUNDED

THE COMMISSION FOR AVIATION REGULATION, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC REGULATION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION WITHIN IRELAND'S AVIATION INDUSTRY, LICENSES IRISH-BASED AIRLINES, AIRPORT GROUND-HANDLING COMPANIES, TRAVEL AGENTS AND TOUR OPERATORS.

This independent statutory body, which under the auspices of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, also enforces certain rights of air passengers, such as investigating eligible passenger complaints.

Furthermore, if a travel agent or tour operator goes out of business, it refunds its customers and if necessary repatriates passengers stranded abroad.

It is possible for much of its work, as it relates to the public, to be carried out online. Here's an outline of that work with links to part of its website.

The text of CAR documents as well as views of interested parties and the public are posted online at regular intervals.

AIRLINES & GROUNDHANDLERS

Irish-based air carriers are licenced by the Commission in accordance with EU regulations. An operating licence permits the holder to carry by air and for payment passengers, mail and cargo.

There are two types of operating licence. Category A licence holders are permitted to carry passengers, cargo and/or mail on aircraft with 20 seats or more and/or over 10 tonnes MTOM (maximum take-off mass).

Category B licence holders are permitted to carry passengers, cargo and/or mail on aircraft with fewer than 20 seats and/or less than 10 tonnes MTOM.

For an updated list of licensed air carriers visit the airline part of CAR website.

The CAR is also responsible for approving groundhandling operations at Dublin, Cork and Shannon Airports. Groundhandling broadly comprises all those services required by an aircraft between landing and take-off (e.g., marshalling aircraft, loading/unloading,

refuelling, baggage handling, passenger handling, aircraft maintenance).

An airline may choose to provide groundhandling services for itself (i.e. self-handling), or contract with another company (third party handling) whether this is another airline or a dedicated groundhandling company.

For an updated list of approved groundhandlers, visit the ground handler part of the CAR website.

TRAVEL AGENTS & TOUR OPERATORS

The CAR licences the outward-bound travel trade in Ireland, and grants licences to both tour operators and travel agents.

As part of this function, the CAR administers a bonding scheme to reimburse consumers in the event of a licensed tour operator or travel agent collapse.

It is also responsible for the repatriation of travellers who become stranded abroad through a collapse. For an up-to-date list of licensed travel agents and licensed tour operators visit the travel trade part of CAR website.

AIR PASSENGER COMPLAINTS

There are many European and global laws which focus on the rights and entitlements of passengers who travel by air.

The CAR does not deal with baggage complaints, safety, security or ticket pricing issues. However the CAR does enforce two EU 'Air Passenger Rights' laws in Ireland. The first (EC

Regulation No. 261/2004) establishes rights for passengers who are affected by flight cancellations, long delays or are denied boarding. The operating air carrier has sole responsibility for the implementation of this law.

The second (EC Regulation No. 1107/2006) recognises that travelling by air can be a more difficult experience for disabled persons and those with reduced mobility. It endeavours to ensure that these persons have opportunities for travel which are comparable with other passengers.

This law obliges tour operators, air carriers and the management bodies of airports located within the member states, to provide specified levels of assistance without any additional cost to the persons receiving this support.

Full details on air passenger rights and online complaints to the CAR are available at www.flightright.ie.

LEGISLATION

Legislation relating to the Commission's activities is on www.aviationreg.ie along with its annual reports, financial statements and other materials generated by its work.



KPMG FLIES HIGH IN AVIATION CIRCLES AFTER 30 YEARS

Ireland has a long and successful history at the forefront of aviation developments. County Galway was the landing site of the first Atlantic air crossing when Alcock and Brown landed in 1919.

Almost ten years later, Irish Air Corps Officer Major James Fitzmaurice was the navigator of the first successful East-West Atlantic crossing, which took off from Baldonnel near Dublin. In the intervening years we have seen the growth of Irish airlines and Irishmen at the helm of some of the world's leading airlines.

Continuing these developments has been the growth of the air finance industry in Ireland. This is one of the

most significant success stories in the development of Ireland's international financial services industry.

KPMG is delighted to have been actively involved with the industry over the last 30 years and has unrivalled experience that has been built up since the inception of Guinness Peat Aviation.

We very much value the relationships we have developed with the companies and people we have worked with in the sector over the years. We have been proud to support events highlighting Ireland's leading position, such as the hugely successful Flightfest event last autumn.

We believe that the key ingredients

of the success of the aviation industry in Ireland are: The expertise and innovation of the people and the companies involved, a supportive tax regime, including a 12.5 per cent corporate tax rate and 70 double tax treaties.

Building on our Irish experience, we have been involved in aviation finance transactions in over 150 countries worldwide and we are recognised globally as the Centre of Excellence for the industry.

KPMG is honoured to be the only professional service firm identified in the 'Airfinance Power 30' list of companies that make an essential contribution to aviation finance.



cutting through complexity

Insight

KPMG is a leading provider of cross-border advisory services to the international aviation finance and leasing sector.

To find out more about how we can help you, please contact:

Tom Woods

tom.woods@kpmg.ie

+353 1 410 2589

www.kpmg.ie/aviation



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SKY'S THE LIMIT IN AIRCRAFT LEASING FOR BBAM

WITH NINE OFFICES IN SEVEN COUNTRIES AND AS THE THIRD LARGEST MANAGER OF COMMERCIAL JET AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD, BBAM IS WELL SUITED TO PROVIDE THE WORLD'S AIRLINES – FROM THE LARGEST INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS TO LOW-COST START-UPS – WITH THE MOST ADVANCED, FUEL EFFICIENT AND POPULAR JET AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE.

BBAM is a leading player in commercial aircraft leasing, financing and management providing over 200 airline customers in more than 50 countries with fleet and financing solutions over its 20-plus year history.

In addition, BBAM provides asset management services to leasing companies, aviation investors and financial institutions covering more than 450 aircraft valued in excess of \$13 billion.

BBAM started out Babcock & Brown Aircraft Management, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Babcock & Brown in 1991.

Babcock & Brown was the pre-eminent arranger of aircraft financing transactions and acted as a financial advisor to airlines around the world for many decades.

FINANCING SOLUTIONS

BBAM, working with its business partner NBB, developed into the largest provider of Japanese equity capital to the airline industry and the third largest aircraft operating lessor in the world. Since its inception more than 20 years ago, BBAM has originated over 500 aircraft valued at

over \$20 billion including over 375 aircraft for the Japanese market.

The senior executives of BBAM acquired the business from Babcock & Brown in April 2010, following Babcock & Brown's decision to complete an orderly wind-down of its operations. In December 2012, Onex Corporation, through Onex III IP, acquired a 50 per cent interest in BBAM. Today BBAM is owned 50 per cent by its management and 50 per cent by Onex.

As one of the world's largest and most experienced financial partners to the aviation industry, BBAM can provide a variety of financing solutions to airlines including operating lease finance, tax-based leasing products and pre-delivery payment (PdP) financing for new aircraft orders.

Over its two-decade-long history, BBAM has arranged over 600 operating leases with over 100 airline customers totaling in excess of \$20 billion in asset value, plus more than 100 tax-based financings covering \$4.5 billion of equipment value and PdP financing to airlines of over \$240 million for their new aircraft orders with Boeing and Airbus.



Representative list of BBAM's major airline clients from around the globe

Americas	Asia	Europe	Middle East/Africa/India
Air Canada Aeromexico Delta Airlines GOI TAM United Airlines US Airways Virgin America	Air China China Southern All Nippon Airways Malaysia Airlines Cathay Pacific China Eastern Garuda Indonesia Tiger Airways	Air France/KLM British Airways EasyJet Ryanair Finnair TUI SAS Iberia	Turkish Airlines Emirates Fly Dubai Oman Air South African Airways Ethiopian Airlines Spicejet

ASL GLOBAL EXPANSION ON COURSE

In a recession-hit world the ASL Aviation Group has continued to grow its business and its international footprint and has been consistently profitable.

Now a recognised global leader the ASL Group, headquartered in Swords, Co. Dublin, has operations on five continents and counts many top freight and passenger airlines as its customers.

The group's Irish airline – Air Contractors – is already a leader in the air cargo world, flying throughout Europe for FedEx, DHL and others. Now, the airline is expanding its passenger operations rapidly including the operation of three Boeing 757 aircraft on transatlantic routes for Aer Lingus.

The first aircraft entered service on the Shannon-Boston route, with the two subsequent aircraft serving New York

JFK from Shannon and Toronto from Dublin. Air Contractors has announced a partnership with Afriqiyah Airways for European passenger flights and will continue to operate a full summer schedule for tour operators with a 737-300 aircraft from Dublin.

"These are exciting times in our Group with Air Contractors growth in passenger flying, a number of new routes including a Transatlantic route into Nova Scotia for our French airline Europe Airport, and the opening of a new ATR Support Hub in Singapore serving ATR customers in Asia," said Hugh Flynn, chief executive of ASL Aviation Group.

"Throughout this summer the group will have up to four aircraft every day flying passengers across the Atlantic and of course we

continue to fly extensively all over Europe every day and night for our air cargo customers," he noted.

"We now have 80 aircraft plying their trade in the skies and while this is an achievement of which we're proud, our aim is to continue to grow by continuing to offer a neutral, focussed and committed service to our customers," Hugh Flynn concluded.



IRELAND'S GLOBAL AVIATION LEADER

Customer Focussed
Airline Services
and Support.



**ASL Aviation
Group**

Air Contractors 

ASL
AVIATION GROUP

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE IS AT CORE OF SCIENTIFIC DAY FOR PARAMEDICS

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE ISSUES SUCH AS TREATMENT TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES IN HAEMORRHAGE CONTROL, KEY STEPS NEEDED IN RESEARCH PROJECTS, AND AUDITING OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION STANDARDS BY THE PRE-HOSPITAL EMERGENCY CARE COUNCIL WERE ON THE AGENDA AT A RECENT 'SCIENTIFIC DAY' ORGANISED BY THE IRISH COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS.

The Irish College of Paramedics is the representative body for all pre-hospital practitioners registered with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). It recently held another Scientific Day in Limerick following their inaugural event in October 2013 in Dublin.

Advanced paramedic David Hennelly addressed haemorrhage control and treatment issues. He placed emphasis firstly on the basic treatment and then additional techniques and advanced treatment procedures currently being employed and developed. What piqued most people's interest was the issue of permissive hypotension and damage control resuscitation.

Dr Niamh Cummins, Research Manager at the Centre for Pre-hospital Research in the University of Limerick (the main research centre and facility for all pre-hospital research in Ireland) outlined the necessary steps to complete a research project.

Niamh O'Leary, an EMT from the Red Cross in Limerick, provided an overview of a clinical audit she completed on medication administered, with a focus on the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) completed by the Irish Red Cross.

She explained that the project was undertaken due to PHECC's annual audits of each organisation to see how the groups maintain self-audit and standards.

DOC-PARAMEDIC TEAM

During his keynote address entitled 'What's the Point of a Pre-Hospital Doctor?' Irish road racing medic Dr John Hinds shared his beliefs that a doctor and



Irish road racing medic Dr John Hinds said that a doctor and paramedic team would greatly benefit badly injured patients.

paramedic team would greatly benefit the sick and badly injured patients.

He had plenty of case history slides showing the enormous benefit of the team system he was endorsing where he works as a BASiCs doctor in Northern Ireland, or when he is working at motorcycle road racing events around Ireland.

Hinds showcased a range of his photos of patients before and more importantly, after, which was evidence of the great work using the correct and up-to-date medical techniques.

He discussed using Tranxemic Acid (TXA) since 2002. TXA is used to treat or prevent excessive blood loss during surgery and in various other medical conditions.

GOOD SAMARITAN LAW

Solicitor and paramedic Raymond Quinn outlined to delegates the medico-legal aspects from the pre-hospital perspective.

Quinn brought his personal case experiences and knowledge to the fore when outlining the new Good Samaritan Law, which was enacted in 2011.

A short session on Continuing Professional Competency (CPC) was provided, which showed some work being done to aid membership, whilst also clarifying the new PHECC guidelines for EMT CPC.

Rory Dillard, chairman of the Education and Research Committee, presented a new database system that ICoP will send to members to aid them in maintaining a record of CPC.

SHOWCASING RESEARCH

The ICoP will now plan to organise similar events three times a year around the country, according to Eoghan Connolly, the MC for the Scientific Day. Connolly, who is a member of the Education & Research Committee, said they developed

the idea to facilitate CPC for members, and also to showcase the work and research by many Irish practitioners in developing the profession in Ireland, and to look at changing methods to best practice.

"The CPR-UL is a great addition to the pre-hospital community and great work is being done on numerous projects that may shape new methods of dealing with patients," he added.

In response to queries regarding work undertaken by ICoP for its members; he added "We look at current issues and what the members want to learn. We get feedback from our events and tailor our response to what the general audience want. Our remit is education and research; we work with researchers who will utilise the membership for studies."

He added that the E-Zine produced by the ICoP will include an educational format to help members develop themselves for CPC and better practice through case study presentations and articles.

OPEN MEMBERSHIP

The PRO for the Irish College of Paramedics, Keith Hayes, said the college was the representative body and not a union for all registered PHECC pre-hospital practitioners, with the aim of developing the profession in Ireland.

"However, this does not exclude anyone with an interest in pre-hospital care from joining. You do not have to be a PHECC registrant to be a part of ICoP. You just have to be interested in progressing our profession for the betterment of everyone," Hayes added.

"Joining as an associate member is just as beneficial for everyone concerned. To this end, we have been recognised by PHECC and have places available on the Medical Advisory Committee and the Education and Standards Committee. We are a voice for the profession and, therefore, we welcome input from our members."

SETTING THE GOALS

The Irish College of Paramedics is now redeveloping the website to improve the lines of communication between their members and the general public.

"We have secured some sponsorship to help us, but there is always room for more! Various committees are doing the work on a voluntary basis, and they are



PHECC audits agencies such as the Irish Red Cross on annual basis to see how the groups maintain their self-audit and standards.

The Irish College of Paramedics (ICoP) is a professional body, concerned with the development and promotion of our profession. It is not based on the organisation you work or volunteer for, but based on an all-inclusive non-discriminatory membership. It is not a college, not a university, but 'collegial' defined as 'Co-operative interaction among colleagues' or a group of professionals working for our profession.

ICoP represents the profession, and includes all levels of registered pre-hospital practitioner. As well as registered practitioners: "EMTs, Paramedics, Advanced Paramedics" our membership includes associate members: all those with a 'pre-hospital' interest, and is not restricted to registrants only. It is an all-encompassing body, representing practitioners and responders from professional, voluntary and private organisations.

About the Irish College of Paramedics

Education

Login/Register

The College is redeveloping its website to improve communication between its members and the public.

eager to get more people involved."

In conclusion, he pointed out to delegates that the college has set various goals with the view to implementing them in the medium and long-term future. "This is an organisation for its members and we are willing to listen to all ideas and input"

*For further info visit www.irishparamedic.ie/ Follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/irishparamedic or Twitter at [www.twitter.com/IrCollegeParas](https://twitter.com/IrCollegeParas)



FUN AND GAMES ON BOARD THE BUMBLEANCE

THE WORLD'S FIRST INTERACTIVE AMBULANCE SERVICE, DESIGNED ESPECIALLY TO MAKE HOSPITAL JOURNEYS LESS TRAUMATIC AND MORE ABOUT FUN FOR THE YOUNG PATIENTS, HAS BEEN GIFTED AN ASSORTMENT OF STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY BY TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES PROVIDERS.

BUMBLEance provides stress-reducing journeys for children in state-of-the-art, safe, fun vehicles. "Every parent can appreciate that an ambulance journey with a child can be very traumatic. However, fun is the medicine of the day in the BUMBLEance!" according to Tony Heffernan.

BUMBLEance was first rolled out at the start of September 2013 by the Saoirse Foundation charity, which was set up by Tony and Mary Heffernan following the death of their only daughter Saoirse from Batten Disease in January 2011.

When the Kerry couple were told that Saoirse had the disease in September 2009, they left the hospital in Dublin with no information about Batten Disease, what to expect or where to look for help. They vowed that this would have to change and so went about setting up the charity.

"We have been very lucky to receive fantastic support from every sector of Irish society and from companies like Ferno, Tech-Fit, Mercedes, Lifeline and ATSR. The Saoirse Foundation receives no state funding for this service and is reliant on support from the business community and members of the public.

"Donations and in-kind support are integral to the future of the BUMBLEance service in Ireland and to its anticipated growth." Tony Heffernan himself



The ambulance is kitted out with the latest technology, designed with the needs of children in mind.



does not receive any salary, allowance, top-ups or any perks from the charity.

One way every business and individual can help is by donating unwanted mobile phones to the charity. The Foundation will readily deliver a collection bin to any interested business/office around the country, and collect it once filled.

SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

The charity now assists and offers support to more and more families affected with this disorder. It also welcomes all those affected and understand first hand, the difficulties a family faces when dealing with fatal conditions.

It also works closely with the medical profession, researchers and other international charities which provide patient support, advocacy and invest in research into the disease.

Through its global connections, 'Bee for Battens' is a founding member of the Batten Disease International Alliance, a worldwide organisation representing patients, families, research and clinical facilities from every continent. Tony Heffernan was elected the first president of the Alliance.

LATEST TECHNOLOGY

The ambulance, which looks like a giant bumble bee, has been kitted out with the latest technology, designed with the needs of children in mind. The Saoirse Foundation has created a fun environment for sick children to travel to and from hospitals and medical centres for scheduled appointments.

To make the journeys for both children and parents as enjoyable and seamless as possible Techfit.ie – a technology company from Dundalk, Co. Louth – has installed a state-of-the-art Control4 automation system on board the BUMBLEance.

The system allows the child to control the TV and music system via the on-board iPad. The online directory of movies and music allows the child to select a movie or a song from the iPad. It will instantly play on the TV or through the BUMBLEance speakers.

The system is normally installed in new homes and has the ability to control lighting, heating, audio and video via an iPad from anywhere in the world. This is the first installation of its kind into an ambulance.

On-board Wi-Fi allows internet



Tony and Mary Heffernan pictured with daughter Saoirse and son Liam during their visit to meet President Mary McAleese and husband Martin at Aras an Uachtarain on 3 July 2010.

WIN A MERCEDES IN THE LATEST FUNDRAISING DRIVE

As part of its new mobile phone and text donation campaign to keep the ambulance on the road for 2014, the charity is running a competition to win a 2014 Mercedes worth €30,000.

Every phone donated is an entry for the draw while a smart phone donation gives you five entries. Old phones can be posted in any envelope to BUMBLEance, Freepost, Castledrum, Castlemaine, Co Kerry.

If you don't have a phone and would like to donate just €4 simply text BUZZ to 50300. Alternatively, you can send a cheque or postal order donation made out to BUMBLEance, to the same address. Remember not to send cash by post.

For further details visit www.bumbleance.com/get-involved/recycle-and-win



browsing and social media engagement, as well as Skype calls. Members of the public can message or tweet their best wishes to the child on board, who can also track their journey progress on the internet by logging into the BUMBLEance satellite tracking system.

Up to two adults (parents, carers, nursing staff) can travel with the child and the registered practitioner from the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) in the rear of the ambulance (the saloon).

PAEDIATRIC AMBULANCE

The base vehicle is a Mercedes Sprinter chassis with air-suspension and air-conditioning, which was converted to a CEN Type B emergency 'box-body' ambulance by Wilker Auto Conversions (based in Clara, Co. Offaly). It was then IVA approved by the NSAI prior to being submitted for an NCT/registration.

As regards the vehicle build specification, BUMBLEance required it to be fitted out as a paediatric ambulance in accordance with its charitable purpose. The vehicle is equipped with a Ferno stretcher, Lifepak-12 defibrillator and Laerdal suction unit, being the primary medical equipment on board, in addition to the standard range of medical consumables.

The exterior/interior lighting, battery management, inverter, satellite tracking, eco-fuel and camera modules/features are controlled and monitored using equipment supplied by ATSR (based in Tullamore, Co. Offaly).

The vehicle is despatched and radio/telephone controlled from Lifeline Ambulance Service's Control Room (Leixlip, Co. Kildare), with additional oversight by way of the GPS satellite tracking system on-board.

BENEFITS OF BUMBLEANCE

David Hall, managing director of Lifeline Ambulance Service, which operates BUMBLEance on behalf of the Saoirse Foundation, says that its impact and benefit has been immediately apparent to the crews when they first engage with the special young patients in their care.

The child's focus is largely diverted away from the more medical aspects of the vehicle interior, resulting in a much more positive experience for the patient and their family during their transfer.

BUMBLEance has a 19-inch LED

FACTFILE ON BATTEN DISEASE

Batten disease is an inherited disorder of the nervous system that usually manifests itself in childhood. Batten disease is named after the British paediatrician who first described it in 1903.

It is one of a group of disorders called neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses (or NCLs). Although Batten disease is the juvenile form of NCL, most doctors use the same term to describe all forms of NCL.

Early symptoms of Batten disease (or NCL) usually appear in childhood when parents or doctors may notice a child begin to develop vision problems or seizures. In some cases the early signs are subtle, taking the form of personality and behaviour changes, delayed speech, slow learning, clumsiness or stumbling.

Over time, affected children suffer mental impairment, worsening seizures, and progressive loss of sight and motor skills. Children become totally disabled and eventually die. Batten disease is not contagious nor, at this time, preventable. To date it has always been fatal.



Bee For Battens.org



Tony Heffernan pictured with Minister for Children Frances Fitzgerald on board the Bumbleance at the launch in September 2013.

TV, Playstation games console, iPad Mini and a dual channel Wi-Fi hotspot which enables the ambulance to communicate with the wider world, allowing live streaming from the internet, Skype calls and more. It transports children throughout Ireland, from both urban and rural locations, to wherever they are to be treated, in a vehicle which has been brightly decorated inside and out.

ONE IN EACH PROVINCE

Tony Heffernan says their vision is to have one BUMBLEance for each province by the end of 2015 plus an additional BUMBLEance for Dublin.

"We want to be in a position to offer this service to every parent of a sick child that requires ambulance transportation to

appointments. So, we would ask everyone to support us and also to send us old mobile phones to guarantee the growth of our service. In the future we hope BUMBLEance will take off, literally."

The Saoirse Foundation is also pursuing the development Ireland's first respite centre for families of children with rare diseases.

This facility, which will be called 'Liam's Lodge', is named after Tony and Mary's only other child, Liam, who also suffers from Batten's Disease. The facility is to be located in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

For more information visit
www.BUMBLEance.com or
[YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vkdj9J0NZM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vkdj9J0NZM)

LIMERICK'S MEDICAL VILLAGE WILL BE A FIRST IN IRELAND

BARRINGTONS HOSPITAL IN LIMERICK COULD BE THE FOUNDATION FOR WHAT ITS MEDICAL DIRECTOR MR PAUL O'BYRNE DESCRIBES AS A MEDICAL VILLAGE FOR THE CITY CENTRE. THE PRIVATE HOSPITAL IS CURRENTLY IN DISCUSSION WITH LIMERICK LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO REFURBISH SOME OF THE CITY'S DERELICT PROPERTIES WHICH WOULD FORM THE NUCLEUS OF THIS MEDICAL VILLAGE. REPORT BY GRACE HENEGHAN.

Medicine is fundamentally changing in the way it is being delivered internationally, and this model of a medical village has been rolled out in other cities across the UK and in Europe," according to Denis Cahalane, Managing Director of Barringtons Hospital.

Barringtons is the first private hospital in Ireland to take the concept of a medical village on board. "Twenty years ago when Mr O'Byrne started off this model he embraced the whole concept of day care, despite the fact that the idea was snubbed at the time and misunderstood by many in the profession."

However, as Denis Cahalane explains, the concept of day care has become standard practice internationally, and now it's also becoming standard practice here in Ireland. "What has happened in medicine over the last 20 years, in essence, is also what has happened in our lives in terms of technology."

Advancements have been made in medical technology such as innovation, R&D software, data storage, specimen handling, instrumentation repair and maintenance. "It means that the medics can now determine and diagnose what's wrong with a patient much quicker, which is driven by technology so the need to spend days in hospital is gone."

Medicine in the future will not be hospital-based, but rather it will be based on 'TED' – Technology, Expertise, Day Care. And this modern and future model of healthcare will oversee the treatment and management of conditions such as heart, stroke and cancer care.

HUB OF THE VILLAGE

Mr Paul O'Byrne has undertaken a study

in and around the Kings Island region of the city. The study has found many derelict and under-developed buildings in areas such as Georges Quay, Mary Street, Creagh Lane, Newmarket Lane, Athlunkard Street, Bridge Street and Nicholas Street can offer great opportunities.

Forming the main part of the plan, Barringtons Hospital would become the hub of the medical village with many out-patient services provided in the peripherals around the hospital.

All areas of medicine will need to be specialised and sourced for expertise. All of these departments currently block up existing facilities in the main hospital. The plan for the medical village, as envisaged by Mr O'Byrne, is that the leaders in these areas will need their own complexes to expand

their own services.

As hospital admissions are identified, these specialists will direct patients into Barringtons where the medical technology



Medical Director and General Surgeon, Mr Paul O'Byrne pictured with theatre staff in Barringtons Hospital.



Barringtons is the first private hospital in Ireland to take the concept of a medical village on board.

is available to treat and investigate the issues concerned.

VILLAGE SPIN-OFFS

The new village will offer many spin-offs, such as a greater numbers of facilities for conferences and accommodation in the city, in addition to the provision of safety training services and advanced medical technology.

"The concept of the Medical Village is very much in discussion stage at the present time, but I would see it being rolled out over the next three to five years. In addition to cities in the UK, the model is also proving very successful in cities such as Milan" Mr O Byrne notes.

"We are currently in discussion with Limerick City Council in relation to a number of derelict properties. We will take out long-term leases at nominal



BARRINGTONS HOSPITAL – FACTS & FIGURES

- Providing 200 years of healthcare
- Over 100 employees
- Independent
- Business from Greater Munster Area
- Provides histopathology services for a number of HSE hospitals
- Pharmacy
- A supply base of about 60 companies
- Endoscopy repair
- Nationwide MRI



Advancements have been made in medical technology such as innovation, R&D software, data storage, specimen handling, instrumentation repair and maintenance.



Sponsorship of the Great Limerick Run followed the decision by management to raise the profile of Barringtons Hospital.

value and do most of the refurbishment ourselves, or the local authority will do the refurbishment for us based on our requirements, and Barringtons will lease these properties from the city council.

"The location is ideal. For example, Georges Quay is only a five-minute walk from the city centre, and is near to major landmarks such as St John's Hospital, the Hunt Museum and King John's Castle, the Absolute Hotel and a number of multi-storey car parks."

EVENT SPONSORSHIP

This year's Barringtons Hospital Great Limerick Run got off to a flying start with over 1,000 runners registering for the annual event since the official launch this January. Cahalane said their sponsorship of the Great Limerick Run followed the decision by the management team to raise the profile of the hospital.

"Prior to that we had kept a low profile, which was part of our style and strategy. Then in 2012 we decided to up the 'ante'.....and what better way to do that by involving ourselves in such a significant event as the Great Limerick Run.

The event benefits a number of charities, and the main benefactor of this year's event will be Special Olympics."

Taking place on Sunday 4 May, the plan is to increase the numbers taking part during 2014. "Up to 9,000 people took part in the Great Run in the first year of the event back in 2012.....and we hope this number will further increase this year."

SAT NAV MAPS OUT COMPETITION FOR ENTREPRENEURS

NOW IN ITS 11TH YEAR, THE EUROPEAN SATELLITE NAVIGATION COMPETITION (ESNC) 2014 IS INVITING PARTICIPANTS ACROSS EUROPE TO SUBMIT THEIR IDEAS FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE €100 BILLION SATELLITE SERVICES MARKET.

Up to 30 June, the website – www.galileo-masters.eu – is open to entrepreneurs to submit ideas for new services, products and business innovations that integrate satellite navigation technology into daily life. The burgeoning sat nav market is expected to grow to €240 billion by 2020.

The regional Irish winner will receive a prize valued at €20,000, which includes incubation space, business coaching, technical support, marketing expertise as well as travel costs and automatic entry to the Galileo Masters, where global competitors compete for the €1 million prize fund.

Since 2004, the ESNC has become the world's largest innovation network in satellite navigation. In the last decade, the ESNC has selected and rewarded 204 winners from 2,397 ideas submitted by a total of 8,200 participants.

The ESNC's network is supported by the European Commission and the European Space Agency, and currently comprises 25 global partner regions. The Irish region is sponsored by the National Space Centre (NSC).

SHOWCASE INNOVATIONS

The NSC chief executive Rory Fitzpatrick said that the competition gives Irish entrepreneurs and businesses in the space and satellite sector "an opportunity to showcase their innovations on a truly global level".

Describing the initiative as "a unique platform", he said it can launch a concept, business or application as well as further helping to build a space-based tech industry in Ireland and Europe.

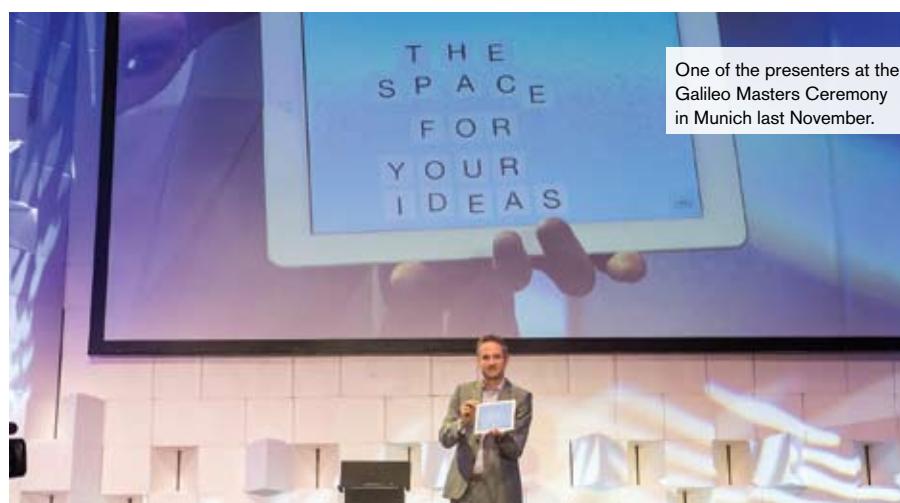
Ireland's National Space Centre is based at Elfordstown Earthstation, just

outside Midleton, Co Cork, and is the country's only teleport. NSC provides carrier grade satellite communications facilities from Elfordstown for the commercial satellite sector and partners with organisations and institutions worldwide for R&D projects, which include a number of emerging satellite technology projects.

Last year's winning entry from Ireland, CarSafari, was the brainchild of James Mannix and Paula Kelleher from Tralee, Co. Kerry.

The CarSafari concept allows car passengers to interact with the locality and environment they are travelling through. The creators intend to launch a demo this year.

Winners will be announced in Munich at the Galileo Masters Ceremony in October 2014.



www.galileo-masters.eu

Ireland Region Partners

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Emergency Services Ireland

PROTECTION GAPS FOR CRIME VICTIMS WITH DISABILITIES

A NEW STUDY BY THE IRISH COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES HAS HIGHLIGHTED PROTECTION GAPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO BECOME VICTIMS OF CRIME. IT INCLUDES PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE, INCLUDING THE RELAXATION OF FORMAL PROCEDURES, VIDEO TESTIMONY, AND PROVISIONS FOR UNSWORN TESTIMONY.

The 'International Review of Legal Provisions and Supports for People with Disabilities as Victims of Crime' provides an international comparative overview of the legal provisions and supports for crime victims with disabilities. The report, which is the first one of its kind, highlights barriers to accessing justice throughout the pre-trial, trial and post-trial periods of criminal proceedings.

Introducing the study's findings, the report's co-author Prof Shane Kilcommans (formerly of UCC, now of UL) said: "People with disabilities who are victims of crime remain largely invisible in the Irish criminal justice system, where standards of fact finding and an adversarial model of justice do not always facilitate their full and equal participation."

He added that the working assumption for all criminal justice agencies should be that victims of crime with disabilities are entitled, as a minimum, to the same rights of access to the justice system as other victims and witnesses.

"As our report outlines, for an equitable, accessible justice process, policymakers and criminal justice agencies in Ireland need to identify people with disabilities as a distinct category of victim, with specific communicative, social, mobility, and emotional requirements."

RAISING AWARENESS

Kieran Rose, Acting Chair of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (Designate) said: "This book will make an important contribution to raising awareness of the many disadvantages experienced by people with disabilities who become victims of crime.



Report authors Tina O'Sullivan of University College Cork and Prof Shane Kilcommans of University of Limerick pictured with ICCL Director Mark Kelly (Pic: Gareth Cheney, Collins Agency)



Kieran Rose, Acting Chair of the IHREC and Chair of GLEN, launched the report. (Pic: Gareth Chaney, Collins Agency)

"The Equality Authority was very pleased to be able to support this research through its 2012 Small Grants Fund which has funded a wide range of events, research, publications, surveys and networking activities across the nine equality grounds.

"Work to protect and promote the human rights of people with disabilities will remain a key priority for the new Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) which will replace the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission later this year."

ICCL Director Mark Kelly added: "The ICCL has been a long-standing advocate for the promotion and protection of victims' rights in the Irish criminal justice system and is working to ensure that the government meets its obligations to victims under the EU directive on victims' rights, which comes into force in 2015."

"This study, an extensive piece of research into international best practice, is designed to equip policy makers with the ideas and information they need to meaningfully protect the rights of Ireland's most vulnerable crime victims."

'JONESBOROUGH JUGGERNAUT' TESTS CROSS-BORDER RESPONSE

A MULTI-AGENCY CROSS-BORDER EMERGENCY TRAINING EXERCISE IN JONESBOROUGH, CO. ARMAGH HAS TESTED OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND RESPONSE FROM THE RESPONDING AGENCIES TO AN EXTENSIVE RAILWAY AND MULTIPLE ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION INCIDENT IN THE BORDER AREA.

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS), in partnership with Translink and Louth County Council Fire and Rescue Service, recently rolled out the 'Jonesborough Juggernaut' exercise – a staged collision on the railway tracks.

Eamon Woulfe, Chief Fire Officer, Louth County Council Fire and Rescue Service, said the exercise allowed them to test response levels to a major rail incident.

"It also allowed us to test our joint response to incidents with NIFRS. It builds on the experience of previous cross-border exercises carried out as part of the Memorandum of Understanding for joint attendance at roads-based incidents.

"A rail-based emergency is a particularly difficult event for emergency services to deal with and this has been a valuable learning experience for Louth Fire Service Personnel."

Woulfe extended his gratitude to NIFRS for all of their work and also to Translink for providing a train and live rail line for the exercise.

TESTING RESPONSE LEVEL

As part of the scenario a car crashed through a fence onto the railway track and into the path of an oncoming train. The car was pushed along the track by the train and fell off at a bridge colliding with other cars.

Simulated fires on board the train combined with diesel leaking into a stream further intensified the difficulty for the various agencies responding to the mock-up major incident as they dealt with multiple fatalities and dozens of casualties.

Chris Kerr, Chief Fire Officer, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Agencies who took part in the 'Jonesborough Juggernaut' exercise included NIFRS, Translink, Louth County Council Fire and Rescue Service, PSNI, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Southern Group Environmental Health Committee, St Johns Ambulance and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.



(NIFRS) said the exercise was one of the largest railway training exercises they ever held. "It allowed us to test response, command, communications, tactics and interoperability between NIFRS, Louth County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Translink, as well as with our colleagues across the statutory and voluntary sectors."

Kerr noted that while major emergency incidents on the railways are quite rare, nonetheless they can have serious consequences with generally large numbers of casualties if not fatalities involved.

"Preparing and training together for such incidents is essential and builds upon the ongoing co-operation and training between NIFRS and Louth County Council Fire and Rescue Service for incident response in the border areas as well as reinforcing collaboration with

Translink in dealing with an incident of this scale on the railways."

LEARNING POINTS

The NIFRS fire chief said there are learning points for all of the agencies involved. "This will ultimately enhance interagency working between the emergency responders, both north and south. It's a vital lifeline to members of the public who may find themselves in an emergency situation on the roads or on the railways, in the border areas and across Northern Ireland."

Granville Lavin, Translink's Group Health and Safety Manager, said the event has given Translink NI Railways a very valuable opportunity to work with the emergency services. "It has also enabled us to test and review our own preparedness and processes for responding to major incidents," he added.

EU DATA PROTECTION – TIME TO “GET SERIOUS”

EUROPEAN COMMISSION VICE-PRESIDENT VIVIANE REDING SAYS THERE'S A NEED TO “GET SERIOUS” ON DATA PROTECTION, AND CLAIMS THAT IF THE EU WANTS TO BE CREDIBLE IN ITS EFFORTS TO REBUILD TRUST, TO ACT AS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER CONTINENTS, IT ALSO HAS TO GET ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER.

Data, the currency of the digital age, is used by all businesses – government bodies, banks, social media sites and search engines. In a globalised world, the transfer of data is a daily occurrence. There are no borders online and cloud computing means data might be sent from Dublin to be processed in California and stored in Bangalore.

Data protection is something that has always been important but as the world is changing with the growth of online and digital technology, rules and procedures which have been adequate in the past are now outdated and not fit for purpose.

With surveillance revelations making the headlines almost on a daily basis, many people are not confident about giving out their personal data.

A total of 83 per cent of Irish internet users said that they were very or fairly concerned about the unnecessary disclosure of personal information online with 61 per cent concerned that personal information is used without their knowledge. (Source: Flash Eurobarometer 359: June 2011)

Commenting on the need for change, European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding says that if the EU wants to be credible in its efforts to rebuild trust, to act as an example for other continents, it also has to get its own house in order.

She said that the appropriate solution for restoring trust – in transatlantic relations and in the way companies and governments handle citizens' data – is a Data Protection Compact for Europe. This should be based on eight principles:

- Data Protection Reform is needed in the statute book. She wants to see full speed on data protection in 2014.
- The reform should not distinguish between the private and the public sector. Citizens would simply not understand a split in times when the public sector collects, collates and



On Data Protection Day 2014 (28 January) Vice-President Viviane Reding called for a speedy reform of data protection policies in the EU.

sometimes even sells personal data.

It is also a very difficult distinction to draw when a local authority can buy storage space on a private cloud.

- Laws setting out data protection rules or affecting privacy require public debate because they relate to civil liberties online.
- Data collection should be targeted and limited to what is proportionate to the objectives that have been set. Blanket surveillance of electronic communications data is not acceptable.
- Laws need to be clear and updated. It cannot be that states rely on outdated rules, drafted in a different technological age, to frame modern surveillance programmes.
- National security should be invoked sparingly. It should be the exception, rather than the rule.
- Without a role for judicial authorities, there can be no real oversight. Executive oversight is good. Parliamentary oversight is necessary. Judicial oversight is key.
- Data Protection rules should apply irrespective of the nationality of the person concerned. Applying different standards to nationals and non-nationals makes no sense in view of the open nature of the internet.

Strong, reliable and consistently-applied rules will make data processing safer, cheaper and strengthen people's confidence. Confidence in turn drives growth. Some estimates show that EU Gross Domestic Product could grow by a further four per cent by 2020 if the EU takes the necessary steps to create a modern digital single market

For more information visit <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection>

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Website: www.euireland.ie
Facebook: www.facebook.com/EU Ireland
Twitter: www.twitter.com/eurireland

QUALITY IN THE DRIVING SEAT AT NORTHGATE

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES CAN NOW ACCESS A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO FLEET OPERATIONS WITH QUALITY ASSURED FROM NORTHGATE VEHICLE HIRE. THIS FOCUS ON QUALITY PUTS THE COMPANY IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO OFFER A FLEET SOLUTION THAT DELIVERS REAL OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGES.

The economic backdrop for Ireland shows signs of change with reports indicating that interest rates are anticipated to remain at an historic low of 0.25 per cent and the economy is forecast to expand by 2.1 per cent in 2014.

Despite these positive indicators public and private sector organisations continue to operate in a post-recession climate with continuing austerity measures. In such conditions, cost control remains a real focus. One way businesses have been able to control operating costs is by carefully considering the method in which they acquire their fleet. Choosing an LCV provider who can provide financial and fleet flexibility can deliver significant benefits.

Northgate Vehicle Hire, the market leader in flexible vehicle hire works with thousands of companies across the UK and Ireland to provide flexible vehicle hire solutions that deliver real operational benefits to businesses large and small. From private to public sector organisations, with a broad range of LCV requirements, Northgate can work as a sole solution or as part of a wider vehicle acquisition strategy.

Northgate's flexible vehicle hire solution is designed to improve fleet utilisation and drive efficiencies in fleet operations by providing businesses the agility to respond to changes in fleet demand. Organisations can access 'ready-to-rent' commercial vehicles that are available immediately; without charges for ordering or returning vehicles being incurred. This flexibility is an ideal solution for emergency services organisations who require instant access to fit-for-purpose vehicles that meet strict government legislation.

COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

With over 1,800 vehicles available from its four locations throughout Ireland (north and south), Northgate can offer a cost



effective and flexible solution to a sudden increase in vehicle demand.

In short, if a fleet requires specific vehicles to supplement a rise in demand, Northgate can respond rapidly, and the vehicles can be simply handed back without penalty, when no longer needed.

The non-contractual package solves operational and logistical issues associated with running a fleet, whilst also offering businesses access to modern and fuel-efficient vehicles that meet legislative and environmental obligations.

In addition to these benefits, a partnership with Northgate frees fixed capital by removing depreciating assets and any costs typically associated with an owned fleet of vehicles, such as vehicle maintenance, servicing, breakdown and recovery – helping to reduce downtime.

FOCUS ON QUALITY

Owen McNamara, Area Sales Manager for Northgate's Irish operation, commented: "Our unique offering is proving to be very popular in Ireland, resulting in a 15 per cent growth this financial year."

"We place a huge focus on quality and meeting rentable standards for our customers - offering complete flexibility

and peace of mind. Our fleet features vehicles from leading manufacturers, the majority of which are less than three years old.

"For additional quality assurance our 'premium only' tyre policy with Goodyear Dunlop, ensures we are able to deliver increased tyre safety and fuel efficiency to our customers."

McNamara continued: "This focus on quality teamed with our flexible and hassle free offering, places us in a unique position to offer a fleet solution to the emergency services sector that delivers real operational advantages."

Northgate Vehicle Hire has branches across 67 locations in the UK and Ireland, with its head office in Darlington. It was recently awarded the ISO 90001 Quality Accreditation for delivering a consistent and quality service and product to its customers.

NORTHGATE
Vehicle Hire

For further information visit
www.northgatevehiclehire.ie and
'Follow' Northgate on Twitter at
twitter.com/northgatevhire.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF FIRE AND RESCUE SCENARIOS

THE FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE WILL JOIN FORCES WITH THE WORLD RESCUE ORGANISATION TO HOST THE 'WORLD RESCUE CHALLENGE 2014' IN THE UK ON 9-12 OCTOBER NEXT, TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR RESCUE AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL TO SHARE AND ADVANCE RESCUE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

Based at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, the Fire Service College will co-host the 'World Rescue Challenge 2014' alongside the World Rescue Organisation (WRO). The four-day event, which takes place from 9-12 October at the College, will attract over 300 competitors from across the world.

The Fire Service College has the unique ability to stage a full range of realistic practical training complexes that go beyond the remit of the World Rescue Challenge event.

An ideal venue for hosting the international WRO event, competitors and visitors alike will be able to experience the extensive incident ground and range of facilities. These include, amongst others:

- Road Traffic Collision (RTC) training
- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) training
- Rope Rescue training
- A full range of additional fire-related training

This year's event will also feature a flexible and mobile solution to enhance spectator involvement. Viewing opportunities will be available to ensure that the competition is as engaging as possible. As well as ensuring continuity between team challenges, this will also make it even more exciting for spectators.

The WRO and the Fire Service College will look to further enhance their activities at this year's World Rescue Challenge. Tablet technology will be employed for assessment and to provide instant feedback to the participating teams.

The Fire Service College will also feature a number of workshops to focus on incident command, firefighter development, USAR and leadership for visitors to learn more.

STANDARD DISCIPLINES

For this year's World Rescue Challenge the WRO has opted for the standard disciplines involving Road Traffic Collision (RTC) and



The M96 Motorway is structured to simulate any major motorway incident with barriers, overhead gantries and central reservations.



The railway simulation area can replicate a wide range of extrication related incidents from vehicles on level crossings through to a major derailment on a station platform.



This rig can be tailored to replicate any USAR incident from building collapse to terrorist explosive attack through to dog search and rescue.

Trauma scenarios.

Globally this will help to promote the development and maintenance of recognised industry standards for dealing with the immediate after effects of road collisions and will develop enhanced proficiency in rescue techniques, incident management and medical care. Their key focus will be to improve life safety through competition, education and training.

The Trauma Challenge will involve the teams dealing with medical emergency scenarios and administering emergency life-saving to multiple casualties in what can be quite complicated scenarios.

The teams will be assessed by global experts, all of whom are practising clinicians. Scoring will be based around the care of the casualty, and will focus on areas which include the safe approach, initial assessment, primary and secondary survey, C-spine management and communication.

For the Extrication Challenge the teams will deal with complicated RTC scenarios, including command and control, casualty treatment and the removal of the casualties in a safe and timely manner.



The UKRO and Fire Service College will engage the services of 'Amputees In Action' to present the teams with realistic and engaging scenarios. These scenarios will be designed around some of the college's practical training areas so that the intensity and realism will further enhance the event.

CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

These scenarios have been designed and agreed by the UK Rescue Organisation (UKRO) in collaboration with the WRO.

RTC Extrication

Each team will undertake three scenarios:
Complex – 30 minutes

- Standard/Limited – 20 minutes
- Rapid – 10 minutes

Trauma

Each team will undertake two to three scenarios:

- 'Amputees In Action' will participate in support of this event

The event is expected to attract over 300 operational delegates, together with support teams and guests.

Over 450 are anticipated for the closing ceremony.

The Challenge will also provide development opportunities for 'UKRO Challenge 2015' and subsequent WRO events.

For updates, follow the Fire Service College on Twitter @FSCMoreton, @WorldRescueOrg; visit www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk or www.wrescue.org/uk



Project Overview

9 Oct	Day 1	Assessor Workshop, Opening Ceremony and Captain's Briefing
10 Oct	Day 2	First Day of Challenge & Social Evening
11 Oct	Day 3	Second Day of Challenge & Seminar
12 Oct	Day 4	Third Day of Challenge & Closing Ceremony

Opening ceremony

WRO AGM

- To showcase new procedures, lessons learned and innovation both within the WRO and the Fire Service College.

Workshops

- To be completed over a three-day period and incorporating all necessary disciplines to be agreed with the project team and WRO representatives.

Main Event

- Opportunity for delegates to network and enjoy an evening of live music and entertainment.

Social Evening

- Presentation of awards for delegates and their guests with key note speakers and VIPs.

Closing Ceremony



The Fire Service College equipment range will enable teams to use fully-equipped appliances.



LEARNING LESSONS FROM DEPLOYED OPERATIONS

Lessons from Deployed Operations' is the theme of a conference to be hosted by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh on 21 October.

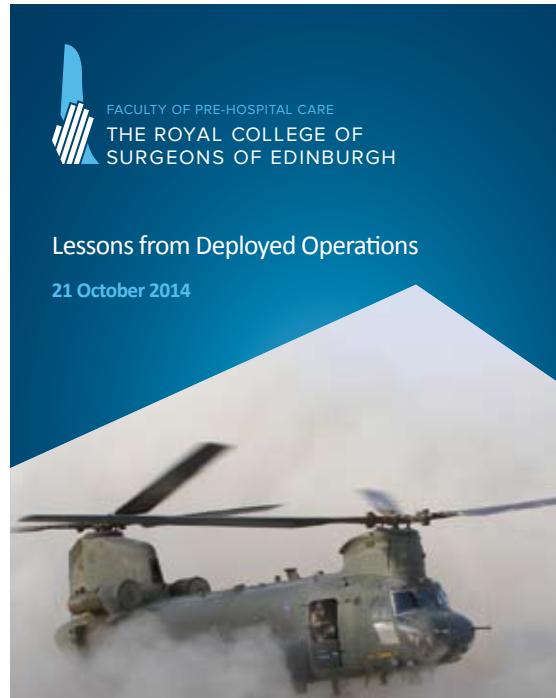
The one-day conference will be targeted at doctors, nurses, paramedics, search and rescue and military personnel involved in pre-hospital care.

During operations in Afghanistan the British Armed Forces have been able to develop and deliver pre-hospital care to an exceptional standard resulting in survival rates for critical trauma better than any ever seen in previous conflicts.

The MERT (Medical Emergency Response Team) has become the accepted shorthand for consultant-led pre-hospital care. The implementation of simple universal clinical protocols has meant that life-saving interventions can be performed almost immediately after injury. Many of the clinical developments from Afghanistan have now been introduced into civilian practice.

Presented by clinicians with experience in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the study day will consider the lessons from deployed pre-hospital emergency medicine and how they might inform civilian practice.

Contact 0044-131-5271732; or visit www.rcsed.ac.uk for more information.



£1M TO SUPPORT A SECOND AIR AMBULANCE FOR LONDON

London's Air Ambulance is being awarded £1 million to enable the charity to operate a second helicopter covering the capital.

Chief Executive Officer, Graham Hodgkin said: "The £1 million will give us the opportunity to acquire a second helicopter to give London 100 per cent air cover during summer daylight hours and maintenance periods. We estimate we'll now be able to reach a further 400 patients each year by helicopter.

"The money will cover the cost of running a second aircraft and extended flying hours for one year. So we'll also be stepping up our efforts to raise the £6 million a year needed to keep the helicopter trauma service running in

the capital."

London's Air Ambulance's advanced trauma team (a senior doctor and paramedic) carries out life-saving medical interventions at the scene usually only performed in a hospital emergency department, giving anyone critically injured the best chance of survival.

Dr Gareth Davies, Medical Director and Chair of the Trustees of London's Air Ambulance said: "The charity covers the 10 million people who live, work and travel in the capital. In our 25th year of service, this donation is a tremendous boost for London's ability to respond to emergencies as well as a tribute to the 30,000 patients we have treated so far."



EMERGENCY SHOW ZONES IN ON SEARCH & RESCUE

A new addition to this year's Emergency Services Show on 24-25 September will bring together the UK's search and rescue organisations within a dedicated presentation area at the NEC in Birmingham.

The brand new search and rescue zone will join underwater rescue demonstrations and a networking area featuring over 80 emergency services-related voluntary sector partners and NGOs.

Visitors to the SAR Zone will be able to meet agencies such as the RNLI, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RAF Search & Rescue, Cave Rescue, Mountain Rescue and the Association of Lowland Rescue, while underwater rescue demonstrations will take place on the Emergency Services Show Lake.

The British Red Cross, CFOA National Resilience, National Ambulance Resilience Unit, AA Special Operations, Flood Forecasting Centre, The Environment Agency and The Met Office will be among those exhibiting

in the Emergency Response Zone.

Training will have a major focus at this year's event with seminars, simulations and opportunities to see the latest lifesaving techniques and equipment in action. The College of Paramedics, for example, will once again run its popular free workshops.

Now in its ninth year, The Emergency Services Show is aimed at all those involved in emergency response, planning and recovery, including all bluelight services, voluntary workers and service providers.



NEC | BIRMINGHAM | 24-25 SEPTEMBER 2014

For further information visit www.emergencyuk.com

SCOTLAND ROLLS OUT NEW NATIONAL RETRIEVAL SERVICE

A world-class national specialist transport and retrieval service for critically ill NHS patients in Scotland went live on 1 April.

'ScotSTAR' represents an investment of £9.5 million a year that provides a single integrated national service with a sustainable multidisciplinary medical and clinical team, making best use of the range of road and air transport resources.

ScotSTAR brings together the Scottish Neonatal Service (SNTS), the Transport of Critically Ill and Injured Children Service and the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service, with the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), which co-ordinates

the teams and road and air ambulances.

The teams will move into a purpose-built facility next year at Glasgow airport, integrated into the new air ambulance base. This will be enhanced by clinical satellites elsewhere in Scotland, defined by clinical and geographical need.

ScotSTAR expects to undertake around 2,200 cases every year in Scotland where specialist, highly skilled, clinical teams are required to manage the care of patients during transport by air and road. These specialised retrievals are clinically complex and take much longer than a normal emergency response.

FORCES UNITE FOR ROADS POLICING OPERATION

A national operation targeting foreign criminals using the roads network has seen a concerted effort involving roads policing professionals from across England and Wales.

'Operation Trivium II' builds on the success of a similar action last year, which saw foreign gangs in the sights of officers and several suspects and vehicles netted.

The same formula for the 2014 operation included the deployment of police personnel from Eastern Europe in call centres and at the roadside. They worked to establish whether individuals stopped were wanted in their home countries.

The European gangs are thought to be involved in fraud, metal theft and prolific shoplifting – but move around the country and are not linked to any community.

National roads policing lead Chief Constable Suzette

Davenport said: "The UK roads network is being used by criminals to carry out their misdeeds while avoiding detection."

"We're working with colleagues from Europe to identify, locate and tackle these gangs. In the past we have identified criminals with a long history of offending."

According to ACPO, there are up to 30,000 foreign-registered vehicles on the UK's roads. Pasi Kemppainen, director of European roads policing organisation TISPOL – which helped facilitate the operation in England and Wales – said that police officers across Europe are increasingly co-operating to deny criminals the use of the roads.

"The support of officers from Romania, Poland and Lithuania enables real-time access to intelligence that will maximise the effectiveness of the police during the operation."

CALL FOR MORE JOINT TRAINING FOR EMERGENCY WORKERS

The lack of joint training opportunities is preventing the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services in the UK from working together as effectively as possible, according to the findings of a report.

The new survey by Skills for Justice, undertaken in partnership with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), reveals that blue light emergency workers should take part in more joint training.

And while 79 per cent of the 1923 emergency service employees questioned said their organisation was interoperable with other emergency services in their area, 95 per cent said a lack of joint training was a barrier to effective interoperability.

As well as taking place infrequently, joint training opportunities are unevenly distributed between the various levels of command within the emergency services. Strategic leads are much more likely to receive joint training with 61 per cent of these 'gold commanders' undertaking joint training at least once a year, compared to just 50 per cent of 'silver' tactical workers and 22 per cent of 'bronze' operational colleagues.

Staff working for the ambulance service are more likely to get joint training opportunities with 17 percent taking part every few months compared to nine percent of fire and rescue and seven percent of police staff.

Some 56 per cent of those surveyed also feel that learning from complex and major incidents is not shared between other agencies and services and 95 per cent of

respondents thought that a move to a single joint decision making model would support interoperability.

The report's authors now recommend that nationally-developed and funded joint training opportunities should be provided for responders, particularly for those working in 'bronze' operational roles.

They also recommend standardising joint decision-making and intelligence gathering models, as well as national funding for equipment procurement. It suggests that a national interactive tool could be aimed at supporting the development of collaborative learning programmes to ensure that the needs of the three emergency services are met.



BLUE LIGHT SERVICES WORK TOWARDS FUTURE COLLABORATION

The Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) and the Association of Police Chief Officers (ACPO) have joined forces to agree a number of key principles on collaboration as a professional response to the changing financial climate in order to secure public health, safety and wellbeing.

Joint working across the services is not a new concept; the services have been working closely together to explore collaboration and integration in order to provide a better service to the public for many years.

For example, the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) is looking at how services can work together at serious and major incidents and this collaborative work will continue.

All three organisations are keen to support innovative approaches to service delivery and have developed a number of position statements. Paul Fuller, CFOA President, said, "Fire and rescue services face significant financial challenges and it is clear that working closely together will deliver more efficient and effective emergency response

services."

Martin Flaherty OBE, Managing Director, AACE, said, "Now that we have agreed a key set of principles around further collaboration we can continue to build on the good examples already in place. In doing so we must ensure that new areas of collaboration are fully evaluated so that we can determine which of those are sensible, workable and truly deliver benefits for our patients and the public."

Lynne Owens, ACPO's National Policing Lead for Uniformed Operations, said, "It is good to be able to make our shared position on these things public. It is important to be clear that close working is necessary for reasons of efficiency and to protect the public."



DEFENCE RECRUITING DRIVE ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND

Over 500 young people across Northern Ireland preparing for university have been inquiring about Armed Forces sponsorship through higher education.

Recruiters for the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army say they have been highly impressed by the standard of education and the variety of degrees the potential students are looking at.

Warrant Officer Nigel Kane of the Royal Navy said there has been a steady stream of students making enquiries regarding what bursaries are available.

"With sponsorship opportunities of up to £27,500 for engineering students and other undergraduate bursaries amounting £1,500 a year, the Royal Navy recognises the need to invest in the education of our Northern Irish students whilst continuing to provide excellent career opportunities," he said.

The Army also grants up to 100 scholarships a year of

£3,000. From 2015, an army scholarship will also include the provisional award of an army undergraduate bursary (with 50 available for up to £7,000).

Northern Ireland's Brigadier Ralph Wooddisse, Commander of 38 (Irish) Brigade, says that the army is changing in terms of size and make-up as well as format and skill sets. "The regular army strength of 82,000 will require a constant flow of recruits coming through the ranks and the increased strength of UK reserves, as well as its integration within the overall force will require young men and women of high calibre and in all ranks," he added.

"In Northern Ireland we have strong support across the 2,000 men and women who are committed to the reserves, we have good and ever developing relationships with employers.

We have been able to consistently show how regulars and reserves from Northern Ireland rightly deserve the credit they have earned on deployments around the world."

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE'S GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE NEW 'LIFE'

A former fire cadet is calling on local businesses to back the scheme that helped him turn his life around. Without funding, the future of the London Fire Brigade's cadet scheme is uncertain.

Stevie Clifford-Tucker (20) from Newham was in trouble at school and under achieving before he got onto the LIFE and fire cadets courses and he believes it changed his life. Now an education officer at London Fire Brigade (LFB), he is volunteering his time to give back to the scheme which helped him.

"I'm now giving back by volunteering and I hope more people give up a little bit of their time as well. Now it's time for businesses to help us bring the local community together for a course which has a huge impact on the lives of the young people."

The cadet course aims to steer young people away from crime and get them back into education, training or employment. Successful cadets are awarded a BTEC in Fire and Rescue Services in the Community.

The course costs around £30,000 a year with an additional £12,000 to get new courses up and running. External investment is vital for the scheme's long term future; businesses can sponsor the cost of one young person at around £2,000;

Local volunteers help the Brigade keep the cost of the course down and increase community cohesion between the fire service and the local people. Volunteers give at least one hour of their time each week and work alongside a small

number of Brigade staff to make the course happen. The Brigade has around 50 volunteers from all walks of life, including bankers, chefs, shop workers and firefighters, but the service still needs more people to step forward and fire chiefs are urging anyone who is interested to get in touch.

The Brigade believes the fire cadet scheme offers huge benefits to the business community as it deters young people from crime and anti-social behaviour. The 2011 summer riots cost the UK retail sector around £300 million in damages and lost revenue.



DNA MARKER COULD BE A PUBLIC ORDER OPTION

ADNA marker commonly used against thieves and burglars could be pressed into action in public order situations in a move to rapidly identify suspects, it has been suggested.

London's Mayor Boris Johnson supports exploring the deployment of 'Smartwater' as an option available to officers. The liquid contains a unique DNA code that can be read under special lights. It is commonly used to mark goods and equipment and as an agent to deter and identify thieves.

Johnson is to endorse a request from the Met to buy three water cannon vehicles from the German Federal Police to assist in future disorder. A poll recently showed that more than two-thirds of Londoners backed the move – although Assembly members opposed it, claiming the kit was costly and would be rarely used.

The purchase of the equipment must now be rubber stamped by the Home Secretary. During the Q&A session with the Mayor, London Assembly members highlighted that the riots of August 2011 began to abate when significant arrests were made – and suggested that Smartwater could play a role in identifying those involved in the future.

The London Mayor told members that he supported investigating whether the liquid could

be a public order tool – but warned that there were potential hurdles to overcome.

He pointed out that suspects could leave the area and could then contaminate other people with the Smartwater DNA – making it an unreliable method of identification. "Smartwater could become very dumb water! I am interested in the potential for Smartwater but whether that could be a replacement for water emitted at a greater pressure I do not know," he remarked.

Politicians claims that a liquid containing DNA marker could assist with rapid arrests (Pic: Smartwater)



USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INTEROPERABLE WORKING STRATEGY

Exploring the benefits of social media could represent the next phase of interoperable working for the emergency services to tap into extra resources and information, it has been claimed.

Surrey Police's Assistant Chief Constable Gavin Stephens said that social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, proved to be a vital communication and information gathering tool during the recent floods that hit the county at the beginning of the year.

In addition to communicating how all the emergency services were responding to the flooding, social media revealed an untapped community resource which provided live time intelligence to help prioritise personnel deployment, he said.

Addressing delegates at the annual British Association of Public Safety Communications Officers (APCO) conference in Manchester, ACC Stephens said that technology has the potential to create connections with the community that previously did not exist.

Stephens, who said he was an advocate of getting the community to police themselves if these communities can be help to be resilient in their own way, told delegates that one of the things they can get from technology is to create connections that did not exist before.

He added that the interoperability programme the force has embarked on with blue light services in Surrey and Sussex has established new and more efficient ways of working.

He said that the multi-agency team, which comprises six organisations, is in the process of creating a joint contact, control and dispatch facility as well as establish a joint HR and IT strategy. As part of the project six governance networks are involved in terms of boundaries and geographies.



NEW INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE FOR CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATORS

Crime scene investigators will benefit from the latest research in proven evidence recovery and analysis techniques in a new journal to share best practice.

'CS Eye,' published by the Forensic Science Society (FSS), will compile various research projects and developments from academic institutions across the country as well as from forensic science providers to ensure crime scene investigators are aware of the latest improvements.

In addition, the quarterly publication will also provide technical analysis on emerging techniques and procedures as well as encourage those with an interest in the specialism to find out more about the forensic landscape.

Dr Graham Williams, a consultant forensic biologist at the University of Huddersfield, has been appointed editor of the publication. The publication will analyse peer-reviewed research articles, case studies, technical notes, and equipment reviews. The first journal will examine new research into fingerprint persistency and blood stain pattern analysis and compare fire investigation practices between England and Denmark as well as featuring the infamous Jack the Ripper.

Dr Ann Priston, President of the FSS, said that the publication will foster greater communication between research scientists and the criminal justice system. "Our

members are working at the cutting edge in diverse scientific fields as well as DNA technology, forensic accounting, archaeology and digital technology. CS Eye will give them a platform for sharing, analysing and debating current issues within their sectors."

She added: "In the past, the role of the crime scene investigator was to bag everything up and send it to the lab. With the expansion of the roles and responsibilities of crime scene investigators, having a greater understanding of what happens in the laboratory should enable them to have an even more relevant submission strategy."



"For more information and to read the first edition visit www.cseye.co.uk/

NEW CHAIRMAN FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES

Mountain Rescue England and Wales, the umbrella organisation for mountain search and rescue teams, has appointed a new national chairman to its ranks.

Mike French takes over from David Allan as national chairman from May 2014. He joined his local team, Woodhead MRT in the Peak District, at the age of 18 and has been involved in Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) on a national level for 17 years, most recently as chairman of National Fundraising.

"I intend to continue my local operational mountain rescue duties in parallel with the new role," says Mike. "At the age of 61, I can't beat a 25-year-old to the top of the hill but that doesn't mean to say I can't get there. Mind you, I do tend to be back at base as search manager or incident controller! I think it's important to me and to the membership of MREW

that I continue to be involved on the practical side and aware of the challenges and daily issues that arise for MREW."

French takes over at a time when the public profile of mountain rescue is high but he recognises that this brings additional pressures and responsibilities to maintain standards and reinforce the best of rescue. "Support from central government is welcome but we need to be in control of our own destiny."

Continued investments in specialist training and team insurances are also priorities for the future, ensuring that teams are left to focus on raising money for local equipment from their local communities and supporters.



SCOTS SUPPORT DEFIBRILLATOR CAMPAIGN

The Scottish Ambulance Service is in full support of a media campaign for the introduction of more public access defibrillators in Scotland.

Over 1500 Scots died from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest last year. Currently, only five per cent of people who have a cardiac arrest in the community survive and every minute that they wait for a 'shock' cuts their chances.

A public access defibrillator, or 'shock box,' can be used by any member of the public to restore a person's heart to a normal rhythm after a cardiac arrest. Early defibrillation,

quickly followed by advanced cardiac care from an ambulance team, greatly improves the chance of survival.

The Scottish Ambulance Service provides advice and guidance to any council, community, organisation or business interested in developing a publicly accessible defibrillator.

This community resilience initiative is part of a wider emergency life support programme run by the Scottish Ambulance Service in conjunction with third sector and private partners, including British Heart Foundation Scotland.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER '112' AWARD WINNERS

EMS personnel from the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain were rewarded for their commitment to promote and improve the European emergency number '112' at this year's awards ceremony in Warsaw.

The 112 Awards Ceremony is organised every year by the European Emergency Number Association (EENA), to recognise and congratulate individuals and organisations particularly engaged in improving and promoting the European emergency number 112.

The event on 2 April attracted over 350 emergency services representatives, international organisations, representatives of European institutions and solution providers, who gathered to recognise and support excellence throughout the European-wide emergency services field.

Held in conjunction with the EENA Conference 2014, the ceremony concluded the quest for outstanding initiatives in the field of emergency services and rescue.

Applications from all over Europe were submitted in the seven categories and a panel of independent experts assessed them before the EENA members gave their final vote.

The 2014 Award Winners

- Outstanding call taker was from Poland;
- Outstanding citizens were five children and a journalist

- from Poland;
- Outstanding 112 education initiative came from Greece;
- Outstanding emergency call centres were in Moravia, Czech Republic, and Catalonia, Spain;
- Outstanding reform of the national 112 system award went to Romania;
- Outstanding rescue was carried out in Finland;
- Outstanding emergency services innovation was implemented in Slovenia.

"The 112 Awards Ceremony can be considered the 'Oscars' for the emergency services," commented Demetrios Pyrros, Chair of the EENA Advisory Board. "The awardees demonstrated to us that we can build a safer society together and set the bar for emergency services worldwide."

*For further information visit www.112awards.eu



CANCER BECOMES INCREASING RISK FOR FIREFIGHTERS

More and more recently, cancer has become the biggest of all hazards facing firefighters. For example, the San Francisco Fire Department recently lost two of its members in just eight days to this insidious killer.

"I'd rather risk getting burned than risk getting cancer right now. That's how scary it is," said Tom O'Connor, President of the SF Firefighters Union.

After 16 years of service, 57-year-old firefighter Clyde Watarai died of lung cancer, while 49-year-old John Murphy died after melanoma had metastasized into his brain and liver. "We're all getting scared. We're all getting concerned for our health and safety. Cause if they could die, at such a young age, I mean, who's next? What's going to happen to all of us?" asked O'Connor.

A retired firefighter named Dan Armenta died last November of a rare kidney cancer, which O'Connor says the department has now seen in six different firefighters. Officials say there are two likely causes for the recent spike in cancers for firefighters.

"We're encountering more and more toxins in the home. Every room has a flat screen TV, a laptop computer and synthetic furniture.

"So, you go into a fire and it's like this toxic soup, the room is full of benzynes and different chemicals that are known carcinogens, and we're absorbing all these through our skin," noted O'Connor.

Not that long ago, a dirty turnout was an admirable sign of hard work, but that's no longer the case. "Things as simple as cleaning your equipment as soon as you get out of a fire...and even something like using a baby wipe on our head and face to get toxins off is a sort of quick way to decontaminate ourselves," he said.





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LARGE VARIATION IN THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE

Healthcare services in Sweden, Italy and Norway are of a high quality, according to a findings of a new project that followed individual patients, but it also found that quality and costs varied widely both between and within countries.

The results from the EuroHOPE project that compare health care for five different medical conditions were presented at a conference on 8 April that explained differences in European health care outcomes performance and efficiency.

This EU project that has run for three years compares the quality and cost of hospital care in Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and certain provinces in Italy. Researchers have focused on care for heart attacks, strokes, hip fractures, very premature infants and certain forms of breast cancer.

"The results show that there is potential to improve the efficiency of health care.

We see significant differences in both costs and quality both within and between countries for these diseases. However, there are no clear results that show that the best quality is associated with the highest costs," says Prof Clas Rehnberg, Department of Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics, Karolinska Institute.

"We have followed individuals who just have one disease in the registries and this means we can draw conclusions about healthcare for the diseases in question. It is a fact that even a country's general health status has

an effect. Hungary, for example, is worse in most areas, but it also tends to have a poorer health status with a shorter lifespan. It is clear that it has an effect and makes it difficult to improve results in individual diseases no matter how many resources you can deploy."

The method used in this project was compared with other forms of rankings of health care systems. There were also discussions about the causes of the differences in quality.

"We see no clear differences between how healthcare is financed in different countries. But it could, for example, be that different medical techniques are employed in different countries. Another hypothesis is that it is due to the centralisation or decentralisation of healthcare or that international healthcare guidelines are not followed," says Rehnberg.

*For the full programme www.eurohope.info/news.html



CANADIAN PARAMEDICS MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT SUICIDE

A troubling report on the mental health state of those who respond to emergencies and save lives in Canada reveals that 58 per cent of paramedics admit to being under a very high amount of psychological stress.

The 'Journal de Montréal' findings revealed that stress translated to suicidal thoughts for over one quarter of paramedics surveyed at Urgences Santé.

Over seven per cent of the workforce has actually attempted to take their own life, and at least eight employees have committed suicide since 2001, according to the report.

The Federation of Paramedic Workers in Quebec (FPESPQ) said the situation is worse for workers around Montreal due to high number of calls.

"They tend to have a lot of calls a day, and they do not have a lot of back-up so they are really stressed," François Trudelle, the president of the federation said. Trudelle says the psychological help offered to workers could be improved because it's not given soon enough.

A 2005 report proposed radical changes at Urgences Santé, but close to 10 years later, a handful of paramedics say the situation has barely improved.





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

HEARTBEAT-SENSING WRISTBAND OFFERS EXTRA SECURITY

A research-based business in Toronto has devised a novel kind of security product – a bracelet that acts as a wearable password.

In the last few decades researchers realised that the human heartbeat, no matter how fast or slow it goes, generates signals that are every bit as unique to an individual as a fingerprint or retina.

The Toronto start-up named Bionym has developed this bracelet that acts as a wearable password – one that can't be lost, can't be stolen, and can't be used by others – but can still be taken off at will.

"By wearing something that knows who you are, it can be used as a universal identifier," says Karl Martin, Bionym's CEO. Founded by Karl Martin and Foteini Agrafioti, two University of Toronto PhD students, Bionym's first product is a \$99 Bluetooth-enabled bracelet called the Nymi.

When a user puts the device on, they can authenticate themselves by pressing it to their wrist for a few seconds, during which the device picks up a few heartbeats' worth of the ECG signatures that, once run through an algorithm, are unique to each person. Having traced the user's pulse, as it were, the device can now use its Bluetooth radio to

wirelessly vouch that its wearer is indeed who she says she is.

However, as soon as the bracelet loses contact with its wearer's skin, it resets itself. So, unlike for instance, a smartphone that contains digital credentials, a lost or stolen bracelet is of no value to those who'd break into accounts.

"In the biometrics world, there's a tunnel vision," says Martin. Biometrics solutions, he says, focus too much on one-off tasks like simply getting people through gates, like passwords. However, he says, the real potential in these technologies lies in using these devices to broadcast your identity continuously to devices around you that might be listening.

"You can have a personalised experience. Devices can know who you are," he says. For instance, users could opt in to programmes that would allow businesses to recognise them when they walk through the door.



EMERGENCY CALLS POSSIBLE WITHOUT A SIM CARD

Finland's emergency services have been working alongside the Communications Regulatory Authority and telecoms operators to test countrywide mobile access to the 112 emergency phone number.

The testing looked at the capability of mobile phones to access the general emergency number from locations where a service provider's network was unavailable. Reliance on mobile phones means that people can find themselves in need of emergency assistance in isolated areas that are serviced neither by their own provider, nor a rival network.

Emergency services officer Katri Kalliomäki says that testing was carried out in areas that were completely devoid of network coverage, including, amongst others, inside a cave.

"The tests were performed using several different makes of phone," she says. "Tests involved calling the emergency number both with and without a SIM card, and in all cases

the emergency call was successful."

On smartphones it's possible to call the emergency number even if the screen lock doesn't open. Emergency calling has its own menu screen, in which the emergency number 112 can be dialed even if the keypad is locked.



The emergency number 112 has been in use in Finland for nearly 20 years. (Image: YLE)

According to Kalliomäki, the emergency services do not have statistical information in cases where 112 was called from a location outside of the phone network, but she believes that such instances have occurred. Last year some three million emergency calls were placed in Finland.

RED CROSS CAMPAIGNS FOR AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

The American Red Cross has partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for America's PrepareAthon! campaign to teach people what to do to prepare for spring and summer disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires.

The national campaign will also feature a National Day of Action on Wednesday April 30.

The Red Cross has urged all individuals, households and organisations to register on the campaign's website for

access to great tools and updates on how to get ready for emergency situations in their communities.

"Disasters can happen to anyone. During a large disaster, first responders may not get to someone right away so it is important for everyone to know the steps they can take to help themselves, their loved ones and their neighbourhood until help arrives," said Russ Paulsen, Executive Director, Community Preparedness and Resilience for the Red Cross.