**Control Room Awards recognise ‘ordinary people doing an extraordinary job’**

**Press release**

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The first national awards for control room staff will recognise “ordinary people doing an extraordinary job”, says the man in charge of managing 999 calls for a UK police force.

The Control Room Awards have been launched by APD Communications, which specialises in mission critical solutions for blue light services and a variety of public and private sector organisations.

The APD Control Room Awards are the first to recognise and reward unsung heroes within critical control rooms across the UK and have been endorsed by several emergency services organisations.

John Flynn, Head of Contact Management for Wiltshire Police, said: “Control room operators are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. Every day they come to work not knowing what they might deal with, what the next phone call will be.

“When our staff answer a 999 call they have no time to prepare for what the next few seconds will bring. A police officer sent to an incident often has some time to prepare themselves for what they will face when they get there, whereas a control room operator never knows what’s coming next.

“As soon as they take a call they can be presented with a set of circumstances that are emotional and traumatic, with a distressed person at the end of the line. It’s their job to elicit all the right information from them in a very controlled manner to ensure our officers can respond to the incident appropriately. They perform that role with great professionalism and skill.”

Mr Flynn said Wiltshire Police was actively participating in the awards and encouraging entries recognising the excellent work of staff in the Contact Management team.

He added: “The reality is our control room staff deal with life and death situations – people don’t ring us to tell us they’re having a good day.

“We have situations where our staff find themselves dealing with people who are threatening to take their lives. When officers get to the scene we will often call out a trained negotiator but, on many occasions, a control room operator performs that role in the first instance – trying to engage with the caller, talk them round and make them see there are other alternatives to taking their lives.

“In those sorts of situations their problem-solving and communications skills come to the fore.”

APD develops critical, life-saving software used by the police and other emergency services organisations across the country, as well as transport and aviation operators nationally and internationally.

APD Managing Director Mike Isherwood said: “We work closely with a wide range of emergency services and mission critical organisations and our technology is integral to their control room operations.

“Because of this we’re very familiar with the extraordinary work of control room staff, often dealing with distressing situations and under significant pressure. The APD Control Room Awards are an opportunity to celebrate and recognise publicly the great contribution made by control room staff to keeping the public safe and secure.

“We’re delighted the awards have been received so positively and that so many organisations with control room operations are supporting them.”

Leading tech company telent Technology Services is sponsoring the Control Room Awards as the Platinum Partner, with pioneering technology companies Sopra Steria and Seed Software Bonze Sponsors of the awards. The British Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (British APCO) is backing the awards as Media Partner.

Nominations are open until January 18, with the awards shortlists scheduled to be announced on February 1.

To nominate an individual or team for the APD Control Room Awards, visit <https://www.controlroomawards.com/nominate/>

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the event, visit <https://www.controlroomawards.com/sponsorship/> for more information.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors**

**APD Communications**

* APD Communications creates secure, intelligent and connected control room and fleet technologies that help organisations protect and preserve society.
* Founded by two academics from the University of Hull in 1984 and still based in the city, APD has developed cutting-edge digital technology for more than 30 years and is an acknowledged market leader in software development.
* APD made its name in the 1980s by designing and delivering the world’s first real-time bus tracking system, which then became the industry benchmark. Later, APD engineered the Eurotunnel communications network, facilitating connectivity between the British and French borders and inside the tunnel itself.
* Today, one in two UK police forces employs APD’s technology, while APD also services the national transport and aviation sectors. The London Underground runs safely and on time with assistance from APD technology, which tracks train locations and supports control room collaboration across the 250-mile network.
* Internationally, APD has an ever-growing presence, powering mission-critical control rooms in Sweden, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates. At Dubai Airport – the world’s busiest international passenger airport with 77m passengers annually – APD’s integrated control room solution keeps the entire operation safe, secure and running efficiently.
* The company’s partners are an integral part of the service and technology APD delivers. APD’s technology partners include mobile communications pioneer Motorola; global digital solutions provider Avaya; mission critical communications networks provider telent; and digital transformation leader sopra steria.
* APD is at the forefront of preparations for the UK’s new digital Emergency Services Network (ESN), due to go live in 2018. APD is working with police, fire and ambulance services around the UK to upgrade to world-leading technology, enabling a business-as-usual transition.
* APD provides its customers with a dedicated support team, available 24/7, 365 days a year. Every APD employee has official security clearance, ensuring customers can have full confidence that their sensitive data is in safe hands.
* The company is showing strong growth, with turnover in 2017 reaching £9m, up 32% on the previous year, powered by APD’s market-leading products, including Cortex, Aspire and Artemis.
* Cortex is APD’s Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) used in more than 70 control rooms around the world. Cortex brings radio, telephony, CCTV and more together on one screen, helping organisations to connect, collaborate and communicate rapidly and effectively when it matters most. A trailblazer in this field, APD has developed and launched the world’s first hosted ICSS, at Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden, supporting the efficient running of the entire hospital operation all day, every day.
* Aspire is APD’s contact management solution, designed to help emergency services organisations to identify and protect vulnerable people. A software solution that can be integrated easily with existing command and control applications, Aspire provides APD’s customers with full contact history to make informed decisions and save lives.
* Artemis is APD’s solution for fleet management and the remote transfer of data and information from vehicles to control rooms and fleet managers. The only technology of its kind built specifically for the emergency services, Artemis helps customers to improve use of resources and driver behaviour and ensure vehicles get to where they need to be promptly and efficiently.
* These technologies work independently and inter-dependently to support organisations across the public and private sectors. APD is attuned to meeting the needs of organisations with critical operations that rely on instant and highly-resilient communications.