**APD launches International Control Room Week to celebrate behind-the-scenes stars**

**Press release**

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Software pioneer APD Communications is launching a special week celebrating the extraordinary work of emergency services call handlers and dispatch teams.

Taking place from October 22-28, International Control Room Week will raise awareness of the life-saving and life-changing work of staff in emergency services control rooms who deal with harrowing and distressing situations on a daily basis.

APD supplies critical, life-saving software to blue light organisations across the UK and also supports vital operations internationally. Building on those links, APD is now inviting individuals and teams in emergency services control rooms across the UK and Europe to back the new campaign and help to establish it as an annual event.

Rhiannon Beeson, APD’s Marketing and Sales Manager, said: “The team at APD spends a lot of time in control rooms – you’ll often find us there on a Friday or Saturday night, trying to better understand the operational need of call takers and dispatchers, so that we continually improve our products.

“Each time we attend there is that one call that really sticks with you and brings on goose bumps, a pounding heart and, sometimes, a tear or two.

“When help gets to that caller there is an overwhelming need to thank and congratulate the team working on that incident. The teams say ‘we’re just doing our job’ but, to us, they’re saving lives every hour of every day – and that needs recognition.

“We know the period from Halloween to Bonfire Night is one of the busiest times of the year for emergency service and critical control rooms, so we picked October 22nd to 28th as the week to say thank you and acknowledge the work they do.”

Organisations who want to take part in the week will receive a celebration box filled with balloons, bunting, sweet treats, badges and stickers for employees to really get into the spirit of the initiative.

Ms Beeson added: “The week is all about creating a feelgood factor and showing control room employees that we care, we appreciate all that they do and it doesn’t go unnoticed.”

As well as celebrating the work of control room teams, International Control Room Week will support a national programme by mental health charity Mind offering mental health support to emergency services personnel and the general public.

Mind is delivering the Blue Light Programme to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales. The programme responds to Mind’s independent research which found that members of the emergency services are more at risk of experiencing a mental health problem, but less likely to seek support.

Ms Beeson explained: “There’s two reasons we picked Mind as a charity to support during this week. The first is that the challenging nature of the job, often dealing with distressing and traumatic situations, puts employees at greater risk of suffering with poor mental health.

“The second is that control rooms across the UK are dealing with record numbers of phone calls on mental health. Last year Britain’s biggest police force, the Metropolitan Police, received a phone call relating to mental health every five minutes and these figures are expected to rise.

“We’ll be promoting the week on social media and, for every #unsungheroes hashtag used during the week, we’ll donate £1 to Mind.”

Control room teams can register to participate in International Control Room Week and receive a free celebration box at [www.internationalcontrolroomweek.com](http://www.internationalcontrolroomweek.com)

The launch of the International Control Room Week follows the hugely-successful inaugural APD Control Room Awards, which took place earlier this year.

During a highly-emotional awards ceremony, individuals and teams working in control rooms were recognised for demonstrating remarkable skill, professionalism and resilience in responding to crisis situations for the police, fire, ambulance and emergency rescue services.

APD’s software is a vital part in the infrastructure supporting the emergency services and transport and aviation operators nationally and internationally.

The company’s technology is used by 69% of UK police forces; helps to run the London Underground; and is a key part of the critical communications infrastructure at Dubai International, the world’s busiest airport.

APD is also at the forefront of the development of the Emergency Services Network (ESN), a new, state-of-the-art communications network for the UK’s emergency services.

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, 69% UK police forces employ 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; network services 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). 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.