arqiva

TETRA boosts security and collaboration across London's busy South Bank

> " In this busy area, people need to share information with each other immediately. "
>
> **David Clark**
> *Security Co-ordinator, South Bank Employers Group*

Challenge

The London Eye... Royal Festival Hall... Waterloo... if your job is to coordinate public safety and crime prevention activities around these locations, it's no small task. You need to share information quickly and regularly with key individuals in order to protect the interests of thousands of people.

As Security Co-ordinator for the South Bank Employers Group (SBEG), this is a day-to-day job for David Clark. The SBEG is a not-for-profit association of the largest organisations in London's South Bank, Waterloo and Blackfriars, dedicated to improving, promoting and protecting this popular destination.

David's role is to help businesses, the local authority and the police share information for the sake of safety and security. However, this hasn't always been easy: "We were all struggling to share information in real time. If there was a security incident, people had to report it via mobile phone calls. But these were

expensive and time-consuming," he explains. "In this busy area, people need to share information with each other immediately."

To resolve this, SBEG decided to put out to tender for a single radio network that all members could use. This would be dedicated to the needs of SBEG, meaning critical traffic would not have to compete for bandwidth.

Importantly, the chosen network had to fulfil a number of criteria. Security was critical, given the confidential nature of the communications; for a not-for-profit organisation, managing cost was also important. "And we didn't want to have to look after the technology either, so finding a managed solution was a key requirement," adds David.

Solution

Six organisations were invited to tender for the network. To get this important decision right, David organised a tender panel comprising key individuals from the police, the local authority and private businesses.

SUMMARY

Client: South Bank Employers' Group (SBEG)
Region: UK
Industry: Not for profit regeneration agency

Challenge: To improve real-time communications in order to make safety and security activities faster and more coordinated across this busy metropolitan area.
Solution: A secure TETRA digital radio network for more than 60 users.

Results and benefits:
- Reliable, effortless, real-time communications
- More coordinated public safety, security and emergency response between SBEG, police and the local authority
- A fully managed, future-proof network at an agreeable cost

The panel's clear choice was the TETRA-based solution from Arqiva – one of the only organisations able to offer this frequency within the London area. "Arqiva offered a fully managed solution, so we didn't have to worry about maintenance. And as a digital network, it is also modern and adaptable. In future we can add new functions such as telephony or GPS."

The TETRA network gives push-to-talk voice calls, peer-to-peer calls and text messaging to around 60 users across the South Bank area. TETRA technology is trusted by police and emergency services teams across the country for its high security, making it ideal for SBEG's requirements. Coverage is also excellent across the area thanks to Arqiva's own nationwide 412 MHz spectrum, boosted where necessary by internal aerials. And from a financial perspective, Arqiva offered SBEG an effective way to manage network costs. "We arranged an agreeable annual fee so we didn't have to pay for everything up front," confirms David.

Results and benefits

More than six months down the line, and the Arqiva TETRA network is giving SBEG reliable real-time communications coverage across the busy South Bank area. In fact, it's helping to resolve problems they could never assist with before.

One such problem is reuniting lost children with their families. "In our busiest season from August to December last year, we reunited seven children with their parents. We've never been involved in this before," explains David. "Parents can now give a description to the patrol service for the attraction they're visiting, who can share it with everyone over the radio in real-time."

Another problem is anti-social behaviour during the evening. "We have a booming night time economy on the South Bank which can attract some anti-social behaviour. The network helps us work in a more coordinated way to deal with it. And we're now thinking about adding even more licensed premises to the network to help with this," says David.

Indeed, the network is helping teams throughout the area to work more collaboratively. In an inner-city first, SBEG has given handsets to the local police so they can work with them to patrol and monitor the area. And because the TETRA radio has multiple channels, SBEG's other on the ground staff – such as the cleaning and graffiti teams, for instance – can perform their tasks more effectively, whilst offering SBEG extra eyes and ears on the area, too.

With more people using the radio to report more issues, SBEG can build a better picture of local security needs. David believes this is undoubtedly the greatest benefit. "In the past, many localised security or safety incidents would have gone unreported; it would have taken too long to phone everyone and tell them. But now people can get the message out immediately which gives me a better picture of security needs in the area."

To other organisations thinking of installing a TETRA network from Arqiva, David has one comment: "It's well worth doing. You'll soon see the benefits."

> " Arqiva offered a fully managed solution, so we didn't have to worry about maintenance. And as a digital network, it is also modern and adaptable. In future we can add new functions such as telephony or GPS. "

arqiva