



Enhancing lone worker safety

National Monitoring delivers remote monitoring for lone workers and protects individuals at risk, with Vodafone IoT.

The future is exciting.

Ready?



Providing security outside the home

The UK public sector has a responsibility to protect society's most vulnerable people and the lone workers who service its communities. While solutions such as panic buttons, intruder alarms and smoke detectors have provided protection in their homes, people were sometimes reluctant to go out as they felt vulnerable without their home security systems. Another challenge was that these systems use landlines to communicate with Incident Management Centres (IMC) but an increasing number of people now rely on mobile phones and have no landline. National Monitoring, one of the nation's largest, fastest-growing independent specialist monitoring companies, addressed both issues by developing a specialist Rapid Deployment Alarm (RDA). Rather than using landlines the RDA uses mobile network connectivity and is supplemented with a portable GPS device for use outside the home.

The challenge

A total solution for vulnerable people

For over 15 years National Monitoring has protected society's most vulnerable people and took the decision to extend this protection to lone workers through its Alertcom branded solutions.

National Monitoring has been a security specialist for 40 years. Today, it provides critical solutions for many of the UK's law enforcement agencies, housing associations, public authorities and blue chip companies. Its fully managed temporary alarm service is commonly used to protect domestic violence victims and others at high risk and in the last decade, over 100,000 systems have been deployed.

"Initially, we focused on protecting people inside the home," says Paul Miller, a Chartered Security Professional and Managing Director of National Monitoring. "This would include panic buttons, intruder detection and smoke alarms. They are extremely comprehensive, but they failed to protect people outside the home."

The problem was that people sometimes felt like prisoners in their own homes and leaving home was viewed as high risk. That impacted on their wellbeing and the ability of law enforcement agencies to reassure and protect these vulnerable people.

“ We need connectivity that uses secure communication paths and with Vodafone IoT all the security is in the core network. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the platform. ”

**Paul Miller
Managing Director
National Monitoring**

"We began to research out-of-home options," says Miller. "The most useful revolved around existing lone worker devices but we needed assurance they would meet our standards. We could develop our own but wanted to see what was available in the market. Our emphasis was on performance, not cost."

Graham Robinson, a Chartered Management Accountant and Finance Director at National Monitoring, was primed with sourcing a solution.

"Our global evaluation lasted six months and Lithuanian company Teltonika came out on top," says Robinson. "We needed a committed partner we could trust and work with to develop the device whilst maintaining competitive advantage and we achieved this by signing long-term exclusivity agreements. In addition to our work with law enforcement agencies the solution has proved a huge hit with lone workers."

Miller comments: "We were delighted with the outcome of the device evaluation but we needed the final piece of the jigsaw – the ability to manage mobile connectivity. We had to ensure that the devices provided the best coverage available and couldn't be hacked, tracked, corrupted or misused?"

"The IMC needs secure and reliable connectivity with the device and the mobile connectivity needs to be as robust as our infrastructure; any weak point leaves a vulnerability which is not acceptable in our sector."

Network coverage is crucial. Health & Safety legislation requires UK employers to prove they have done their utmost to protect lone workers and vulnerable people. Miller continues: "If an incident occurs, employers must demonstrate they have done everything in their power to prevent problems. They are conscious of their legal obligations to reduce risk."

Devices with multi-network connectivity reduce network coverage issues. If the mobile signal from the home provider is lost the connection instantly switches to another available network. Cost assurance is important and employers cannot run the risk of the device and SIM being stolen and misused.

National Monitoring's requirement was for a multi-network SIM with unbreakable security providing cost assurance and a simple but comprehensive management platform.

“ When one organisation makes a purchase there tends to be a ripple effect. Organisations are inherently risk-averse so using a less comprehensive solution is hard to justify. The Vodafone roaming functionality gives us a huge advantage. Vodafone has been fantastic for us. ”

Graham Robinson, Finance Director, National Monitoring

The solution

Multi-network connectivity and a comprehensive management platform

The Vodafone Managed IoT Connectivity Platform delivers against every requirement. It ensures multi-network connectivity, robust security and a world class management platform complemented by Vodafone's dedicated account management and support staff.

“The SIMs can't be misused meaning we can offer our clients cost assurance, which is proving a huge plus,” says Miller. “The security element is crucial. The alarm user can summon assistance by pressing a panic button or if the device detects a trip or fall our IMC is sent an alarm message with a GPS location. IMC support staff can listen in before deciding the next step.

“We need connectivity that uses secure communication paths and with Vodafone IoT all the security is in the core network. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the platform.”

The same qualities that make this technology applicable to high risk individuals also appeal to organisations with lone workers. “We'd already developed a secure system for customers to manage alarms and we are familiar with the public sector. Following our £3m infrastructure investment we had the major component parts in place and with a few tweaks we had the perfect solution,” says Robinson. “We made a strategic decision to focus on Housing Associations and Local Authorities. Once fully established we will move into the National Health Service (NHS) and commercial sectors.”

The service is accredited to British Standard BS8484 meaning the IMC can quickly escalate calls to the emergency services.

The multi-network feature makes a compelling case, as Robinson explains: “It costs a little more than a standard SIM but many organisations are happy to pay as the alternative is too risky. They need to prove they are doing enough to protect their staff. They like being able to switch between single and multi-network which I don't believe can be done on any other platform.”

Following an OJEU compliant tendering process in 2014, Alertcom was made a first ranked supplier on the multi-million Procurement for Housing (PfH) Lone Worker Framework. PfH has a growing base of 900 public sector members who can procure services without going through costly procurement exercises.

“First ranked status is fantastic as it means members can quickly implement Alertcom without spending time on direct tenders or mini-competitions,” says George Pouncey, Category Buyer at PfH. “Speed can be important. Our members have implemented Alertcom within weeks of enquiry and devices have been used to summon emergency responses within days of implementation.”

Miller concludes: “When one organisation makes a purchase there tends to be a ripple effect. Organisations are inherently risk-averse so using a less comprehensive solution is hard to justify. The Vodafone Managed IoT Connectivity Platform gives us a huge advantage and was integrated with ease. Vodafone has been fantastic for us.”

The bottom line

- Establishes nationwide coverage with full roaming
- Meets risk compliance guidelines for customers
- Delivers an out-of-the box solution for organisations, with Vodafone IoT SIMs pre-installed and easily activated from a single platform
- Ensures robust security, preventing SIMs from being hacked or misused
- Provides brand reassurance from an established IoT expert
- Can be upgraded retrospectively
- Comes with world class support

About National Monitoring

- UK security specialist, founded in 1976
- Provides specialist monitoring and security solutions to public sector and blue chip clients
- Developed market leading solution for lone workers
- www.monitoring.co.uk

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