

999 Emergency SMS

Issue One, 2 March 2010

Dear colleagues

You may be aware that the trial of the emergency SMS (ESMS) service commenced on 14 September 2009. The trial has been extended until summer 2010 to ensure that there is sufficient demand to support an effective review.

ESMS is a national and essential service for members of our communities who are unable to use the 999 voice service. It will improve access to the 999 service and is initially aimed at the hearing impaired* and speech impaired - whose preferred channel of choice is SMS.

The emergency services have already received a number of requests from the hearing impaired and speech impaired communities in emergency situations.

Raising awareness of this service within our communities and getting it right when we are contacted is critical to improving their confidence in the Police Service.

What is ESMS?

The ESMS service is currently being trialled and will allow people who are unable to use the 999 voice service to send a SMS text message to the UK 999 number.



This message will then be passed to the relevant emergency service i.e. police, ambulance, fire rescue or coastguard.

How does the service work?

Users of the service will be required to pre-register. The registration process will explain how the service works and its limitations.

Simply by sending a SMS message to the 999 number (registered), users can call for help and the emergency services will respond.

Managing Non-emergency and Secondary Contact

In order to provide comprehensive access to police services, consideration should be given to the diverse make up of the communities served.

It is becoming increasingly important for forces to have established processes to support non-emergency and secondary SMS contact. Enhancing access to our service is crucial to improving the trust and confidence of our communities.

This need is supported by the inclusion of critical success factors within the National Contact Management Principles and Guidance document that was launched on 2 March 2010.

How can we raise awareness amongst our staff?

Early feedback suggests that frontline contact management staff are unaware of this essential service.

The NPIA has produced a leaflet to raise awareness of ESMS with contact management staff. This leaflet will also benefit front counter staff, neighbourhood and response officers, PCSOs and volunteers.

[Click here to download a copy](#)

How can we promote this within our communities?

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) is leading on communication within the hearing impaired and speech impaired communities and has produced a leaflet to support awareness of ESMS.

This leaflet can be used to promote awareness within your communities.

[Click here to download a copy](#)

Where can I find out more?

Further information on the ESMS service, including how to register and how to send a text to the 999 service is available via the following website:

www.emergencysms.org.uk

Further information on the Text Relay service is available via the following website:

www.textrelay.org

* The term 'hearing impaired' is used to represent deaf, deafblind, deafened and hard of hearing people.



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