

NSI Bulletin - Issue 6:

Topic: Alarm handling in the UK is undergoing a transformation with the rollout of ECHO, the industry backed not-for-profit automated alarm transfer service.

What is ECHO?

Launched last year following extensive development, ECHO's ground-breaking service enables alarm activation signals to be automatically transferred from registered Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) to ECHO-connected police control rooms using secure networks, transforming the speed with which the police respond to confirmed alarm signals.

Replacing the legacy manual voice calling procedures currently in operation, ECHO's signal automation from ARCs to police control rooms means confirmation of receipt and police ability to despatch responders is handled digitally within seconds.

According to Police sources, it is estimated transmission of automated alarm signals via ECHO will generate an impressive average saving of up to four minutes in deploying responders to confirmed alarms. This time saving in arriving at alarmed premises is potentially crucial in improving incident clear-up rates, potentially saving lives, and helping to deter crime.

ECHO-connected Police Forces can also reduce their risk of human error, such as mishearing an address or incident type, and ensure information is transmitted digitally, thereby releasing call handlers for more valuable tasks.

How many police forces are currently ECHO-connected?

Currently, ECHO is automating Police alarm response to homeowners, businesses and government properties across the Metropolitan, Essex, Avon & Somerset and Northumbria police regions.

To date, over 200,000 Intruder and Hold Up alarm systems with a URN (Unique Reference Number) qualifying them for police response, are now connected to ECHO and virtually all UK ARCs monitoring police response Intruder and Hold-Up alarms are ECHO-connected.

All ECHO-Connected ARCs are required to complete an ECHO on-boarding process including thorough systems testing and staff training, completion of connection validation, and Cyber Essentials certification.

Future potential

ECHO is ready to link all 45 Police Forces nationwide to approved ARCs collectively monitoring 24/7 over 1.5 million Intruder and Hold-Up alarm systems, and the future potential for other blue light services, including fire and rescue services, is significant.

With recent developments in detector activated CCTV alarm standards, it is expected interest in police response alarms will only grow. In addition Lone Worker monitoring and 'what3words' are likely to be explored to further assist response to emergency situations.

What should you look for?

Only certificated intruder and hold up alarm systems provided by approved installers can deliver ECHO-connected services. For more information and developments on ECHO visit: www.echo.uk.net or follow them on LinkedIn by searching [ECHO \(Electronic Call Handling Operations Ltd\)](#)

NSI News

This section, requested by Insurers, provides relevant curated NSI news, updates and editorials staff may not ordinarily see but which may be of interest.

The move to digital networks and the impact on alarm systems (highlighted in NSI bulletin 5) continues to be a hot topic, with communications providers also highlighting this industry issue. More information regarding the migration of Public Switched Telephone Networks to the Digital 'All IP' Network can be found here or via Openreach at:

<https://www.openreach.com/upgrading-the-UK-to-digital-phone-lines/industry>

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office recently issued new and updated Publicly Accessible Locations Guidance on their Protect UK resource. Details on the specific advice and guidance can be found here:

https://www.protectuk.police.uk/advice-and-guidance/risk/publicly-accessible-locations-guidance?mtm_campaign=PALsC

"Fire Safety – are you meeting your obligations?" in City Security Magazine

<https://www.nsi.org.uk/fire-safety-are-you-meeting-your-obligations/>

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