



Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Using UPRNs to inform regional and national incident management

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Nicola Smith
Information Manager
CFRS

Background

Delivering prevention, protection, and response services

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) delivers life-saving services to more than 900,000 residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. For efficient delivery of service, it is streamlined into three distinct divisions: prevention, protection, and response. Prevention encompasses community safety work prioritising those most at risk of a fire in the home. Protection covers fire-safety in non-domestic premises, with CFRS offering advice and ensuring premises abide by the legislation while doing all they can to limit the risk of fire. Response includes not just deploying crews to fires, but also floods, road traffic collisions and even stranded animals.

Challenge

Gaining maximum insight into a location

When CFRS began using Idox's hosted Bluelight Gazetteer Management System (GMS) to utilise AddressBase Premium (ABP), they immediately benefitted from up-to-date, accurate, and consistent location data. In 2022, they adopted the hosted and fully managed service, which ensures all data updates and application patches and upgrades are implemented seamlessly with no input required from their IT team.

Having accurate, up-to-date address data at the heart of CFRS provides the foundation for maximising efficient service delivery – but data can do so much more than that. For the Service it would be a huge advantage to enrich the address data with the location intelligence and risk data that sits in disparate datasets around the organisation.

Why might this be beneficial?

Take, for example, a fire protection officer visiting a commercial premises that accommodates dangerous chemicals, therefore putting it at a higher fire risk. To provide the best advice, the team would need to understand the distance from the nearest fire hydrants, the nature of the surrounding businesses, and if they too were higher risk. They would also need to establish whether the premises was close to any vulnerable residents. By pulling all this information together, the Service can provide a fully comprehensive fire safety plan, thereby minimising risk to the public and staff.



Solution

Utilising the Unique Property Reference Numbers as the golden thread

The Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN) are the unique identifiers allocated to every address in the AddressBase Premium dataset that resides in Idox's Bluelight GMS. Using addresses that are validated by the UPRN ensures a single truth. This means disparate datasets can be matched to the data in the GMS to cleanse it and allocate the UPRNs. With UPRNs now sitting at the heart of every address in every dataset, data relating to a specific location can be pulled together, using the UPRN as the anchor.

Outcomes

How UPRNs inform prevention, protection, and response

To help CFRS connect its data in this way, Idox created numerous bespoke views. This has allowed them to interrogate data from other systems using the UPRNs to link the data together. One example is a tailored view created for the core system of records for prevention and protection activity, CFRMIS. From a prevention perspective, this could review activity carried out by community safety officers visiting properties to fit smoke alarms or conduct Safe and Well visits. For protection purposes, it might highlight compliance visits to commercial premises.

The reports generated by some of these views enable the Service to carry out trend analysis, which helps clarify what types of incidents are emerging, whether a certain kind of incident is increasing in frequency, or whether it's seasonal occurrence. In addition, the Service uses positional information from the ABP record (i.e. the eastings and northings) to enable geographical analysis in terms of spatial position or assessing response times to specific locations.

These types of reports also help the Service to take a proactive, preventative stance in terms of assessing risk. For example, it could be used to identify whether a particular type of commercial property or manufacturing type is being developed in the region that could be considered a higher risk. This can then be correlated with ABP data to identify any additional information around the site area that may be relevant and could potentially compound the risk.

Ensuring all child properties have a parent

CFRS has recently invested quite heavily in ensuring every

child property has a parent. Taking a block of flats as an example, the principal flats are the children of the parent shell of the building. Under the Fire Safety Order, the Service needs to inspect access to the building in addition to communal areas such as hallways, lifts, and so on. This information relates to the parent shell, including the number of children within that shell. If the parent information is missing, the residents of the child properties are at increased risk.

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Understanding these parent child relationships is critical at the point of the emergency call in the control room. It is crucial to be able to view data from other third-party datasets that link to the specific UPRNs for both the building shell and the flat itself. Such data may include whether the property's residents are vulnerable, if they have additional needs such as oxygen cylinder requirements, or face mobility issues. By understanding where the child sits in relation to the other properties inside the shell, and where the closest access points are, CFRS can evacuate in the safest way for both residents and staff.

“Up-to-date, accurate address data in the British Standard is the starting point from which we can deliver an effective service. Using the UPRNs to link the wealth of location-based information we have around the organisation helps to inform the best use of our resources.” Says Nicola Smith, Information Manager at Cambridgeshire FRS. “An example of this would be how we use ABP alongside our hydrant information. This helps us structure our reinspection programme so those hydrants that are within a specified distance of the higher risk premises may get a different reinspection regime to those in proximity to less risky premises”.



[How the UPRNs are informing central government](#)

The UPRNs are not just informing internal services – they're also crucial for central government.

Fire and rescue services are required to provide the Home Office with incident data so it can identify both current and developing trends within incident management nationally. To ensure the Home Office is receiving data in the British Standard, CFRS matches the location data that is imported into the Incident Recording System (IRS) with the gazetteer data, ensuring all records are correct and allocated to their corresponding UPRNs. This is then exported to the Home Office, where it is combined with other regional datasets for national analysis.

CFRS is fully utilising the UPRNs to both inform their service and the Home Office.

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