

Primetech MultiNet systems provide crucial communications support during York city flooding

When major flooding hit the North of England over the 2015/16 Christmas and New Year period it disrupted local communications in complex ways, creating a series of knock-on effects that threatened to make what was already a terrible situation even worse



During the recent flooding in York city Primetech's resilient MultiNet mobile satellite broadband systems allowed responder staff to access the internet securely after 3G services became overloaded and to manage National Resilience Enhanced Logistic Support assets held at a Strategic Holding Area (SHA) outside the city

A complex and hugely disruptive communications situation arose, resulting in loss of landline internet access and restricted voice and data communications, all of which placed immense pressure on local 3G and 4G networks. This in turn threatened to overload the capacity of these local networks, disrupting the communications of responders attempting to use these same systems to manage their response to the flooding; in particular, staff attempting to deploy web-based systems critical to the management of all deployed assets.

Fortunately resilience, in the form of both Ka-band and Ku-band mobile satellite broadband, supplied by Primetech, was available, which allowed responder staff to access the internet securely and to use their web-based logging system to manage assets from a number of National Resilience Enhanced Logistic Support units, congregated in a

Strategic Holding Area (SHA) at Strensall Barracks.

Simon Land, Senior Design Engineer for Primetech, travelled to the area during the floods to provide technical backup, taking with him additional mobile satellite broadband capacity in the form of the Primetech Resilient Communications Trailer and the MultiNet Communications system. While there he was able to observe what was happening on the ground.

He told *FIRE*: "As a result of the flooding a lot of the landline-based broadband in York failed. People then reverted to using their mobile broadband, which created pressures on the mobile network. Although there was 3G, there was not much point in using it as most of the public were using these networks. The responders' Ka and Ku-band mobile satellite broadband systems therefore allowed the ELS teams to use their asset management systems to their full capability.

"The other observation I would make is that, given the disruption to transport and communications in York city itself, the potential value, portability and flexibility of the Primetech MultiNet communications system can be seen. An ICU, for example, may not be able to be deployed into a flooded area, but the MultiNet Communications system, with a range of over 1000m, can be easily deployed, on a boat if necessary, thereby delivering critical communications capacity to emergency teams operating within flooded areas. The Primetech Resilient Communications Trailer can also deliver highly flexible communications capacity."

Henry Walker, director of Primetech, added: 'We were delighted to be able to help our clients in whatever ways we could during their recent involvement with the very testing Christmas/New Year flooding in York. It showed yet again the huge value that can be delivered by mobile satellite

broadband communications during such events, events that regularly test local communications to the limit.

"These events have also demonstrated the potential the MultiNet system has for delivering integrated, interoperable communications, no matter how bad local conditions may be. Packed in ruggedised, easily transportable Nanuk cases, it is just the sort of portable, battery-powered, network and responder-agnostic system that will benefit any responder agency in any situation. The flooding in York reinforced the need for, and the benefits of, this highly flexible, multiple-network system.'

Primetech is demonstrating the MultiNet Communications system and Resilient Communications Trailer throughout 2016. Go to the Primetech website for further information or to register for a demonstration near you.

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