**Control Room Awards celebrate unsung heroes who serve the public hour after hour**

**Press release**

**March 8, 2019**

Hidden heroes of the control room community have been honoured for their amazing work saving lives, safeguarding the public and supporting good causes.

The APD Control Room Awards 2019 have shone a welcome spotlight on the behind-the-scenes stars who epitomise the very best of public service.

The APD Control Room Awards winners were announced during an emotional evening at the De Vere Orchard Hotel in Nottingham last night (7 March).

The inspirational winners exemplify the extraordinary professionalism, resilience and selflessness of control room staff and teams. They include:

* Gemma Honey, of Lincolnshire Police, who showed remarkable calmness and presence of mind in handling two harrowing, linked 999 calls, in the first of which she heard a woman being ferociously beaten and stabbed to death in front of her three-year-old daughter.
* Avon and Somerset Police Call Handler Megan Brunt, who put herself in harm’s way to help save the life of a teenage girl at risk of suicide and prevent a drink driver from endangering motorway users.
* Mandy Cassidy, from the London Ambulance Service, whose teenage son was killed in a knife attack and who now plays a key role in the service’s anti-knife crime work in schools.
* Kate Dewey, from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, who has organised a Christmas Day lunch for homeless and lonely people for almost 10 years.

The APD Control Room Awards are the only accolades to celebrate the life-saving and life-changing work of individuals and teams whose contribution is absolutely critical to the work of emergency control rooms.

Staged for the second year, the 2019 awards attracted almost 400 nominations from more than 60 organisations committed to serving the public and safeguarding society.

The awards are run by **APD Communications**, which develops critical, life-saving software used by the police and other emergency services organisations across the UK, as well as transport and aviation operations nationally and internationally.

APD Managing Director Mike Isherwood said: “We launched these awards because we felt very strongly that the remarkable work of control room staff needed to be more widely recognised and publicly appreciated.

“We’re delighted the control room community has embraced the opportunity and so many unsung heroes are being put forward.

“There is such a powerful cultural thread running through the winners and nominees, both individuals and teams. They are all utterly selfless and absolutely dedicated to public service.

“They provide a snapshot of the thousands of people working in emergency control rooms and who serve and protect the public, hour after hour, day after day.”

**The full list of APD Control Room Awards 2019 winners is:**

**Community Champion Award, sponsored by Northgate Public Services**

**Winner: Kate Dewey, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Shortlisted: Romel Davis, Nottinghamshire Police, and Jonathan Tones, North East Ambulance Service

The judges said:

“Kate is the backbone of a project that she works on all year round and culminates in a very special Christmas Day lunch for homeless and lonely people. Kate is utterly selfless and dedicates herself to people in the most difficult of circumstances. On duty or off duty, she is always on public service.”

**Award for Services to the Public, sponsored by telent**

**Winner: Amanda (Mandy) Cassidy, London Ambulance Service**

Shortlisted: Julie Roberts, Dyfed Powys Police

The judges said:

“We found this nomination deeply moving and humbling. Mandy has turned a terrible personal tragedy into remarkable public service.

“There could not be a more powerful message to young people about the perils of knife crime than the story Mandy tells, as a mother and as a London Ambulance Service ambassador. Mandy embodies the public service spirit of emergency services control rooms.”

**Control Room Dispatcher of the Year, sponsored by Plantronics**

**Winner: Bronwyn Langdon, Kent Police**

Shortlisted: Sue Dyer, Thames Valley Police, and Carmel Sharkey, National Ambulance Service of Ireland

The judges said:

“Bronwyn’s performance was exceptional, despite operating outside her usual role. While supporting a firearms operation, she identified a new address to locate a dangerous suspect, thereby ensuring a successful arrest and protecting a vulnerable victim, her young daughter and the community generally.”

**Young Achiever of the Year, sponsored by Sopra Steria**

**Winner: Liam Masurier, Welsh Ambulance Service**

Shortlisted: James Dye, South Yorkshire Police, and Codie Williams, Welsh Ambulance Service

The judges said:

“Liam’s passion for his role really shines through and he is a thoroughly worthy winner.

“We were impressed with all Liam has achieved in such a short time and by how he used his skills to ensure a caller, who didn’t realise he was having a heart attack, received urgent medical intervention. That man believes Liam saved his life – a great example of the amazing work of control room staff.”

**Team of the Year, sponsored by Red Box**

**Winner: B Relief, Durham Constabulary**

Shortlisted: Red Watch, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

The judges said:

“B Relief demonstrated exceptional team spirit in very difficult circumstances, technically and operationally. They provided vital support to a neighbouring force and its communities while maintaining delivery of services to the Durham Constabulary and local people. This was typical of the team’s consistently high levels of performance.”

**Special Recognition Award for Bravery and Courage, sponsored by Hexagon Safety & Infrastructure**

**Winner: Megan Brunt, Avon and Somerset Police**

Shortlisted: Eddie McEvoy, West Yorkshire Police; Jason Stevens, Thames Valley Police; and Gemma Warren, Merseyside Police

The judges said:

“Megan carries the skills she has learned in the control room into her everyday life. In two separate incidents away from work she potentially put herself in harm’s way to save a life and prevent risk to life.

“Megan’s actions showed considerable courage and remarkable initiative. She is a credit to her force and community.”

**Control Room Call Taker of the Year, sponsored by Emergency Services Show and Emergency Services Times**

**Winner: Gemma Honey, Lincolnshire Police**

Shortlisted: Kirsty Findlay, Police Scotland, and Sarah Fisher, South Western Ambulance Service

The judges said:

“Gemma showed amazing calmness and resilience in her handling of the most harrowing of calls as she listened to a brutal murder taking place. She also demonstrated resourcefulness and presence of mind in establishing the location of the crime and requesting a playback of the call, which proved vital in securing prosecution of the killer.

“Despite the distressing experience, Gemma remained professional and alert in taking the next call, obtaining crucial information to protect a young child who witnessed the attack and enable the arrest of the suspect.”

**Leader of the Year, sponsored by Affini**

**Winner: Samantha Grainger, Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Police**

Shortlisted: Becky Tipper, Avon and Somerset Police, and Rachel Walters, Northumbria Police

The judges said:

“Samantha provided excellent leadership during a period of considerable change. The innovations she led have delivered improved operational outputs and have been adopted by other control room operations. She has also led a series of initiatives to promote employee wellbeing.”

**Lifetime Achievement Award, sponsored by BAPCO Show 2019**

**Winner: Mark Rodaway OBE, Maritime & Coastguard Agency**

Shortlisted:Mick Millen, Kent Police, and Midge Nolan, Metropolitan Police

The judges said:

“Mark ticks every box for the Lifetime Achievement Award – longevity of service, leadership and national influence. Over his full career he has been responsible for the development of the coastguard service, technically, operationally and in terms of personnel.”

**John Gilhooly Unsung Hero Award** (dedicated posthumously to John Gilhooly who served in the Scottish Ambulance Service control room for almost 30 years)

**Winner: Bernie Miggin, National Ambulance Service of Ireland**

The judges said:

“Bernie personifies the unsung heroes of the control room. Nominated in several categories, her personality shines through in the heartfelt tributes paid by her colleagues. Bernie is clearly the glue that holds the control room operation together.”

**Control Room Ambassador of the Year**

**Winner: Tom Donohoe, West Yorkshire Police**

The judges said:

“We’ve decided to recognise Tom for all that he does for the control room community. As well as leading one of the top performing control rooms in the country, his contribution to the sector is truly outstanding and he is a passionate champion of control room teams.”

Leading tech company **telent Technology Services** is the Platinum Partner of the awards and also sponsored the Award for Services to the Public.

Barry Zielinski, telent’s General Manager, Public Safety & Defence, said: “After only two years the Control Room Awards are already well established as part of control room culture and are bringing to light wonderful and inspiring examples of the very best in public service.

“We’re proud to play our part in providing this platform to celebrate people and teams who perform their duties with extraordinary professionalism, dedication and skill.”

Other leading organisations in the control rooms sector who support the awards are:

* **Affini,** a leading systems integrator specialising in wireless communications.
* **British APCO (BAPCO)**, the leading UK-based association for everybody who uses public safety communications and IT.
* **BAPCO Show 2019**, the annual conference and exhibition that is a crucial event for everyone involved in critical communications and public safety solutions.
* **Emergency Services Show and Emergency Services Times**, published by Broden Media, a publisher and event organiser focused primarily on the emergency services sector.
* **Hexagon Safety & Infrastructure**,a global leader in computer-aided dispatch software.
* **International Critical Control Rooms Alliance (ICCRA)**, which brings together critical control room professionals worldwide and co-ordinates discussion on key sector issues.
* **Northgate Public Services**, the market leader for policing IT solutions in the UK.
* **Plantronics,** which provides integrated solutions including headsets used by control room staff worldwide.
* **Red Box**, a leading provider of communication recording solutions to store, retrieve, transcribe and analyse voice, instant messaging, video and data.
* **Sopra Steria**, a European leader in delivering successful transformation programmes to top private and public sector organisations.
* **West Pier** (Bronze sponsor), the award-winning provider of communications and networking products.

The APD Control Room Awards 2019 judges were:

* Mike Isherwood, Managing Director, APD Communications.
* Chris Dreyfus-Gibson, Vice Chairman, ICCRA.
* Sue Noyes, former Chief Executive of East Midlands Ambulance Service and Chair of The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC).
* Cheryl Rolph OBE, former Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Director of Women in the Fire Service.
* Ian Thompson, Chief Executive of British APCO.
* Barry Zielinski, General Manager, Public Safety & Defence, telent.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors**

**APD Communications**

* APD Communications creates secure, intelligent and connected control room and fleet technologies that help organisations protect and preserve society.
* Founded by two academics from the University of Hull in 1984 and still based in the city, APD has developed cutting-edge digital technology for more than 30 years and is an acknowledged market leader in software development.
* APD made its name in the 1980s by designing and delivering the world’s first real-time bus tracking system, which then became the industry benchmark. Later, APD engineered the Eurotunnel communications network, facilitating connectivity between the British and French borders and inside the tunnel itself.
* Today 69% of UK police forces employs APD’s technology, while APD also services the national transport and aviation sectors. The London Underground runs safely and on time with assistance from APD technology, which tracks train locations and supports control room collaboration across the 250-mile network.
* Internationally, APD has an ever-growing presence, powering mission-critical control rooms in Sweden, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates. At Dubai Airport – the world’s busiest international passenger airport with 77m passengers annually – APD’s integrated control room solution keeps the entire operation safe, secure and running efficiently.
* APD runs the APD Control Room Awards, the only awards that recognise and celebrate the life-saving and life-changing work of staff working in control rooms operated by the emergency services and other critical control operations. Launched in 2018, the awards are supported by a host of leading organisations operating in the emergency services and critical control sectors and attract hundreds of entries highlighting the extraordinary contribution to the public and society of control room staff and teams.
* APD also stages International Control Room Week which celebrates the unseen work of control room operators worldwide. Launched in 2018, the campaign was supported by almost 200 control room operations and more than 10,000 personnel from police, ambulance, fire and coastguard services across the UK, as well as control rooms from as far afield as USA, Australia and India.