**Control Room Awards launched to celebrate unsung heroes of the emergency services**

**Press release**

**November 15, 2017**

A company specialising in mission critical solutions for the emergency services today launched the first awards to recognise and celebrate unsung heroes working behind the scenes in control rooms across the UK.

APD Communications develops critical, life-saving software used by the police and other emergency services organisations across the country, as well as transport and aviation operators nationally and internationally.

The company’s market-leading software protects the public and emergency services personnel and ensures the efficient, continuous operation of services vital to public safety and security.

APD has launched the Control Room Awards 2018 to recognise the life-saving and life-changing work of control room staff working for the emergency services and within a wide range of public and private sector organisations.

The awards are the first to recognise the achievements of control room staff in their day-to-day duties, often dealing with harrowing and distressing situations.

APD Managing Director Mike Isherwood said: “These awards are about publicly acknowledging the amazing people who work in emergency and critical control rooms everywhere. They play a vital role in keeping members of the public safe and their work often saves lives.

“We see first-hand the extraordinary work of individuals and teams in emergency services control rooms and in critical operations across the public and private sectors and we felt we should do something to recognise their vital contribution.

“The awards will thank them for the outstanding and unseen work they do, day in, day out.”

The APD Control Room Awards 2018 feature nine categories:

* The Award for Services to the Public
* The Lifetime Achievement Award
* Control Room Dispatcher of the Year
* Control Room Call Taker of the Year
* The Community Champion Award
* Young Achiever of the Year
* Leader of the Year
* Special Recognition Award for Bravery and Courage
* Team of the Year

West Yorkshire Police is among the emergency services organisations backing the awards.

Tom Donohoe, Customer Contact Centre Head for West Yorkshire Police, said: “People remember the officers on the scene at a major incident – they don’t always recognise that, more than likely, the response began with the skilled handling of a call into a police control room.

“In such incidents it’s down to a call handler to stay calm, take down the details, assess the risks and look after the officers going out to the incident, by making sure they know what they are going into. All of that can sometimes go unnoticed.

“I’m a really big supporter of these new awards – they are long overdue. Our control room staff and their counterparts around the country do great work, every single day, and that deserves to be recognised.”

West Yorkshire Police Call Handler Deborah Griffiths illustrates the crucial role of control room staff in responding to the most serious incidents.

Deborah took the first call from an eye witness alerting police to the fatal attack on MP Jo Cox in Birstall, West Yorkshire, in June 2016, and played a vital role in apprehending and securing the conviction of the killer, Thomas Mair.

She said: “I’m really pleased these awards are being held as the public don’t really understand what we do on a daily basis.

“Some of the calls we receive are about minor matters, but many of them are extremely harrowing. We deal with them because that’s our job – we’re here to look after the public and our colleagues, the officers.

“Control room staff don’t look for recognition, but it’s a good thing they will be acknowledged by these awards. People don’t appreciate the amount of skill, empathy and caring goes into handling the calls we take.”

The Control Room Awards ceremony will take place on Thursday, March 8, 2018, at the luxury De Vere Orchard Hotel in Nottingham. Finalists and a select group of guests will enjoy an evening of celebration, reward and recognition.

Guests will be treated to a three-course dinner, followed by live entertainment. The cost of shortlisted nominees’ tickets will be covered, making it possible for all finalists to attend.

Nominations for the Control Room Awards are open until January 18, 2018, with the awards shortlists scheduled to be revealed on February 1, 2018.

To nominate an individual or team for the APD Control Room Awards, visit <https://www.controlroomawards.com/nominate/>

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the awards, visit <https://www.controlroomawards.com/sponsors/> for more information.

Follow the Control Room Awards on Facebook: @controlroomawards and Twitter: [@CR\_Awards](https://twitter.com/CR_Awards)

**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, one in two 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.
* The company’s partners are an integral part of the service and technology APD delivers. APD’s technology partners include mobile communications pioneer Motorola; global digital solutions provider Avaya; network services provider telent; and digital transformation leader sopra steria.
* APD is at the forefront of preparations for the UK’s new digital Emergency Services Network (ESN), due to go live in 2018. APD is working with police, fire and ambulance services around the UK to upgrade to world-leading technology, enabling a business-as-usual transition.
* APD provides its customers with a dedicated support team, available 24/7, 365 days a year. Every APD employee has official security clearance, ensuring customers can have full confidence that their sensitive data is in safe hands.
* The company is showing strong growth, with turnover in 2017 reaching £9m, up 32% on the previous year, powered by APD’s market-leading products, including Cortex, Aspire and Artemis.
* Cortex is APD’s Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) used in more than 70 control rooms around the world. Cortex brings radio, telephony, CCTV and more together on one screen, helping organisations to connect, collaborate and communicate rapidly and effectively when it matters most. A trailblazer in this field, APD has developed and launched the world’s first hosted ICSS, at Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden, supporting the efficient running of the entire hospital operation all day, every day.
* Aspire is APD’s contact management solution, designed to help emergency services organisations to identify and protect vulnerable people. A software solution that can be integrated easily with existing command and control applications, Aspire provides APD’s customers with full contact history to make informed decisions and save lives.
* Artemis is APD’s solution for fleet management and the remote transfer of data and information from vehicles to control rooms and fleet managers. The only technology of its kind built specifically for the emergency services, Artemis helps customers to improve use of resources and driver behaviour and ensure vehicles get to where they need to be promptly and efficiently.
* These technologies work independently and inter-dependently to support organisations across the public and private sectors. APD is attuned to meeting the needs of organisations with critical operations that rely on instant and highly-resilient communications.