Driving for Better Business case study

Business Champion

Kent Fire and Rescue Service - November 2019

Kent Fire & Rescue Service

201911-046A

Background

As a modern fire and rescue service, we are constantly exploring methods to provide value for money and quality public service, linking into our fleet strategy:

- Newer
- Fewer
- Greener
- Smarter

Technology helps KFRS to improve standards, supporting organisational change and development.

Sean Bone-Knell, Director Operations said:

> *"By using technology to defend our liability, legal costs savings have been significant. In cases where we are to blame, we are able to find out what happened quicker. This means we can learn much faster as an organisation."*

Sean sees KFRS in a lead role in driver safety and accident reduction, in Kent and across the country:

> *"With such a large fleet, we want to be as efficient and strive to deliver the best service we can. By attending Driving for Better Business (DfBB) workshops, we heard how other organisations improved. We picked up insider tips from DfBB Champions who had been along the same path and made a big difference.*
>
> *"Dr Andy Kemp recently joined us as a road risk reduction coordinator. With his experience as a DfBB ambassador, we were able to take a 'big picture' view of our entire operation."*

Few vehicle fleets attract as much public attention as the fire and rescue service. Serving around 1.8 million people, KFRS covers:

- an area of 1,442 square miles
- 250 miles of motorway and major trunk roads
- the Channel Tunnel

Fire service drivers and their vehicles must drive and be driven with:

- safety
- expertise
- efficiency
- compliance

in mind.

Even the tiniest error is there for all to see, which can trigger a flood of criticism. This can undermine public trust and confidence in their emergency service.

The public is most familiar with fire engines, and Kent has 95, spread over 56 fire stations. We have responsibilities for firefighters as well as all business support staff. In total, we have over 1,400 people who drive in one form or another for the service.

The service has:

- 74 marked response cars for officers attending incidents
- 89 marked pool cars for duties including fire prevention, education, and customer safety

A team of mobile technicians keeps all the equipment ticking over.

With partners, we have developed our Road Safety Experience in Rochester.

Our 'blue light' response vehicles have:

- telematics systems
- CCTV
- added 360-degree cameras on fire engines

This has given us improved interpretation and assessment of events and behaviours.

Business benefits

Between November 2018 and January 2019, we used data from the new technology 42 times. This helped with allegations of poor driving or minor damage. Since the installation of the systems, we have a year-on-year insurance saving of £60K.

> *"Having vehicles on blue lights means we have had a couple of quite high profile incidents. Some of these incidents involved large claims and legal fees," said Sean.*

> *"The system has been invaluable in investigating accidents. This includes those involving our vehicles or captured while the vehicle is operational. Footage has assisted our fire investigation team and other emergency services."*

Firefighter safety was a key need for our system and has proved to be an important safety measure. Recorded footage is providing invaluable training and development opportunities based on actual events. To support the health and wellbeing of our staff with our approach to fleet management and road risk reduction, we're also looking at driving simulators in conjunction with BAE Systems for training and maintenance of skills.

Having an overview of our fleet has proven invaluable. In the first 12 months, we were able to review use of our fleet, removing some and not replacing others. All of the 'savings' have been reinvested in operational vehicles and equipment to improve our customer service. That's things like smoke hoods to rescue the public from smoke-filled buildings and battery-powered rescue tools across the whole appliance fleet rather than just on rescue appliances. This reduces the average intervention time at (mostly) rural RTCs by about seven minutes.

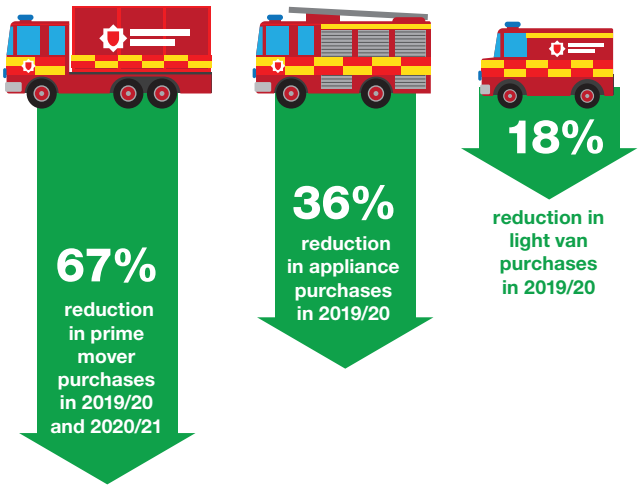
We are striving to:

- work smarter
- provide the highest standard of service to the people of Kent and Medway
- reduce our carbon footprint

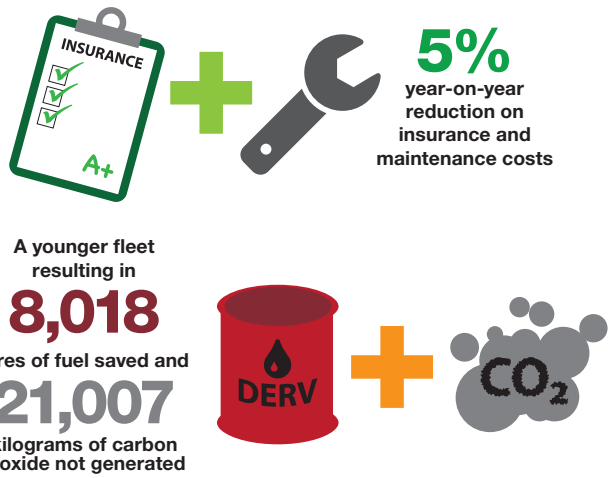
Additional information

As a result of reviewing our telematics data, it supported the following changes.

Capital cost savings



Revenue cost savings



We have also introduced 11 hybrid cars to help reduce carbon footprint and to help the evaluation of the introduction of larger hybrid and electric vehicles.