Patients will benefit as London’s Air Ambulance accelerates incident response times around the capital

Customer’s challenge
London’s Air Ambulance saves lives every day. Its team of highly-trained doctors and paramedics routinely perform medical procedures in the street that are normally only found in hospital emergency departments.

“We attract some of the best medical talent from around the world,” says Gareth Davies, medical director at London’s Air Ambulance. However, speed is of the essence. Most patients have a critical window of time in which to receive treatment, improving their chances when they might otherwise not have survived the journey to hospital.

Located at The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, the charity attends missions across the capital, using a helicopter by day and rapid response cars at night. Both platforms presented opportunities for improvement. In scrambling a helicopter, pilots would have to manually print incident details before taking off from the helipad. Similarly, rapid response vehicles speeding to the scene were often delayed by the loss of satnav signals around tall buildings.

A trial using applications run on 3G networks proved less than satisfactory. “Doctors would have to manually enter addresses into the satnav, so there was always the possibility of human error,” says Gareth. “Aside from connectivity problems, 3G simply wasn’t fast enough to refresh the mapping system. So the team often had to revert to paper-based maps. Travelling at high speed in a tense, time-critical situation, such factors are compounded.”

Our solution
Partnering with EE, London’s Air Ambulance is transforming road and airborne operations with two 4GEE-enabled initiatives currently in development.

The first is a bespoke mapping application to help improve vehicle navigation. The solution, which will be delivered over 4GEE, is a step change from reliance on manual and paper-based processes.

In future we hope to be able to send the route straight through from the control room to the tablet. And, unlike a map book, if you go wrong the application will correct you immediately.

Gareth Davies, Medical Director, London’s Air Ambulance

The second accelerates the time it takes to dispatch the helicopter, because medics don’t have to compile paperwork and can get airborne faster. They’ll be able to get directions, checklists and key situational data via tablets running over the 4GEE network.
Value delivered
A London’s Air Ambulance helicopter has an average flight time of seven minutes and can reach the furthest extremities of the M25 in around 15 minutes. The 4GEE applications have the potential to cut that significantly. “When the medical team arrives the patient may not have a pulse,” says Gareth. “In such a situation, where every second counts, improving take-off times by minutes makes a huge difference.”

The organisation’s mobile innovation doesn’t stop there. It plans to take advantage of superior 4GEE speed to aid collaboration. “We see a huge future opportunity here,” concludes Gareth. “The tablet’s in-built HD video camera means it will be possible to stream pin-sharp video live from the scene, which could be shared with receiving hospitals to help prepare for the patient’s arrival. It’s yet another example of how we are intending to further enhance our patient care.”

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Gareth Davies, Medical Director
London’s Air Ambulance

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