

Support our people by providing them with the appropriate technology, equipment and systems

Digital Strategy

Introduction

Our digital strategy focuses on using technology to improve business performance by providing tools and capabilities to assist staff to operate, innovate, communicate and make efficiencies within their workplace. Across the Service we want to harness the potential that new IT systems can bring to improve the efficiency of our services - enabling us to provide a better service to the community and in a more effective way. This strategy outlines the Services proposed approach to ensure that it continues to provide an effective ICT infrastructure to meet our needs and responsibilities.

We recognise that ICT underpins everything we do and is an important service to enabling our people to do their best. The development and investment in ICT is essential to enable the Service to operate safely and to enable all departments to maintain their high performance and deliver the Safety Plan.

Current Position

Across the Service various departments use a number of different applications and systems. These have often been developed in isolation and are frequently limited in their ability to expand and adapt to meet new or changing demands. Very often these systems are not connected or accessible and although often suitable for single department's, opportunities to remove duplication and share information are not being achieved. The applications and systems are currently managed through a hybrid environment where some of our technology services and infrastructure are on site (using Service buildings) and some are hosted in the cloud or remote servers. The technical architecture and platforms have been developed over many years and although fit for purpose at this time are not future proof due to a lack of resilience, interoperability and integration. The increasing need for cyber security, GDPR compliance and data protection places an additional demand on many of these applications which limits the future for their operational use.

Our aim

Our aim is to enable our staff to be and do their best. We want to provide the right tools and equipment, and have the right structures and processes to achieve this. Additionally the NFCC has set five strategic commitments that inform all of its work and its priorities. One of these is to:

“Encourage and assist fire and rescue services to maximise the added value of digital solutions, innovative use of information technology and effective sharing and utilisation of data in ways which will make the sector more effective and efficient at what we do.”

Our aim is to use software and hardware which provides users with the technology to deliver consistent services and capabilities to reduce complexity.

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We have adopted the following principles for our ICT provision:

Enable anytime, anyplace working

To help our staff work flexibly and to increase the opportunities for agile working we will use systems where connectivity is easy and not location dependent. Prioritising hosted, internet and cloud based systems will support this. Staff will be able to access and work on documents across multiple devices, hold meetings remotely, and share information quickly and easily.

Provide the right information to the right people at the right time

As well as enabling flexible working our systems will provide single versions of information, which is current, relevant and accessible. We will use hardware and software which allows our staff access to this information with both 'push' and 'pull' functionality.

Allow collaborative and connected working

We aim to have information stored in one place, but accessible from anywhere. This will reduce our storage profile, improve our data storage and retention policies, and join departments within the organisation. We will aim to use common, industry standard systems which ease partnership working.

Provide resilience and security

As our reliance on technology grows, so do the opportunities for those who would seek to compromise our systems and data. Responding to this threat and ensuring the safety and security of cyberspace is an essential requirement for the ICT strategy. Our digital world will be easily available for those who need it, but restricted where they do not. All of our infrastructure and products will comply with our Information Security Management System and be monitored through our SIRO and Information security manager.

Rationalise all the systems and applications

We will minimise the number of applications and systems we use – the two core products which we will build our delivery on are Microsoft 365 and FireWatch. This systems rationalisation and move to interoperable, scalable and complementary products will reduce duplication, automate connections, streamline workflows and reduce the effort and resources needed across all departments.

Implementation

We recognise the need to 'invest to save' and will prioritise enhancing our ICT in order to continually improve the services we deliver. Any developments or updates in our ICT will be based on the principles outline in the strategy and will be implemented and monitored through our internal governance framework.