

# SEPA Uses Hornbill's Supportworks to Support IT Helpdesk Team and Freedom of Information Enquiries.



SEPA, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency was established by the Environment Act of 1995, and is the official body responsible for the protection of the environment in Scotland. The organisation has the responsibility for local air, water and land pollution control, as set out by the Environment Act.

SEPA regulates under several pieces of legislation and has extensive duties. These range from maintaining a flood warning system and implementing the National Waste Plan to controlling discharges to watercourses and managing a pollution inspection regime for industrial sites. To manage the many external enquiries about certain duties, SEPA has set up direct access to information for customers, e.g. its 24 hour Floodline, and Pollution Report line.

Following the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and the updated Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIR), the organisation is required to manage related queries within a twenty working day limit. To help meet the Act's stringent requirements, SEPA has recently extended the use of Hornbill's Supportworks, the helpdesk service management solution, which has been successfully used for a number of years by SEPA's IT support team.

## Hornbill's Proven Solution

SEPA initially undertook a review of applications available on the market, selecting Hornbill not only because it was an existing supplier, but for its ability to deliver the solution within the tight deadline.

Hornbill's Supportworks had already been in use by the IT department to manage IT support requests within SEPA. Based in Stirling, the central helpdesk has a centralised phone number and email address and coordinates and logs all IT support calls using Supportworks. The IT department has twelve support engineers located across Scotland who all access the helpdesk system.

The IT team supports all PCs, laptops, handheld devices, servers, network and telephone systems used by over 1200 employees across SEPA's 22 offices. In addition, Supportworks is used by the Oracle development team to handle in-house development calls, as well by the geographic information systems (GIS) and web teams.

## Meeting Service Levels

Graeme Adams, IT Customer Services Team Leader at SEPA explained: "When we implemented the IT helpdesk solution it immediately had a positive impact. With better communication and call handling, the visibility and reputation of the IT team within SEPA improved significantly. We have been able to meet our service level targets consistently."

SEPA initially selected Hornbill's Supportworks for its ease of use and its web-based functionality, enabling support staff located at

## Business Benefits:

- Ability to record external enquiries, track their progress and respond to the customer within the set FOI Act timescales
- Improved communication and call handling enables IT support team to meet service level targets
- Workflow technologies provide audit trail of calls for both IT helpdesk and Customer Communication Centre
- Using Supportworks enables call handling to be centralised through Customer Communication Centre
- Web based functionality enables engineers working in different locations to access central helpdesk system

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Alison Mackinnon  
Information Manager and FOI  
Project Manager  
SEPA

different offices to access the system. Another key factor was the level of automation provided, saving support staff time searching for information and ensuring consistent logging and updating of calls.

The Supportworks call diaries enable staff to routinely document all calls, so that known issues can be highlighted and used in problem management and calls may be passed to second and third line support staff as appropriate.

### Coordinating Customer Queries

Following the success of the solution for the IT helpdesk, SEPA adopted Supportworks in order to improve the management of customer queries within its communication centre. This team, located in SEPA's Communication Centre (SCC), based in Perth, uses Supportworks on a daily basis to formally log and track external enquiries to the organisation.

It was the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act, which came fully into effect in January 2005 that initiated SEPA's further use of Supportworks. The organisation created a project team which was tasked with implementing a system to help the organisation meet FOI requirements.

### Information Overload

According to Alison Mackinnon, Information Manager and FOI Project Manager at SEPA; "The FOI legislation meant that as a public body SEPA could potentially find itself with a lot of additional work with no real business benefit."

The FOI team wanted to find a way to streamline processes so that they could manage incoming requests and meet the statutory deadlines imposed, without it becoming a burden on day to day operations.

"With Hornbill's proven success in other areas of the SEPA organisation, we were keen to work with them to develop a solution for our FOI needs. We knew that Supportworks was robust and suitable for our purposes," said Mackinnon.



### Meeting FOI Regulations

A pre-configured template built on the Supportworks platform was designed specifically to meet FOI legislation. The template is used to record enquiries, allocate them to the SEPA staff throughout the organisation to retrieve the information, tracking the request through to feedback to the customer. With workflow technologies built-in, Supportworks provides an audit trail of each request and provides tailored reports that monitor usage of the service.

Following the joining of forces of the FOI project team and the SCC, a combined external customer-facing system was launched. SEPA now runs two separate Hornbill systems, one for the internal helpdesk and one for the external information enquiries.

"Since implementing Supportworks the external call centre handles over 1000 calls per month, which we are able to record, track their progress and respond to the customer within the set timescales," said Mackinnon.

"Without an effective call handling and tracking system in place we would not have been able to provide such an efficient information service to customers," she added.

SEPA has been impressed with both the technology and the customer support provided by Hornbill throughout the implementation and development phases. The IT team at SEPA is currently working with Hornbill on an implementation of the Hornbill ITIL template to introduce ITIL best practices to its helpdesk. The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is a process-based approach to IT service management that focuses on the effective integration of People, Process and Technology to deliver optimised service quality.

"Hornbill's solution is a technically well designed platform on which to build a service desk, this coupled with their excellent account management and support is enabling us to improve our service levels even more by implementing ITIL best practice," concluded Adams.

# HORNBILL

Hornbill Systems Ltd.  
Ares  
Odyssey Business Park  
West End Road  
Ruislip  
HA4 6QD  
UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 8582 8282  
Fax: +44 (0)20 8582 8288

Hornbill Systems, Inc.  
245 Park Avenue  
39th Floor  
New York  
NY 10167  
USA

Tel: +1 212 803 8100  
Fax: +1 212 792 4001

Email: [info@hornbill.com](mailto:info@hornbill.com)  
Web: [www.hornbill.com](http://www.hornbill.com)



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