SafeZone

SafeZoneApp.com

"SafeZone is proving to be extremely popular with all our security patrols. They get detailed alerts directly to their phones, which means they are immediately much more involved in an incident before being deployed and arriving at the scene."

STEVE WOOLLCOTT
Head of Security,
University of Kent.

The University of Kent is a leading UK university producing world-class research, rated internationally as excellent and leading the way in many fields of study. Known as 'the UK's European university' it has an extensive study abroad programme involving over 170 universities, a high proportion of international students and staff, and is fully committed to keeping everyone safe and secure across all its activities and locations.

The University of Kent has expanded rapidly over the last 10 years or so. Its 20,000 students are based at campuses in Canterbury and Medway, and centres in Athens, Brussels, Paris, Rome and Tonbridge. Some of those facilities are shared, for example for student accommodation and at its four European study centres, where response teams are resourced by external security staff.

The University's security team regularly reviews its procedures and had identified three key priorities: firstly, to give every student and staff member easier access to support, regardless of location; to help improve incident responses; and finally, to implement a targeted mass communications system for use in emergencies.

SafeZone solution

Kent started rolling out SafeZone™ in May 2016, and is investing in an ongoing multimedia campaign to help drive awareness and usage amongst its community of 20,000 students and 3,500 staff.

SafeZone effectively gives every student and staff member a panic button in their pocket; putting them in direct contact with the Canterbury control room whenever they need help. The control room manages any incident by deploying its own first aiders or staff, or briefing the security team on one of its shared sites.

Most requests to date are for first aid or medical support. For example: a student recently suffering from an epileptic fit, alerted security via the app - which meant the first aiders knew exactly where he was located and could provide almost immediate and essential assistance.

Users are also encouraged to use SafeZone's lone worker feature to help maintain their own personal safety where appropriate. Users simply check in to register with the security team and are then prompted to log out after a pre-determined time interval or upon leaving the site (automatically logging out).

The University's postgraduate teaching centres in Brussels and Paris are covered by SafeZone too, and the system is available for anyone travelling internationally on a university-related activity. Current developments include implementing SafeZone's bus tracking feature for use with the University's shuttle buses on the 30 mile journey linking the Medway and Canterbury campuses.
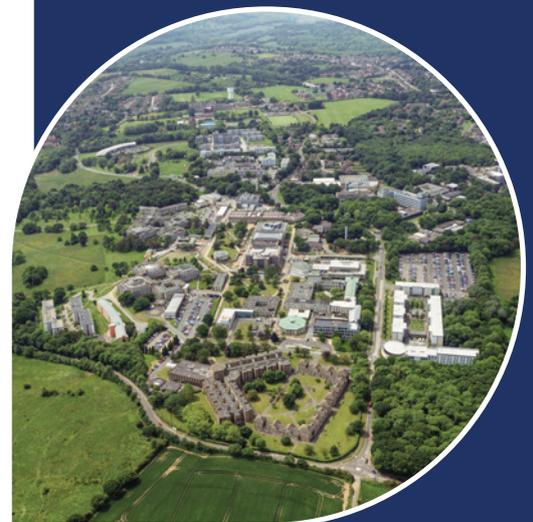
SafeZone has been particularly well received by the University's staff and students. Additionally, its security personnel see SafeZone as innovative technology working alongside their existing GPS radios and tracked vehicles, helping them do their jobs better. It also gives the team more opportunities to demonstrate its professionalism whilst contributing to the University community and the students' overall experience.

Thankfully, the University has not needed to use SafeZone in a major crisis. Although a recent lightning strike disabled the alarms in some buildings so they were able to use SafeZone to alert specific users, reminding them to be extra vigilant.

Benefits and outcomes

The University of Kent brought in SafeZone primarily to support its crisis management policy, but the app is consistently proving itself to be an essential tool for students and staff. System benefits include:

- Improving access to first aid/security services, especially for vulnerable students
- Enabling centralised control and response to all requests from all University locations
- Demonstrating to students and parents the University's real commitment to safety and security
- Providing detailed analysis to verify security teams are regularly patrolling known hot spots.

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CriticalArc is a leading technology innovator, designing and developing the distributed command and control solution, SafeZone, which is revolutionising the way organisations manage safety and security operations.