



DMS at the University of Sussex

Nestled into the rolling hills of the South Downs, surrounded by the boundaries of the National Park, the Falmer Campus of the University of Sussex cuts an impressive figure. With around 15,000 students a year, it is one of the top 20 universities in the UK.

Architect Sir Basil Spence drew inspiration from the surrounding countryside and many of the buildings have listed status. The campus has undergone much redevelopment over the last 20 years, including recent major refurbishment of the iconic Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts.

The University undertook a review of fire protection measures to support Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for people with disabilities, including methods of notifying the deaf or hearing impaired that a fire alarm has been activated. The existing pager system had been in use for a number of years but, as with most systems of this type, there were issues with handsets going missing and needing to be replaced.

It became clear to the University that the time had come to look at a new alarm notification system for its hearing impaired students, staff and visitors. The University of Sussex had previously worked with Fireco and were keen to see what the company could offer.

Fireco completed an installation of the Deaf Message Service (DMS) in the academic and social buildings across the campus. When a fire alarm is activated, DMS notifies users via a text message on their mobile phone.





The University of Sussex is well known for its innovation, so DMS fits in well with this ethos. It is more cost effective than pagers in regards to equipment and operational costs – individuals can use their own phones which is a real advantage. It's also much easier to operate day-to-day, with very little required from student services and the estates teams. Operating a campus-wide pager system had been a very involved process.

As well as improving safety for the hearing impaired, the University is looking at other ways DMS can be used. Security teams, fire alarm contractors, fire wardens and fire marshals can all benefit from receiving important notifications via text message. With the large number of buildings the University has at the Falmer Campus, keeping track of alarm activations can be hard work. The University is happy that the right people can be notified instantly with DMS, even if they're not on site.

Since the Equality Act of 2010 it is important for the University to be able to cater to the broadest range of students possible. The Royal National Institute for

Deaf People's statistics tell us that deafness, or some form of hearing loss currently affects one in six people, projected to be one in five within 20 years.

Pete Davies, Senior Account Manager at Fireco, oversaw the installation: "We're proud to be working in partnership with our local University and glad to have provided a vital service for those with a hearing impairment, We're also glad to make the jobs of those involved with estates management, fire safety and evacuation that little bit easier."



For more information on DMS and how it can benefit your business, contact Fireco on 01273 320650