NEIGHBOURHOOD ALERT DEV BOARD UPDATE: 50

Date: 26th February 2020

Note: You are receiving this email circular because you are listed as a key contact involved with your organisation's Neighbourhood Alert system, including senior administrators and members of the Practitioners' Group. If you feel you should not be on this list, please reply to feedback@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk and I will remove you.

View an archive of previous updates here

Welcome to your latest Dev Board update bulletin. Firstly, I must apologise that you have not received an update for a couple of weeks. I have been on the road a lot visiting various force partners, had a nightmare with Twitter and have also been focusing on getting our National Survey finalised and launched, which I'm delighted to say is being slowly fed out by email today. It does mean that this is a long one and there are some key points so try and grab a few minutes to work through this at some stage this week.

This message is an update on Version 4 development progress, I have outlined some key dates to save, given an update on Practitioner Group nominations as well as an explanation concerning Twitter.
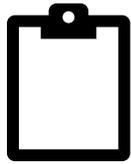
Many thanks
Mike

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February National Survey

I am very pleased to tell you that the Neighbourhood Alert National Survey is being been sent today to 638,000 Alert subscribers with email, as I send this over 4,000 people have already completed it this morning!

We have included a mix of questions to help us understand user-perception relating to the Alert system, update user groups such as CCTV and age group, check GDPR elements and assess social media perceptions. We also invited people to opt-in to "Get Safe Online" and presented an option to opt-in to a clearer form of membership benefits. We have replicated some of the questions featured in the 2018 survey for comparison purposes. You will probably have received the survey by email to your end user account but if not, you are welcome to review it **here** (its for members only so you will need to enter your details to view it).

Apologies if you do get any "is this a scam?" queries via your help desk, please put people's minds at rest. You might consider including a comment on any Alerts you are due to send to encourage all users to complete the survey over the next two weeks? I look forward to sharing the results with you in due course.
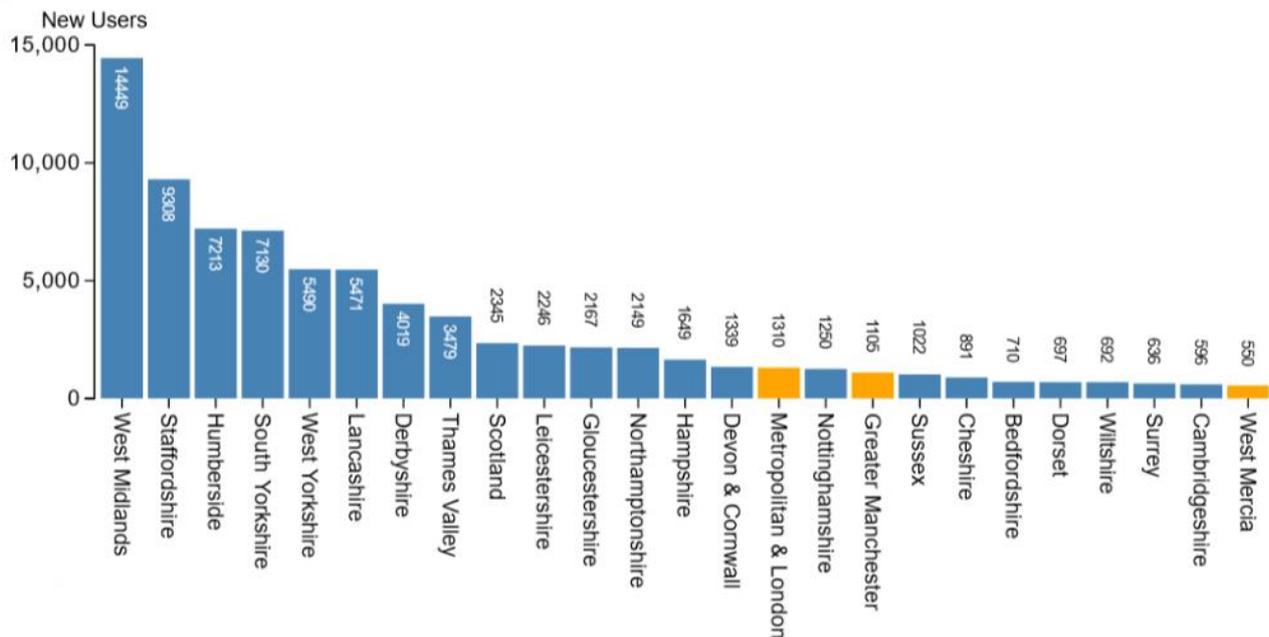
Alert Registrations Update

I just wanted to share with you a graph showing the number of newly registered Alert users by area for the **six-month period** 1st August 2019 – 31st January 2020. As you will see West Midlands are paving the way with 14,449 new sign-ups and Staffordshire have had a great start as they invited their members to register on their new Alert system. I would also comment that of the top seven areas for growth five are now using the new enhanced survey "Talking" approach 😊

MONTHLY REGISTRATIONS BY AREA

For all users across the Neighbourhood Alert network (1 August 2019 - 31 January 2020)

KEY
- Police force with Alert license
- Police force area without Alert license

New Users

Area	New Users
West Midlands	14449
Staffordshire	9308
Humberside	7213
South Yorkshire	7130
West Yorkshire	5490
Lancashire	5471
Derbyshire	4019
Thames Valley	3479
Scotland	2345
Leicestershire	2246
Gloucestershire	2167
Northamptonshire	2149
Hampshire	1649
Devon & Cornwall	1339
Metropolitan & London	1310
Nottinghamshire	1250
Greater Manchester	1105
Sussex	1022
Cheshire	891
Bedfordshire	710
Dorset	697
Wiltshire	692
Surrey	636
Cambridgeshire	596
West Mercia	550

The number of newly registered Users for the top 25 Neighbourhood Alert areas, excluding bulk imported Users.

Twitter Account Suspension

You may already be aware that Twitter decided to suspended @alertmessages on 6th February without explanation. This means that we cannot currently tweet your "shared" alerts to this account. We have an approved "user case" logged with Twitter which includes a full description of the service we provide and how we do it, this has operated successfully for four years without incident. We were given no explanation or notice for this suspension and have been unable to make contact with a representative from Twitter or even obtain a response to our repeated use of the contact form and @twittersupport messages.

As a result it is not currently possible for anyone to Tweet messages via the Alert system. We have set up localised accounts for each site to enable you to Tweet messages. For example @lincsalert. You can however still Tweet to a single account using Version 3 tools if you wish. I can only apologise for this inconvenience which was completely out of our control. Version 4 will have a more robust approach to social media propagation.

It is worth considering that, as with Facebook, Twitter is completely unregulated with regards to provision of service. We have not broken any terms or rules but, no doubt if we take up the new developers API and pay $9,000 a month, service would be resumed? These unregulated platforms have done what they said they would do five years ago: built up a dependency and are now, openly "monetarising" their position. I appreciate that you are obligated to use these channels and soon that obligation will be greater as legislation is updated but until OfTel has more control over these ruthless, autonomous organisations, my advice would be to approach with caution. The good thing is that your Alert database IS regulated, we have service level agreements, data processing agreements and you own your data. I hope you never experience the same

treatment that we have but when you do, the commitment and support you have made to building your Alert database will be well rewarded.

Version 4 (V4) Progress Update
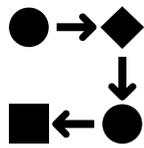
V4 development has progressed very well since the last update bulletin, and we are now more than 50% of the way through the work needed to get V4.0 to the point of being able to start Practitioner Group and User Acceptance Group (UAT) testing. Our priority now is to get the current V4 development penetration tested so we can populate it with the users that have agreed to be guinea pigs and give access to your Practitioner Group volunteers. The timeline below indicates some key dates over the next few weeks that I would ask you to take note of, especially the **Practitioner Group meetings on 11th and 20th March**:

V4 Timeline - Key Short-Term Dates
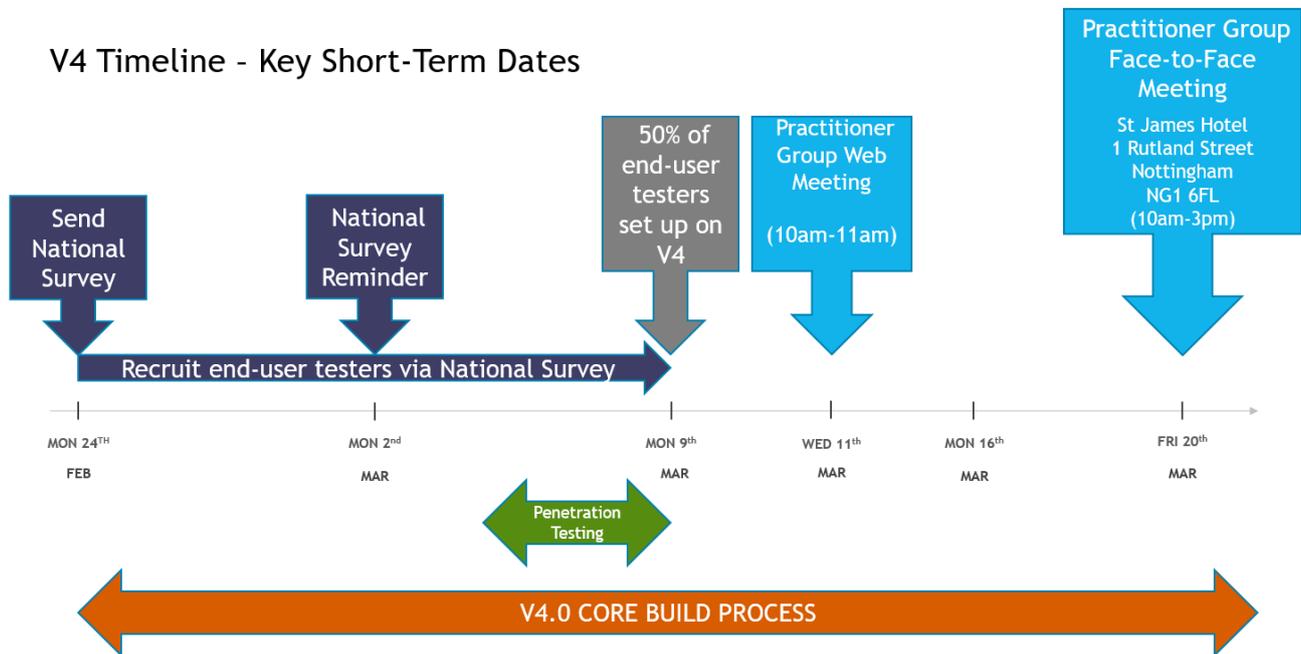
Practitioner Group Meetings

Once the initial Penetration testing is passed we will be hosting two key meetings in March for representatives from our emergency service partners to get access and familiarise themselves with some of the new functionality of V4 and provide some initial valuable feedback.

The first of these meetings will be an online **web meeting on Wednesday 11th March** at 10am lasting approximately one hour. We will give you access to some of the new elements of V4 as well as a quick overview of some of the key functionality. We will send more details directly to all the nominated Practitioner Group members next week (if you have not nominated anyone yet, see below).

The second Practitioner Group meeting will be **face-to-face in Nottingham on Friday 20th March**. Having had over a week to enable you to 'play' with the new system, this meeting will give us the opportunity to gather your initial feedback in terms of, is the access working, what works well, agreeing the overall scope of the task ahead and your overall thoughts. Starting at 10am, and finishing by 3pm at the latest, the meeting will

take place at the St James Hotel in Nottingham city centre (1 Rutland Street, NG1 6FL). Parking is available at the St James Street NCP car park directly adjacent to the hotel, and Nottingham train station is a 10-minute walk away. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

To attend this meeting please RSVP to sue@visav.co.uk by Friday 13th March at the latest to enable us to cater for the appropriate numbers.

Both meetings are relevant for our **emergency service partners only**. Separate communication will be made in due course with National Neighbourhood Watch regarding the development of the NW system tools.

V4 Practitioner Group Nominations Update

We have received a few more practitioner tester nominations over the past couple of weeks; however, we do have a lot of partners who don't have someone nominated. Apologies if I have missed an email, (perhaps send directly to me and not feedback@). I really would encourage you to submit your nominations without delay. It goes without saying that the more testers we have, the more resilient and robust V4 will be when it's launched. Ultimately, if you don't submit your nominations you won't have the opportunity to influence any of the functionality of V4 that could be key to your organisation. Please email your volunteer details to feedback@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk.

The last bulletin included a 'What You Need to Know' guide for test practitioners which I have included again below as a reminder so you can nominate the most suitable colleagues from within your respective organisation.

Outstanding Tester Nominations:

The following partners have not yet submitted nominations for V4 test practitioners and are therefore not currently represented on the focus group:

Bedfordshire Police
Cheshire Fire & Rescue
Cheshire West & Chester Local Authority
Cleveland Police
Dorset Police
Durham Police
Gloucestershire Police
Hampshire Police
Lancashire (Police, Fire & Rescue and Local Authority)
Leicestershire Police
Lincolnshire Police
Surrey Police
Sussex Police
Wiltshire Police

Please note: We have also received nominations from various Neighbourhood Watch administrators which we will manage separately, as they will be assisting with the testing of the Neighbourhood Watch tools development.

V4 Practitioner Group Testing Requirements

What You Need To Know:

When V4 is ready for testing we will supply you with a URL link to the test system, thus enabling all testing to be carried out remotely. Testing will take place in a live environment but on a totally separate database to the V3 existing system, containing thousands of test accounts created for users that have agreed to be guinea pigs (in our upcoming national survey). The current (V3) system will not be affected until you choose to migrate to V4, at which time we will delete your test user data from V4.

The fundamental upgrades that have been made in V4 are to the functionality and user interface of the system and will therefore provide you with a quicker, smoother and more intuitive system to work with. From an aesthetics perspective you will recognise the vast majority of the V4 layout, so your practitioners will not need to learn a completely new system.

During the testing process we will ask that all the main administration function of the system is tested in as much detail as possible with regards to updates and changes to layout, sending messages, managing replies (from test users), checking reports etc. As with any system testing process, the more time that can be dedicated to this the better, however we fully appreciate that resources are limited. Some testers will have more time than others to do this but any contribution to testing and feedback will be helpful. In order to assist you with time planning we would anticipate that the maximum testing and feedback process could take up to two hours per practitioner, per week, over a six-week period.

The Feedback Process:

We will ask for initial feedback to be submitted in as much detail as possible via an online comment's forum, using a URL that will be provided to you. The benefit of this forum-based process is that it will enable the nominated test practitioners to see the feedback from all other practitioners, thus negating the need for repetition and giving the practitioners the option of interacting with each other from a best-practice perspective. We anticipate some debate regarding which features are vital for the Version 4.0 launch and which could be deferred to V4.1 and V4.2.

Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Update Meeting

We had a very worthwhile meeting with Deborah Waller and Nick King from the national IT Working Group on Friday 14th February at the VISAV offices covering a host of agenda points relating to the new Ourwatch website, the NW member registration process and V4 development progress. The meeting resulted in a list of points to be actioned by the VISAV team over the coming weeks and into the V4.1 and V4.2 development timeline. The new OurWatch website has been sent to a number of testers and looks fantastic. It features our new registration process that works by sending a pin during registration to remove any chance of those dreaded un-verified users. I am sure Deborah will give us the go ahead to share the new site with you soon.

SGN Gas

Some of you will know SGN Gas are active Information Partners in the south of England and across Scotland. Our contact for the South of England, Deborah Cane is keen to emulate partnership work that SGN do in Scotland and wants to engage with safety working groups that any police partners in their coverage area. If you would like to make contact or have any guidance or connections you can offer, please contact Deborah directly:

Deborah Cane, Customer Experience Manager
E: deborah.cane@sgn.co.uk
T: 07855 088651

That's it for this week other than to say thanks again for your continued support.

Best regards
Mike Douglas
Product Director: Neighbourhood Alert

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