



Hants emergency services win national award for roll out of life saving technique at height of Covid-19 pandemic

Volunteers from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) and Hampshire Constabulary have been awarded the 'Best Emergency Services Collaboration of the Year' award at the [Skills for Health](#) Our Health Heroes Awards.

An expert panel of judges praised HIWFRS, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum and Hampshire Constabulary highly for their role in rolling out a lifesaving technique across the county to treat vulnerable Covid-19 patients.

To alleviate pressure on NHS staff at the peak of Covid-19, hospital leaders trained up the multi-agency volunteers in proning, which involves putting patients onto their front to relieve pressure on their vital organs and assist breathing.

Volunteers worked across four intensive care units (ICUs) in Hampshire, helping to prone patients and support hospital staff struggling under complex and extreme demand.

David French, Chief Executive Office at University Hospital Southampton (UHS) – one of the three NHS Trusts involved - praised the collaboration: "We have always worked closely with our emergency service partners who are highly skilled, used to working under pressure in challenging situations and whose skills are easily transferable to the complex working of an ICU department. The pandemic has brought many challenges to our hospital; however, it has brought us together as a community and with our partner services."

Speaking at the Our Health Heroes Awards ceremony held at London Science Museum, Craig Gregory, Group Manager Health and Social Care Lead at HIWFRS, said:

"We're proud to accept this award recognising the part firefighters played alongside health professionals in Southampton, Portsmouth, Basingstoke and Winchester hospitals at the height of the pandemic.

"It was a truly humbling partnership between the four hospital trusts, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, other blue-light colleagues and the Local Resilience Forum.

"Our firefighters showed true dedication, compassion and professionalism at a time when all those things mattered most.

"My thanks go to everyone who was involved."

PC Matthew James of Hampshire Constabulary added:

"It was amazing to be able to step up and answer the local resilience forum's call for support into local hospital intensive care units.

“At the height of the second wave of COVID-19 the request presented a unique challenge for Hampshire Constabulary in that this is the first time a police force has provided mutual aid to a hospital in this way.

“There was lots of planning that went on in collaboration behind the scenes to ensure our officers were able and ready to rise to this challenge.

“Our officers and staff working with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and University Hospital Southampton achieved something amazing in offering support to those extremely unwell with COVID-19 and gave a real boost to the exhausted NHS staff.

“The award being presented today recognises and celebrates the achievements of all involved in this unique collaboration.”