

# Morrison Utility Services – Pushing back against the pandemic

## Case Study



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Rob Page, Performance & Change Manager  
Morrison Utility Services

When an MUS team chose a new workforce management system, they didn't know they were also preparing for COVID-19.

It's no exaggeration to say that life has never been quite like this before. In just a matter of months, everyday routines across the world have been turned upside down by the threat and reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of us juggle the demands of home working, home schooling, supermarket queues and other challenges, we could be forgiven for wishing we could turn back time.

For many at Morrison Utility Services, however, life must go on – albeit in a socially distanced form. This is a company that works closely with utility asset owners to help keep the lights on, the taps flowing, and households and businesses warm. MUS gangs are out each day as key workers, repairing and maintaining our nation's vital infrastructure.

However, while COVID-19 has been hugely disruptive for many, the MUS contract team on Severn Trent Water has described the pandemic's impact on their work as “minimal”. The reason? A flexible, dynamic and dedicated workforce which with their triopsis workforce management system has ultimately made MUS able to adapt and maintain delivery for their client. The implementation and use of triopsis in these crucial times has made all the difference.

Triopsis, this mobile-enabled workforce management and scheduling platform has freed the team from making unnecessary journeys and face-to-face interactions, allowing everyone to get on with their jobs while taking the necessary social distancing precautions.

If COVID-19 had hit 12 months ago, before the triopsis system was rolled out, life for the contract team could have been very different.

“ Twelve months ago, our processes were very manual,” explains Parmjit Singh, Contract Planning Manager at MUS. “Work was carried out on a Severn Trent Water work management system, then exported into a spreadsheet. We'd email that spreadsheet over to the eight counties across the Severn Trent Water region, then our operational managers would print that work allocation off and physically hand it out to each of the teams every morning.

As the teams carried out the works, they would text or WhatsApp their updates into our scheduling office, then the office would inject that back into the workforce management system.”

With a number of cumbersome manual steps, the potential for improving the process was already evident, but the face-to-face handing out of work would have caused major problems in the age of COVID-19. Parmjit says:

- “ Without triopsis, we’d have been looking at literally having the operatives queuing up outside each office on a one-out, one-in basis,”

Rob Page, the Performance and Change Manager at MUS, elaborates:

- “ We’d have had to have queues outside with two-metre social distancing, with gangs waiting in their vehicles for the supervisors to come to the side of the vehicles, which wouldn’t exactly protect the supervisor. It certainly wouldn’t have helped us maintain the performance we need to deliver.”

While the contract’s demands would have meant that ways and means to continue working would have had to be found, the circumstances would have been “exceptionally difficult” according to Rob.

It’s little wonder, therefore, that in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the contract team is generous in its praise of triopsis. As Rob says:

- “ In terms of performance and reporting, without triopsis we wouldn’t have been anywhere near where we are now.”

Everything is now handled through the universal triopsis application, with the gangs receiving their work via the app on a mobile phone. That means no queuing, no paperwork, no physical face-to-face contact with the scheduling team, and several other big key benefits. Parmjit says:

- “ A major advantage of using triopsis is the real-time tracking so we can see exactly where operatives are. That particularly pays off in terms of planning and reallocating work. Twelve months ago, if someone rang in sick we’d have to call some of the other operatives, get them to physically come back in and change the work around. Now they don’t have to come back and interact with anyone else. We just literally call them, get them to stop for a moment, reschedule the work, and within a minute or two they can refresh the app and their work will have slightly changed.”



Another major benefit of triopsis is its flexibility in terms of remote working explains Rob:

- “ We’ve got schedulers working at home, with their line managers able to clearly see what’s happening at any moment. We’re not trying to pull off eight different spreadsheets to get the detail like we would have done in the past. Now we’ve got live, up-to-date information that enables schedulers to work from home and still be managed to make sure they’re not struggling and to make sure the gangs are doing what they need to.”

Parmjit adds:

- “ Also, we used to have operatives updating various different systems, which in some respects could be a bit of a distraction. With triopsis, the team can concentrate on one system rather than three, and that helps them carry out best practice around COVID-19.”

Rob sums up the triopsis advantage in simple terms:

- “ It’s spot on, triopsis has made it easier – much easier – to keep delivering at the level and quality that we have been. It’s meant we’ve maintained our performance and delivery, and it’s also enabled us to maintain the social distancing that we need to do. It’s helped us keep our guys safe and secure as much as we can out on site.”

It’s always been the case that a lot can change in 12 months, but perhaps that’s been more true over the last year than has been the case for a long time. The MUS contract team on Severn Trent Water are clearly pleased they made the change to triopsis when they did – and everyone who relies on the Severn Trent Water supply can be extremely pleased they did too.

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Morrison Utility Services

triopsis.com  
info@triopsis.co.uk  
01865 304 083

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