

# News Release

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## **Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Awarded For Innovative Work in Virtual Reality**

Paul Speight, Watch Manager at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, recently received an award in recognition for outstanding achievements working in the public safety technology sector.

Paul, whose remit is road safety and virtual reality, has recently been working on developing state of the art training experiences, using emerging technologies that totally immerses the student in a virtual world that can be manipulated. This enables users to interact with objects within the virtual world and gives them the ability to move about, knowing they are doing so in a safe space.

Due to this fantastic work, he was shortlisted for a global award - The People's Choice Award - at the Mission Critical Technologies Show for Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality at the ExCel in London. This is an international award, and only six made the shortlist:

- Daniel Gomez - Los Angeles Police - America
- Paul Speight - Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service - UK
- Gert Jan Wolf - Critical Communications Review – Netherlands
- David Adams – PCTEL – USA
- Christian Regnier - Air France
- Eileen Rubiera - Alberta Energy Regulator – Canada

Paul was named the winner at the show on Wednesday 13 June 2018, achieving nearly 50% of the total votes made online – this was an outstanding achievement when looking at who he was up against.

Paul Speight, Road Safety/Virtual Reality Watch Manager at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "I am delighted to receive this international award for an individual's outstanding achievements in the public safety technology sector, not only for myself, but for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

"It is good to be recognised for the work we do to try and create safer people and safer places - the journey has only just begun.

"I would just like to say thank you to everyone who voted for me, it would not have been possible without you."

Due to the success of virtual reality, not only within Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service but also across UK Fire and Rescue Services, the Service was chosen to be the virtual reality National Lead in the UK, endorsed by the National Fire Chiefs Council. This has led to Paul working alongside many other fire and rescue services on producing virtual reality films, so there is a lot more to come from him and the fire and rescue services nationally.

For more information on Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, visit [www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk](http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk)

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

Interviews can be arranged through prior arrangement with Corporate Communications on the details below.

**About the Service**

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire-related incidents have reduced by 43 percent.

During 2016/17, the Service attended 694 road traffic collisions, of which 148 were extractions from vehicles, in addition to 2,259 fires. 272 schools were visited as part of the Service's schools programme, delivering fire and road safety education to pupils. Staff organised or took part in 1,613 community safety events, promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, and 145 Virtual Fatal Four (VF4) events as part of the Service's young drivers' road safety project.

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