

CMA finds competition concerns in merger of emergency service software suppliers

Press release

NEC Software Solutions' purchase of SSS raises competition concerns in the supply of vital software to emergency services and transport customers.



NEC and SSS are 2 of a small number of suppliers that supply essential software solutions to emergency service providers (including police forces, fire and rescue services and ambulance trusts) as well as transport service providers (such as TfL and rail operators).

These include:

- 'integrated communication and control services' (ICCS) used by control room personnel in day-to-day duties such as receiving and making urgent phone calls to communicate with emergency response staff.
- specialised software (referred to as 'Duties') to police forces to enable the planning and scheduling of shifts. Supply of this software requires significant expertise and experience.
- records management systems (RMS) which enable the police to record and manage case-related information such as the processing of people in custody and case file management for prosecutions.

The CMA found that for each of these 3 services, the market is relatively concentrated, with NEC and SSS generally being 2 of only 3 suppliers with a large established customer base.

The CMA considered the impact of the merger on these services and found that

the deal gives rise to competition concerns with regard to all 3 software products.

David Stewart, Executive Director, Mergers and Markets, said:

We all rely on our emergency services, and they rely in turn on essential services such as those provided by these 2 companies. The CMA's role is to ensure this deal does not undermine competition in this market, so police, fire and ambulance services across the UK have a choice of supplier and can secure the most reliable and innovative services available.

Ultimately the software NEC and SSS provide is paid for by the taxpayer and we can't risk higher prices or a lower standard of service.

It is now up to NEC to provide us with undertakings to address our concerns.

To address these concerns, the CMA has given NEC until 9 May 2022 to offer an undertaking that might be accepted.

If no undertaking is offered that addresses the CMA's concerns, then the deal will be referred to a more in-depth investigation.

More information is on the [NEC/Capita case page](#).

1. SSS refers to SSS Public Safety Limited (formerly Capita (SSS) Limited) and Secure Solutions USA LLC (formerly Capita Software (US) LLC).
2. In the ICCS market, the third established player is Frequentis. In the Duties market, the third player is Crown and, to a lesser extent, Totalmobile also competes with NEC and SSS. In the RMS market, the third established player is Niche.
3. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

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