

Staffordshire Police Locks Up Password Issues with Imprivata OneSign ESSO

The Business Challenge

Police information security offices face some of the biggest IT security challenges in any sector due to the wide variety of application types in use within their organisations, ranging from mobile and terminal emulation applications using Citrix, to internally developed web-based applications. Due to the sensitive nature of the information stored in IT systems, a variety of passwords must be used to access each application. Forgetting these passwords can be particularly frustrating for staff and can ultimately lead to a loss of productivity.

This challenge was one encountered by Staffordshire Police, which employs around 4,500 police officers and support staff. Staffordshire Police's IT department runs more than 45 different applications, each requiring complex, dynamic passwords. On average each user at Staffordshire Police had to remember at least six different user names and passwords for various applications including HOLMES2 (used in police investigations), STORM (Police Command and Control), SPIN (Intelligence) and FPS (Family Protection). In addition, over the past 12 months police forces were up against increasing pressure from the Home Office and organisations such as PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation) and ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers) to adopt strong password policies. Police IT departments had also begun to follow this best practice with internally developed applications, resulting in a wide-spread requirement for single sign-on solutions.

“Due to the confidential nature of the information being accessed, police are required to use complex passwords consisting of letters, numbers and characters,” explained Phil Lovell, ICT Director at Staffordshire Police. “This policy, combined with the fact that passwords must be changed frequently, has reduced police productivity and put a strain on our IT helpdesk, with 40 percent of all calls relating to password issues.”

Key Business Results

- Enhanced security for a wide range of application types developed both externally and internally
- Adoption of strong password policies to satisfy increasing pressure from the Home Office
- and organisations such as PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation) and ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers)
- Increase in police productivity
- Decrease in strain for IT helpdesk staff

The Imprivata OneSign Solution

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—Phil Lovell
ICT Director
Staffordshire Police



About Staffordshire Police

Staffordshire Police employs around 4,500 police officers and support staff and provides policing services to around 1 million people within the county of Staffordshire. Staffordshire represents a large geographic area that brings with it a need for both urban and rural policing styles. Public safety and service to the communities of Staffordshire remains central to Force Objectives, as is an ethos for continual improvement. The drive for improved performance is constant and is very much part and parcel of daily life for all of the organisation's employees, police office and support staff alike. The Force makes extensive use of a wide-range of technology which is not only used to support day-to-day business, but also to drive performance in all major areas of policing.

The Force is often seen as an innovator in policing and its sharp focus of service delivery and performance was rewarded when Staffordshire Police received a UK second place ranking by HMIC for 2004/5 for efficiency.

Following a successful pilot, Staffordshire Police found Imprivata OneSign ESSO to be the only solution able to handle all of its requirements. With OneSign ESSO, Staffordshire Police officers and support staff only have to remember one secure password to access every application they require to do their jobs effectively. Upon implementation, Staffordshire Police became the first police force in the UK to achieve complete single sign-on for all internal and external applications.

“As a public safety organisation, we have to be confident in the technology we implement to ensure that we are able to serve the public effectively in the event of a crisis,” said Phil Lovell, ICT Director at Staffordshire Police. “In pilot testing, we rolled-out OneSign ESSO to half of the staff that manages emergency calls and kept the other half operating on existing technology to ensure that calls would continue to be answered in case any issues arose. In just two weeks, we had completed our initial pilot scheme with no problems and were easily able to introduce the technology to new users with minimal training, resulting in both cost and time savings. We’re currently rolling out OneSign ESSO for our entire user population of 4,500 staff, all of whom have truly welcomed this new technology.”

“Staffordshire Police has an extremely complex IT environment and a strong set of password policies that have presented an exciting challenge to Imprivata, especially as other solutions on the market have failed to manage these complex applications,” said Wayne Parslow, VP of European Operations, Imprivata. “Having successfully demonstrated suitability against some key applications, both internally and externally developed, we’re delighted to have Staffordshire become the first police force to achieve a true single sign-on capability. Not only will users have just one password to remember, but ongoing password changes will also be automatically handled by OneSign, relieving helpdesk staff of time-consuming password resets and support.”



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