



Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland Case Study

The Organisation

The Health and Social Care (HSC) system in Northern Ireland includes five HSC Trusts who provide integrated health and social care services across Northern Ireland – they are the Belfast, South Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern.

They manage and administer hospitals, health centres, residential homes, day centres and other health and social care facilities and they provide a wide range of health and social care services to the community. The sixth Trust is the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

The HSC also includes the new Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, Patient and Client Council and the Business Services Organisation (BSO). The BSO has responsibility for a number of support services for the HSC including ICT services.

The Business Need

Following best practice in security standards

HSCNI ICT security policy is based on ISO27001 and references the good practice guidelines issued by Connecting for Health. This means that HSCNI has implemented two-factor authentication (2FA) for their secure remote access service and third party contractor access via the Internet and PSTN. They also identified the requirement to add 2FA to certain web-based applications which allow access to large volumes of sensitive data.

Reducing Total Cost of Ownership

A non-CRYPTOCard system of 2FA had been in place for a number of years, with up to 700 users. The system used hardware tokens to generate a one-time password (OTP) and these needed replacing every three years, bringing a substantial overhead. Consequently HSCNI looked for a 2FA solution which offered a better long-term cost of ownership.

The Solution

HSCNI replaced their 2FA system with CRYPTO-Shield, the server based authentication server from CRYPTOCard and initially purchased 1000 tokens.

The HSCNI has expanded the use of CRYPTO-Shield from remote and third party access to web-based applications, such as hospital waiting lists and applications that track and monitor trends in certain illnesses. These applications hold large volumes of sensitive data and therefore require the protection of 2FA.

The Benefits

Cost savings

HSCNI forecast substantial cost savings over a three-year period by switching to CRYPTO-Shield, arising from lower administration and hardware costs. These savings would easily cover the cost of changing to a new 2FA supplier and to date they are on track to meet the forecast savings.

The CRYPTOCard hardware tokens are highly durable and do not have an expiry date giving them a longer life span than competitive tokens. So not only does the HSC benefit from reduced token replacement costs, but there are cost and resource benefits from reduced logistic and deployment requirements.

The CRYPTO-Shield application is also simple to integrate, reducing the cost of implementation. CRYPTOCard worked closely with the HSC to ensure a highly responsive and smooth hand-over.

“We switched to CRYPTOCard two-factor authentication as they offered the best total cost of ownership when evaluated over a 3 year period.”

Michael Harnett, HSCNI ICT Security Manager, Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland



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The Benefits continued...

Economies of scale

An economy of scale was achieved by putting a framework contract in place that all HSCNI organisations could use. Following the installation of CRYPTO-Shield, each HSCNI organisation was given delegated administration to the central service, allowing each one to manage their tokens and users.

By July 2009, 2000 tokens are in use across the HSCNI, with the additional tokens purchased benefiting from the same economy initially negotiated by the HSCNI.

Security of user authentication

CRYPTO-Shield meets HSCNI security policies requirements and its use across IT platforms follows best practice as defined by Connecting for Health. Users including administrators, payroll staff, medical staff and contractors can use 2FA to access confidential information with complete security. As the tokens are simple to operate, the time required by users to use 2FA is kept to a minimum which is especially important for healthcare professionals who face many pressures on their time.

The Future

HSCNI is upgrading the service to BlackShield ID, the latest server-based 2FA application from CRYPTOCARD, to benefit from additional features and benefits. Specifically, BlackShield ID gives HSCNI the flexibility to roll out tokens in soft, USB and SMS formats to suit individual needs. For example, software tokens will be allocated to contractors, removing the need for them to return hardware tokens when the contract expires. While lower usage staff will have the option of BlackBerry/USB and SMS tokens which avoids the need to carry 2 devices whilst still ensuring users can access 2FA secured applications at all times.

Product Overview – CRYPTO-Shield

CRYPTO-Shield is a complete authentication solution that consists of a suite of applications designed for implementing and operating strong passwords using two factor authentication enabling efficient password validation. CRYPTO-Shield, provides everything that is required for securing remote access, domain and desktop logon or web portal access with two-factor authentication.

Product Overview – BlackShield ID

BlackShield ID is the award winning authentication server from CRYPTOCARD combining a broad feature set that delivers low total cost of ownership. Use of leading edge technology simplifies integration and administration while delivering unrivalled performance. Real-time reporting, a comprehensive security policy, compliance and audit capabilities set it alone in the two-factor authentication market.



CRYPTOCARD Overview

Twenty years of technical excellence have won CRYPTOCARD the trust of thousands of customers in over 70 countries. With the highest levels of encryption, most robust tokens and lowest total cost of ownership, CRYPTOCARD offers unsurpassed value in solutions for positively identifying individuals through strong password security.

“Through ongoing consultation with CRYPTOCARD, we will shortly upgrade our server to BlackShield ID, to benefit from the broader range of tokens, including SMS and BlackBerry tokens, which will better meet our end user needs and ultimately, achieve additional cost savings.”

Michael Harnett, HSCNI ICT Security Manager, Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland

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