



## SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

# STRENGTHENING ACCESS SECURITY WHILE REDUCING TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

## THE CHALLENGES

With easy access to its network, applications and resources by staff and partners a crucial element of Gloucestershire County Council's 'Agile Working' initiative, the council needed to enhance its access strategy.

The aim was to implement a single security solution that could be used to provide various staff and partner user groups with access to key resources at anytime from anywhere. The council also wanted to replace weak, static passwords

with dynamic 'one time' passwords - using multi-factor authentication.

At the same time the council also wanted to consolidate its two existing on-premise solutions, RSA SecureID and Swivel Pinsafe, which duplicated training and skill sets and increased cost of ownership.

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Single system that satisfies the needs of multiple user types
- Exceptional ease-of-use for employees
- Significantly reduced cost of ownership
- Simple, automated deployment and management
- 24x7x365 technical support
- Predictable cost per user per annum



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## PROCESS

To achieve its aims Gloucestershire County Council set about a comprehensive technical and financial market investigation. One of the companies it spoke to was AscendID.

AscendID's experts worked closely with the council's assessment team to clearly establish the organisation's business objectives and requirements. Part of this process was helping the team to understand the wider potential of multi-factor authentication within the council.

AscendID also put the council in touch with another of its public sector customers, which allowed it to understand the challenges, requirements, business objectives and the solution AscendID implemented for them.

In addition, AscendID built and demonstrated a tailored proof of concept, which was integrated with Gloucestershire County Council's IT environment. The outcome was that the council decided to proceed with the solution AscendID proposed.

## SOLUTION

AscendID's cloud-based solution utilises VASCO's comprehensive range of authenticators to help assure the security of the council's data, network and applications, by controlling who has access and the method used to access corporate resources. The flexible combination of robust and tamperproof hard tokens, SMS, virtual and mobile authenticators met the council's requirements for securing access through both corporate and employees' own devices.

Access to a manned  
Technical Support  
Centre

# 24x7x365

and a secure Web  
Administration Portal



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AscendID's demonstrable history and reputation within the UK public sector played a large part in our decision to select its solution. Ultimately their experts delivered an amazing solution that ticked all the boxes in terms of technical, commercial and compliance criteria.

Rob Elcock, Senior Infrastructure Engineer

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## GREATER CONTROL

The service is standards-based so integrating it with the council's IT environment is simple, compared to other vendors' solutions with proprietary technology that is cumbersome and tough to set up. Our customer is happy because

“With the GDPR deadline looming, we wanted to take greater control over who accesses our data. The introduction of multi-factor authentication was a key component to achieving that”, says Clare Cato, ICT Commissioning Officer, Gloucestershire County Council.

Additionally, we wanted a solution that delivered a positive user experience and would be readily accepted, to achieve the maximum return on investment. AscendID's solution provided the answer to these requirements by giving us the flexibility of being able to provide users and partners with a choice of GO 7, mobile, SMS and e-mail authenticators generating one-time passwords that last just 30 seconds.”

## ENHANCED USER EXPERIENCE

The solution was designed and implemented using a hierarchical approach as the basis for allocating resource access. This was further enhanced by layering profiles against these resources so that they would react to the security postures of users and where/how they access systems and data.

Every token has an individually assigned user and Gloucestershire County Council can set an individual entrance level for each of them. So, for example, care workers can have different access rights to senior managers.

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In addition, all privileges are set up in the back-end servers, ensuring the solution can be easily adapted to the councils' ongoing demands and removing the necessity to implement different solutions for different user groups.

Since one solution can secure different users individually, and the devices have a very long lifespan, it's also very cost-effective. The user experience is simple. Users can log-on to the network at any given time, with a single button press, or by using the app on a mobile device. At that moment a one-time password is generated, which is used on the log-on screen.

"We initially selected AscendID's hardware tokens due to their minimum 7-year battery lifetime and because they are robust, tamperproof and very user-friendly", explains Clare Cato, ICT Commissioning Officer, Gloucestershire County Council.

We're now using a mixture of hard and mobile authenticators across various platforms and devices, plus the virtual token, SMS and email authentication options. After the implementation, AscendID provided us with a brief explanation about the use of the authenticators, but no additional user training was required. The solution was very well received and we didn't experience any problems after the quick and simple allocation and enrolment process".

## 24X7X365 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

AscendID's solution provides 24x7x365 access to a manned technical support centre in the UK and a secure Web Administration Portal, where authorised council employees can raise support tickets, run reports, check usage, add or request new users, replace old users, redeploy tokens to new users online, and much more.

"The service provided by AscendID is seamless", says Clare Cato, ICT Commissioning Officer, Gloucestershire County Council. "It's a testament to its reliability and importance that you almost forget it's there. It just works, and works extremely well, which gives me tremendous confidence and peace of mind."

In addition, the council is exploring the potential roll out the 'end user self-service portal' to its users. This is included within the primary service and allows users to quickly and easily complete a token health check to assess and even reset faults, plus change pin numbers without having to contact the help desk.



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The end-user self-service portal is another fantastic way of improving the user experience, and productivity, and delivering an even greater return on investment to the council.

Rob Elcock, Senior Infrastructure Engineer,

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## PEACE OF MIND

The AscendID platform leverages VASCO technology at its core. VASCO is - and has been for a couple of decades - the global leader in access security for retail banking, which is a huge confidence builder, and provides the council with the peace of mind that it has a reliable and robust solution that exceeds the high security expectations of one of the most demanding business sectors.

With a single, cloud solution Gloucestershire County Council not only has considerably lower expenditure than when it was running two in-house systems, the costs are also simpler to understand. There is one simple charge per user per year, which includes set up, making it easier to budget. Plus, the annual subscription costs come out of operational expenses rather than requiring capital expenditure.

## PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERSTANDING

AscendID's public sector understanding was a key factor in choosing the solution, as Rob Elcock, Senior Infrastructure Engineer, Gloucestershire County Council, explains.

"AscendID's demonstrable history and reputation within UK public sector played a large part in our decision to select its solution. The AscendID team showed a clear understanding of what we were trying to achieve, took ownership, focused on our business objectives and tailored the solution to meet our needs. Ultimately their experts delivered an amazing solution that ticked all the boxes in terms of technical, commercial and compliance criteria."