



CASE STUDY:

Oxford City Council safeguards public services with TrustID

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Customer: Oxford City Council

Industry: Local Authority

Location: Oxford, UK

Website: www.oxford.gov.uk

Profile: Delivering a range of services to meet local needs and improve quality of life and community well-being

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE:

- A quick and simple way to validate customer and employee identity
- Robust protection against fraudulent claims on public services
- Significant time saving with more efficient validation processes and a reduction in the need for staff training
- Significant cost saving thanks to prevention of housing claims using fraudulent documents
- A deterrent to anyone seeking employment or making a claim using a false identity

Oxford City Council employ around 1300 people and help to provide a wide range of services, including benefits, housing services and licensing for approximately 152,000 residents. They also support the 110,000 people who work in Oxford and 9.5 million people who visit the city every year.

The Council's Corporate Investigation team, led by Scott Warner, is responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud across all services, with a particular focus on the high risk areas of Housing, Business Rates and Council Tax.

The Challenge

In order to access the services provided by Oxford City Council, customers – predominantly members of the public - are required to present documents such as passports, visas and driving licenses to prove their identity. In order to validate these documents, front-line staff at the council had access to an online reference database which required them to cross-check and interpret the validity of documents against reference images of different document types. All users of the system needed extensive training, as they were not document experts, and this training had to be frequently repeated when new employees joined the Council. The team at Oxford were concerned that the system, which didn't check the UV image of documents and which relied heavily on human interpretation, offered them insufficient guarantees and exposed the Council to an element of risk.

The Solution

In June 2014, having evaluated the options for electronic document validation, Oxford City Council introduced 5 scanners from TrustID to support identity checking for customers and for employees as part of Right to Work compliance.

“We are delivering services to our customers and to the community and we can have absolute assurance that those people who receive our services are the ones who are entitled to them...”

Scott Warner, Corporate Investigations Manager
Oxford City Council

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Having seen how effective the solution was in other councils, Scott Warner, Corporate Investigations Manager, was confident that the scanners would be easy to use, offer an additional level of validation, reduce the administrative pressure on frontline staff and greatly reduce the need for training.

The Result

Since introducing the scanners, the Council have processed over 10,000 document scans across their different offices and departments. The main scanner, located at the front desk in the central Oxford offices is the machine which sees the heaviest use as staff validate passports, residence permits and other documents for anyone who wishes to access public services. The other scanners include those at satellite council offices, a system used by the internal HR team and a 'mobile solution' which allows the Corporate Investigation team to conduct scans remotely during offsite investigations or to support residents who struggle to come to a council office. Those documents which the system flags as potentially suspicious are referred to Scott and his team who can review the documents and, if necessary, forward them to the team at TrustID for further analysis.

The Benefits

Today, the TrustID scanners offer the team at Oxford City Council an efficient and robust document validation process. The training requirement is now minimal since staff now only need to understand how to use the technology. As Scott Warner explains, "Once an officer has been trained in how to use the scanner, which is, at most, a 30-minute session, they can then rely on the technology to spot any instances of questionable documents"

The electronic scanning process has also helped Council staff to identify several suspicious documents and indeed two cases have led to further police investigations.

Oxford City Council can attribute at least £36,000 of savings to the TrustID scanning solutions since the software helped them to prevent 2 applications for housing that were made to the Council using fraudulent identity documents.

Conclusion

Today, the system continues to support document validation across the Council, from employees to tenants. Oxford City Council now have a robust and future-proof system which doesn't require staff to attend extensive training sessions and supports them in the fight against fraudulent attempts to claim public services.

In the future, the Council are considering how they can use the scanning solution to further support the community, perhaps offering validation services to local small businesses and landlords to help them comply with government legislation.

Scott Warner and his team are confident that they now have the necessary safeguards in place to ensure that they are delivering services to those people who have proved that they are who they say they are.

“ I'd personally recommend TrustID scanners to other organisations on the basis that they provide a 'no-doubt' solution to document authentication

Scott Warner, Corporate Investigations Manager
Oxford City Council

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