

Victim Support provides staff with 'e-safety net' using Egress encryption services



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BARRY ALSTON, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS, VICTIM SUPPORT

Victim Support offers free and confidential practical help and emotional support to people affected by crime, delivered through a network of employees and volunteers across England and Wales, in conjunction with contacts within blue light services, health and social care providers and the criminal justice system.

Email provided the easiest mechanism for sharing information about current cases, while also being cost-effective and efficient. However, the charity was unable to take advantage of email as a means of passing data because of the sensitive nature of many of its communications and the potential security risks of using plaintext email.

Recognising the importance of ensuring communications channels were secure, Victim Support searched the market to find a solution that would not only provide an enhancement to the business but maintain the level of information assurance needed to protect information, as well as being easy for staff and volunteers to adopt.

"As part of improving service delivery, in 2013 we carried out research that highlighted data protection as one of the most important issues for our clients," explains Barry Alston, Director of Information systems at Victim Support. "The nature of our work supporting the victims and witnesses of crime means we regularly share sensitive information electronically with both approved third party agencies and our specially trained volunteers who deliver key services in the field."

It was essential we found a secure communication solution that provides robust encryption matched with sophisticated control functionality.”

Finding the right fit

In December 2013, Victim Support started speaking to Egress Software Technologies, a leading provider of encryption services to charities, about its flagship information security solution Egress Protect. The Egress solution integrating with Victim Support’s existing IT infrastructure was of huge benefit to the charity, as it meant that staff and volunteers could share information with the added security of knowing communications were encrypted. Egress was an ideal solution for the charity.

“We selected Egress Protect as it is the only government-certified technology that integrates with Microsoft Outlook to provide a ‘one-click’ mechanism to secure highly confidential data,” Alston continues. “In addition, deploying the solution using Egress Gateway enabled us to scan the content our employees send to ensure the correct level of protection is applied – with prompts appearing on screen if confidential information is ever at risk of being sent without appropriate measures.

“This brings benefits in two ways. Firstly, Egress Protect helps to remind our staff of the correct application of Victim Support’s data protection and protective marking scheme. Employees are continually reminded about the importance of information security, enabling them to select the most secure way to send data. Secondly, Egress Protect helps reduce the risk of an accidental data breach caused by human error. As such, Victim Support’s staff and volunteers have flexible control over the way they share information, with full confidence that sensitive data will arrive securely, every time.”

Sharing is caring

In addition, Victim Support also benefits from Egress’ licensing model, which makes it free for recipients to initiate and reply to communications with their staff. With over 3,000 volunteers working for the charity across England and Wales, this significantly reduces cost overheads and ensures all confidential information can be encrypted to improve service delivery.

Alston concludes: “The work Victim Support carries out is critical to help people cope and recover from crime and, as such, confidentiality and data protection are of paramount importance. Victim Support has enjoyed a successful partnership with Egress over the past two years, making data protection measures accessible to all employees, volunteers and the trusted third parties we work with.”

About Egress

Egress helps protect unstructured data to meet compliance requirements and drive business productivity. The company’s AI-powered platform enables users to control and secure the data they share.

Working with sensitive data

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Reducing risk through policy

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Constant awareness

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