

Improving management of witness protection

It is recognised that witness protection programmes are essential to the furtherance of justice. However, the associated risks are significant and any law enforcement agency needs to ensure that it is adequately managing all of the potential minefields surrounding the protection of witnesses and other persons.

Gaining public confidence

There is little point in providing a Protected Persons service unless the public have confidence in its ability to work effectively. This requires Protected Persons practitioners to be impeccably trained in dealing with all aspects of protection. Comprehensive and robust policies and procedures must be in place and the infrastructure to implement and manage these procedures must be provided. abmpegasus, a leading software system for managing covert policing, provides a state of the art tool for doing just that – manage your procedures from first contact with the protected person through to cessation of protection. abmpegasus can boost public confidence in witness protection programmes by helping police forces to implement a more consistent and professional approach to dealing with protected persons.

The potential for leaking the identity of protected witnesses is significantly reduced via the automatic allocation of Unique Reference Numbers (URNs) to each witness – the true identity of a protected person is only ever available on a need-to-know basis, enforced by abmpegasus' role-based access control.

Adopting the world's best practice in protection of witnesses and other persons

The UK has a proud history of furthering the professional standards of law enforcement. As a result, the practices of UK policing are some of the most highly regarded in the world. ABM has sought to support best practice by engaging in close consultation with law enforcement agencies across the UK. ABM organises regular focus groups and maintains regular contact with thought leaders, senior police officers and practitioners to direct the further development of abmpegasus. As a result abmpegasus Protected Persons is laden with functionality which seeks to maintain and further best practices in witness protection. The consultation and development is an ongoing and continuous process which ensures that abmpegasus is always at the forefront of law enforcement thinking.

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Complying with legislation

ABM's consultation with law enforcement organisations has ensured that abmpegasus fully supports legislation and best practice surrounding witness protection. Specifically, it assists with the following aspects of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCPA) 2005:

- Protection of all illegible persons, including witnesses, jurors, law enforcement officers, informants and family members (as required by Section 82 of SOCPA and listed under Schedule 5)
- Facilitates joint protection arrangements between 2 or more protection providers (Section 83 of SOCPA)
- Facilitates transfer of protection responsibility from one protection provider to another (Section 84 of SOCPA)
- Ensuring that the protected person is informed of the implications of arrangements being provided for him/her (Section 93 of SOCPA)

Supporting standardisation and collaboration

abmpegasus is the leading solution for ensuring compliance with protected persons legislation and best practice without incurring unwieldy and expensive administrative costs. The system can be adopted by groups of agencies to support regional collaboration and therefore reduce the overall cost of administering Protected Persons programmes.

Flexible, adaptable and future proof

Unlike some solutions, abmpegasus can be customised to individual forces' requirements. ABM is also able to develop the system with relative speed to account for changes in legislation and/or the latest best practices. The system also presents a good range of functionality, including advanced searching, auditing and security features. Continuous development, advanced technology, and ABM's longstanding experience of developing and supporting IT solutions for law enforcement mean that abmpegasus will support your operations now and in the years to come.

References

Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c.15), London: HMSO.

Available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/pdf/ukpga_20050015_en.pdf [Accessed 30 September 2009].

