

West Midlands Police protects and serves the public with enhanced mobility

West Midlands Police strives to prevent crime and help people in need. To empower officers to spend more time serving the public and less on paperwork, it launched a mobility and device management transformation with Omnissa Workspace ONE®. Approximately 11,000 frontline and knowledge workers use mobile devices to gather, store and share evidence and witness statements, navigate faster to crime scenes and access IT support services from anywhere. This increases safety for both officers and the public while saving an estimated 1.8 million hours of administration time every year.

Preventing crime, protecting the public and helping people

West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the country, covering an area of 348 square miles and serving a population of almost 2.8 million. The force deals with more than 2,000 emergency calls a day.

In 2021, West Midlands Police launched a three-year strategy called “This Work Matters” to help its staff be the best they can be as they deliver on the force’s objectives. Enabling police officers to maximize their time in the communities they serve is essential to the successful delivery of police initiatives.



West Midlands Police is the second-largest police force in England, serving 2.9 million citizens across 348 square miles. Its mission is to prevent crime, protect the public and help people in need.

Industry

Government

Omnissa footprint

Omnissa Workspace ONE®
Assist

Omnissa Workspace ONE®
Tunnel

Omnissa Workspace ONE® UEM
Omnissa Intelligence

Reducing the burden of police paperwork

Accurate and reliable reporting is fundamental to policing. West Midlands Police found that legacy processes—such as manual reports and having to scan documents—were taking much-needed time away from policing. And when officers were in the field, receiving information via phone or radio was sometimes misinterpreted.

“All interactions with the public must be accurately recorded and securely stored—if there’s no record, it’s as if it never happened,” explains Gregg Hudson, Mobility and Automation Manager at West Midlands Police IT and Digital Team. “When responding to a callout, officers need access to up-to-date intelligence to assess potential risks. Additionally, having real-time visibility into team locations helps ensure the fastest possible response.”

West Midlands Police introduced a workplace mobility strategy in 2016 and has since rolled out 11,000 end user devices and nearly 250 applications.

However, there were challenges around device management and the user experience. Officers were responsible for part of the device configuration, which made onboarding time-consuming. Calls to the support desk were at an all-time high and user adoption was only around 60 percent. The team needed to reduce the IT administrative burden, digitalize more workflows and provide a better experience to end-users. As a government entity, the force also needed to follow national guidelines around security from the UK Government’s National Cyber Security Centre to better secure its large volume of public data.



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The rise of the connected police officer

Partnering with Omniassa, West Midlands Police completely rebuilt and re-implemented their Workspace ONE solution. This allowed them to migrate 7,000 users from the on-premises unified endpoint management solution to the cloud-native management of Workspace One UEM in just four months. Where previously it took around three hours to set up a new device, it now takes as little as five minutes (in ideal circumstances). In the first five months of the project, this amounted to time savings of 17,000 hours. Officers are equipped with Samsung smartphones using Android Enterprise management and security features in the Android operating system.

The IT team—which had a good relationship with Omniassa from previous engagements—worked with Omniassa experts for

implementation guidance. They also had regular ongoing meetings and sessions to share best practices. This proved to be vital at challenging points in the rollout, such as retaining password-less authentication for Microsoft Office 365.

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Devices were allocated based on role-specific personas, ensuring that each user group received the right apps and level of data security to empower but not overwhelm them. The force used Samsung Knox Mobile Enrollment to enroll all devices easily and efficiently in Omniassa Workspace ONE® UEM, keeping end-user interaction to a minimum.

Secure, seamless IT support from anywhere

Today, when officers need IT support in the field, devices can be remotely controlled using Omnisssa Workspace ONE® Assist, which has increased first time resolution from approximately 60 to 90 percent. “With Workspace ONE Assist, we can do a walkthrough diagnosis from anywhere. Using remote whiteboard tools, we can even draw on the user’s screen and train less technical people on how to use their device,” Hudson explains. “Importantly, when an officer in our region supports another police service, we can still provide active support in the field which we wouldn’t be able to easily achieve without Workspace ONE Assist.”

IT support staff are divided into security tiers to serve different user groups. Those with the highest security clearance can see everything on a user’s device, but lower tiers have limited access. They can help track down lost devices using location services, but can’t see the user’s personal files or photos. Authorized IT staff can also recover lost files or wipe devices remotely if they’re lost or stolen, reducing the risk of data leaks.

Reduced risk and increased performance of mission-critical apps

Another solution that has provided efficiency and security is Omnisssa Workspace ONE® Tunnel, which ensures secure device access to corporate resources. The flexibility of the solution also helps the team make decisions on how to operate more efficiently. The per-app feature is more efficient than a full-device VPN because tunneling is activated when specific applications are launched, instead of a traditional VPN scenario where all traffic is tunneled. For example, Google Maps does not require secure tunneling and is routed directly to the Internet, while other corporate apps are secured on a per-app basis.



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“A significant benefit of Workspace ONE Tunnel is when we’re using Google Maps for GPS. The last thing you need in an emergency is an app that’s slow or hasn’t updated with recent road closures,” says Hudson. “Per-app VPN removes local dependencies for services which we can assure for operation directly over the internet.”

Spending more time protecting the public

The IT team created a broad portfolio of apps, making essential resources available to officers from their devices. This has resulted in fewer phone calls and trips back to the office, and more time for community policing. The organization estimates frontline officers have avoided more than 1.8 million administrative hours in one year.

The consumer-like device configuration has reduced the need for training and improved end user satisfaction. This was vital to increase user adoption, and demand has grown steadily since the initial rollout. One of the apps captures digital witness statements. In just one month it captured more than 8,000 statements, saving around 1,000 hours of officer time.

Officer safety is strengthened through more accurate information about the local area and the ability to quickly access and share accurate, real-time information. As Hudson explains, “Officers aren’t guessing what awaits them at a crime scene. Radio messages can be misheard and rely on the officer’s memory. Now, they have a visual reference to refer back to.”

By taking a user-centric approach to device management, the IT team has removed maintenance tasks—such as app permissions—that interrupt officers when they’re trying to work.

“Workspace ONE is providing officers with a smooth, user-friendly experience—and the data backs it up,” says Hudson. “Adoption rates have climbed to 80%, and the split between support tickets and features requests has flipped from 80:20 to 20:80, demonstrating strong engagement and enthusiasm for the transformation.”

With digital workflows and real-time information on the go, officers can spend more time serving the public and delivering against the “This Work Matters” framework. This has resulted in visits from 11 national police forces and the French Directorate of Information Systems and Communication (DSIC) looking to learn from the force.

Smarter intelligence and IT reporting

Following the successful rollout, West Midlands Police is collaborating with Omnisca and Samsung to develop a self-service portal to secure lost devices faster and reduce IT support demand. The team is also exploring the use of Omnisca Intelligence reports to generate app installation data and bespoke device reports. The intelligence API then pulls this data into their service management platforms. App data provides management insights into installation and engagement post-launch, while mobile data enables a single-button wipe or retire service, allowing IT specialists to remove a device from Workspace ONE and the Samsung portal via API in just one click.