



UK Power Networks

Closing the Door on Fraud
with Confirmation of Payee

Reducing Fraudulent and Incorrect Payments

UK Power Networks is an award-winning utility organisation. They rely on Bottomline solutions to manage payments to 3,000+ vendors and contractors, some of which can amount to millions of pounds. They also make pension and payroll payments, as well as customer refunds.

An early adopter of Bottomline's Confirmation of Payee (CoP) for Business solution, UK Power Networks has reduced the risk of fraudulent or accidental misdirected payment for high-value transactions, and lower-value transactions that previously were not subject to payee verification.

Ever-Escalating Risk of Fraud

Before implementing CoP, UK Power Networks followed industry best practice to manually verify payee details by contacting the beneficiary using an independently researched phone number. The process was thorough but time-consuming. Hardy Finn is the Accounts Payable Manager at UK Power Networks. He says

"Due to the ever-escalating risk of fraud, I was keen to introduce CoP as quickly as possible. During the evaluation, only Bottomline could give me complete confidence they had the right technology combined with a deep understanding of the CoP roadmap. The solution was a natural fit to our requirements, it was fast to switch on and we have successfully derisked our payments as a result."

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CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

UK Power Networks owns and maintains electricity cables and lines across London, the South East and East of England and makes sure power flows reliably, safely, and securely. Their priorities are also to help tackle the climate crisis by connecting power supplies for renewable energy, electric car chargers and low carbon heating and meet customers' evolving needs by continuously improving services.

BENEFITS



Pay the right company/
person every time



Eliminate risk of fraud and
accidental misdirection of payments



Complete a Confirmation of
Payee check in as little as 30
seconds



Enable verification for
all payments



Embed payee verification
processes across the enterprise



Preventing Authorised Push Payment Fraud

UK Power Networks verifies payee bank details when it onboards new vendors and customers, but update requests are often received by email. The value of CoP verification was demonstrated when a supplier was compromised by a cyber incident which allowed fraudsters to send a highly credible request from a valid email account, asking to change bank details. It came from a known and named individual at an existing supplier.

However, the CoP check immediately revealed a mismatch between the payee's name and bank account. A quick phone call to a very surprised supplier confirmed it was attempted authorised push payment (APP) fraud.



Paying the Right Company/Person

Bottomline's CoP solution allows UK Power Networks to verify that the payee and bank details match. The sort code, account number and payee name are entered into a web-based CoP screen and returns one of three outcomes - Match, Close Match or No Match. Hardy adds,

"It's not just fraud we have to worry about. We need to prevent accidental payments made in error resulting from a typo or data entry issue. Some of our payments can be tens of millions of pounds but with CoP we know that we are paying the right company/person every time.

The nature of our business as a leader in providing the power to new housing developments and consumers' electric vehicle charging infrastructure has led to a large number of first-time refund payments to companies and individuals.

We didn't have the time or resources to verify payments of less than £10,000. Thanks to Bottomline, we have replaced a slow, manually intensive process with an automated real-time solution which has enabled us to eliminate this threshold and derisk an entire suite of payments that previously had no account verification."



Payee Verification in as Little as 30 Seconds

Hardy states, "The change effort required to embed CoP verification into multiple teams across UK Power Networks has been minimal. The adoption even by non-finance personnel allows more staff to perform vital CoP verification checks.

The solution is simple and easy to use. The user experience (UX) is very clear and we can train a new user in just 10 minutes. For example, customer refunds are now made daily and processed by an admin team."

For auditing purposes, full details of each CoP verification, including when it was performed, and the ID of the person making the check, is saved as a pdf and uploaded to the ERP solution, SAP. This whole process can be done in as little as 30 seconds.



Closing the Door on Fraudsters

Hardy explains, "Everyone involved in payments at UK Power Networks can sleep better at night knowing that every payee has been through a CoP check. The solution enables us to close the door on fraudsters. We have increased confidence that we are paying the right company/person, every time.

The solution has eliminated any residual risk for our payments as we have a significantly faster verification process which means we can check thousands of payments that were never scrutinised before."

Delivering Continuous Improvement

Bottomline's focus on service excellence has given UK Power Networks the confidence to explore further areas of payment automation. Hardy concludes,

"Bottomline is a trusted partner not just in digital payments - their Cheque Printing Service was also invaluable.

You can see the time and effort they invest in the relationship and our account manager is genuinely interested in understanding our payment challenges. One of our core values is continuous improvement and working closely with Bottomline helps us to continually refine and improve payment processes so that we can provide the best service at the lowest cost to our customers.

We've had zero downtime which is very important when making vital payments. I would recommend Bottomline's CoP solution without hesitation to anyone who wants simple but effective payee verification. It has given us complete peace of mind for all our payments."

CoP for Business is provided by Bottomline Payment Services Ltd, who are authorized by the Financial Conduct Authority under the Payment Services Regulations for the provision of payment services with FCA registration number 616279

Confirmation of Payee: New Applications For Payment Verification

CoP is an industry-wide, UK response to combat Authorised Push Payment (APP) fraud and misdirected payments. There are numerous ways businesses and consumers can be deceived into sending what they think is an authentic payment. This eBook delves deeper into how CoP works and how businesses use CoP.

[Read the ebook](#)



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