

CASE STUDY

CLOUD TRANSFORMATION LIBERATES THE DISABILITIES TRUST



OVERVIEW

- The Disabilities Trust needed to replace its ageing IT infrastructure, which was no longer coping with the organisation's increasing workload.
- CDW delivered a transformational cloud migration, providing the Trust with a unified managed service that offers greater uptime, enhanced security, drives employee collaboration and delivers an improved user experience.
- Productivity has improved alongside numerous efficiency gains.

ABOUT THE DISABILITIES TRUST

- A national charity providing services to people with complex and challenging needs, from brain injury to autism and physical disabilities.
- The charity's Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT) has 11 residential assessment and rehabilitation centres, and two independent hospitals, while the Autism and Disability services operate 10 residential and community-based services and a special day school for children and young people with autism.
- Also provides community-based services to support people in their own homes.
- 1,500 dedicated members of staff.
- Providing support, rehabilitation and enablement to around 1,000 people each year.

CHALLENGE

The Disabilities Trust depends on the strength of its IT infrastructure to enable the provision of specialist support. The Trust's IT transformation journey began with a recognition that its infrastructure was no longer coping with the demands placed upon it, let alone being able to handle future growth. With a commitment to continuous innovation, the Trust needed the agility to embrace new technologies and respond to emerging challenges, all while securing efficiencies wherever possible, to ensure limited resources are focused on improving the lives of the people it supports and maximising their independence.

The decision to embark on a programme of change came at a time when outages were alarmingly frequent. The Trust's Interim Director of Technology, Nathan Baranowski describes the previous arrangements as 'the old world'. He says "When this project began four years ago, our IT infrastructure was not fit for purpose. On my first day in this role, our servers went down three times and it seemed we couldn't add a new email account without the system crashing. It was clear that whatever applications and systems we needed to build would demand a robust IT infrastructure."

The shortcomings of the existing infrastructure were having a negative impact on employee productivity and service continuity. In addition, outages were creating potential vulnerabilities around the protection of diverse data, including project information and personal details. There was a lack of standardisation across the infrastructure which led to increased support costs and unpredictable user experience. This placed pressure on IT teams to regularly patch up areas of weakness.

These problems created barriers to the increasingly dynamic way in which the Trust's staff wanted to work. It was clear that the outdated remote desktop service needed to be replaced with a solution that delivered anytime, anywhere access on any device in a unified way.

“ People are saying this will revolutionise the way they work. ”

– Nathan Baranowski, Interim Director of Technology

SOLUTION

The aim was to replace the two existing collocated data centres with a scalable cloud solution. After exploring a wide range of options via a tender process, the Trust identified CDW's managed services as the best fit. Nathan says "CDW was the only provider at that time which understood our need and could deliver it. We had open and clear dialogue about what we were trying to do and how CDW could meet those requirements. I loved CDW because they were open and honest."

The creation of a unified cloud solution was an important leap forward for the Trust and required thorough planning and expertise. "CDW helped us understand that world," says Nathan. "It was an educational process, often involving up to 15 experts around the table. There were certainly some complexities to overcome. For example, we needed to leverage some licensing agreements and CDW helped make that commercially viable. Compared to some other providers, it was a refreshing change."

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An important pillar of the solution was the implementation of CDW's own Cloud platform, ServiceWorks, including disaster recovery to uphold continuity. In addition, Citrix ADC was recommended to help control network congestion and deliver a responsive experience on managed devices.

Staff at The Disabilities Trust are now taking advantage of a range of virtualised applications delivered via Citrix, with unified access across laptops, smartphones and

tablets as the platform is rolled out across the organisation. The security provided by Citrix was a key factor and resilience is further strengthened by Microsoft's Enterprise Mobility + Security suite.

With a workforce spread across the country, the Trust also wanted reliable conferencing, collaboration and communication tools. CDW orchestrated a set of solutions including Skype for Business and, in two core locations, video conferencing services.

OUTCOME

The cloud migration project and associated technology upgrades represented the biggest single investment in the history of The Disabilities Trust, excluding property transactions. As such, it was imperative that measurable returns were delivered.

Most importantly, The Disabilities Trust has now achieved NHS Level 2 IT compliance, without which it could have put at risk 70% of its revenue.

The use of video conferencing and enhanced mobility has dramatically reduced travel costs and time relating to meetings and interviews, paying for itself in as little as eight months, enabling greater productivity and delivering a positive social impact. In addition, new ways of working have brought a widely dispersed organisation closer together.

"We are trying to drive value. That means, for example, thinking of the cost per gigabyte of data and asking whether the amount of data we are holding is appropriate. The solution is about consuming the right services and driving productivity through mobility, providing users with access to the data and apps they need. These are like the foundations of a house, making everything else possible" said Nathan.

Employee feedback has been positive as their experience of using technology becomes more

closely aligned with their needs. "People are saying this will revolutionise the way they work," said Nathan. "It's fantastic watching the senior management team having meetings, all from different locations."

The Trust's experience of working with CDW has also attracted praise. "It has not been an easy journey – it never is in IT – but I had confidence that CDW would do the right thing. They had our interests at heart throughout the whole process, they listened and they came prepared which differentiates them from other providers. It was a relationship that turned into a partnership. We are a team that feels like one group because CDW is part of our team."

The approach that CDW brought to the project has inspired a fundamental shift in thinking at the Trust. "This process has matured us. Our internal change management programme has changed and now follows the process that CDW introduced to us. We have become far less reactive and more proactive. Moving forward – this year is the year where IT keeps giving, and it is manifesting itself in some really positive ways. The shifts in mind set among the teams here have been really exciting."

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For more information or to discuss your requirements, speak to CDW:

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