

## CASE STUDY

# YOUR HOUSING GROUP LEVERAGES PRIVATE CLOUD TO BOOST EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY



### OVERVIEW

- The growth of Your Housing Group was constrained by ageing and inconsistent IT infrastructure, which prevented employees from working flexibly and delivering on-the-spot customer services.
- CDW designed and implemented a new infrastructure solution, harnessing HPE and VMware technologies to enable a more resilient, scalable and agile private cloud.
- IT availability has improved and employees now have access to flexible working, driving greater productivity and enhanced customer experience.

### ABOUT YOUR HOUSING GROUP

- Your Housing Group is a housing provider with a diverse portfolio of over 28,000 homes across the North West, Yorkshire and the Midlands.
- Employs over 1,000 people.
- Portfolio includes; general properties for social and affordable rent, retirement living developments and innovative private rental schemes such as Hive.
- Committed to helping solve the UK housing crisis by providing homes that help people live independently and navigate the property ladder.

## CHALLENGE

Your Housing Group was formed from a merger of separate organisations and was reliant upon a mixed accumulation of legacy IT infrastructure platforms, including a large proportion of ageing technology.

IT services are vital to the running of the organisation's three main offices, eleven community hub sites and many of its housing schemes. However, reliability, agility and remote working were all restricted by disparate infrastructure. The organisation also lacked a sufficient disaster recovery solution.

Additionally, there were no standardised processes and the productivity of field workers travelling between sites was compromised as a result.

Sarah Stinchcombe, Category Manager – Indirects at Your Housing Group, says: "We needed our employees to be able to work from within our housing schemes by accessing WiFi services, retrieving documents online and completing tenancy agreements. It is so much more beneficial in terms of service levels and efficiency for our employees to be able to work through these tasks whilst sitting with customers, but we didn't have a solution that enabled that."

With strategic plans to build at least 1,000 homes each year, introduce property brands and enable greater agility within the workforce, the need for a more consistent, modernised infrastructure solution was a priority.

**“ Thanks to CDW, employees are now empowered to work from our properties with customers while reporting a repair or discussing a new contract, prior to the new solution this wouldn't have been possible. ”**

– Sarah Stinchcombe, Category Manager – Indirects at Your Housing Group

## SOLUTION

CDW was selected as the preferred partner to plan and implement Your Housing Group's infrastructure transformation. CDW's team of expert Solutions Architects worked closely with the organisation to design a highly available and scalable private cloud solution to host network applications and services, centred around HPE and VMware technologies. The plan was set out in the form of a high-level design document that became pivotal to the deployment.

The new modernised solution consisted of HPE BladeSystem technology and HPE 3PAR StoreServ for optimised data storage. This was supported with VMware vSphere server virtualisation and VMware vRealize for automation, orchestration and management. Additionally, HPE OneView provided the platform for converged management.

By combining HPE and VMware technologies, CDW enabled the provision of virtualised infrastructure to run line-of-business applications and virtual desktop infrastructure services for flexible working at Your Housing

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— Matt Bradshaw, ICT Head of Infrastructure at Your Housing



Group. The addition of an enhanced data protection solution was integrated in to the plan proposed by CDW in order to provide granular back-up and restore capabilities, plus extended retention and off-site data back up.

Guy Smith, Head of Technology Solutions at CDW says: “CDW worked with Your Housing Group to prepare them for the next generation of on-premises provisioning. This enables them to benefit from a cloud experience within defined boundaries. HPE and VMware are providing a new level of flexibility and control in the enterprise.”

Based on Your Housing Group's plans for future growth, CDW sized the infrastructure by calculating the number of VM's it would

require over the next five years.

In the deployment phase, CDW also helped manage the 'lift-and-shift' of legacy infrastructure, which ran parallel with the new platform until the former was decommissioned.

Another element of the solution was the supply and configuration of new powerful and flexible HP devices. The team at CDW's dedicated Configuration Centre ensured that devices were pre-configured to Your Housing Group's requirements, so that new employees joining the organisation were suitably equipped and up and running almost immediately.

## OUTCOME

Your Housing Group is now benefitting from a more agile infrastructure platform, which is helping employees with flexible working. Since the completion of the infrastructure project, the organisation has created its first fully agile team.

Having proven its value, the same approach is being applied to other areas of the business, with the intention that approximately one-third of the workforce will be fully agile, another third will have the flexibility to switch between the two and the remaining workforce will be necessarily office-based.

“We believe strongly in helping our employees maintain a healthy work-life balance and with the new infrastructure now in place, we can enable a work schedule that suits them,” says Sarah Stinchcombe. “Alongside that, we have a commitment to deliver the best possible service to our tenants, which means making use of digital capabilities. Thanks to CDW, employees are now empowered to work from our properties with customers while reporting a repair or discussing a new contract. Prior to the

new technology solution, this wouldn't have been possible.”

The increased reliability of the new infrastructure has been demonstrated by a radical reduction in the number of service failures. Uptime has improved and the IT team is reporting high levels of visibility thanks to HPE OneView. “We're able to deal with problems very quickly because we can see exactly what is happening and in many cases we are able to address any issues before they even affect anyone. We have a huge amount of visibility now,” says Matt Bradshaw, ICT Head of Operations at Your Housing Group.

Guy Smith, Head of Technology Solutions at CDW, says: “Like many other organisations, Your Housing Group wanted to harness digital technologies to better serve its customers and improve employees' experience of work. Having the correct infrastructure in place is fundamental to that goal and we are proud to have assisted Your Housing Group on this journey, which will have a profound effect on people's lives.”

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— Sarah Stinchcombe, Category Manager – Indirects at Your Housing Group

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

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