

How Castleton facilitated a mobile workforce and more digitally engaged customer base

Housing Solutions is based in Maidenhead, Berkshire. Formed in 1995 as part of a stock transfer from the Windsor & Maidenhead council, Housing Solutions took over the management of more than 7,500 homes across Berkshire and Hampshire. The most recent implementation of Castleton's Host-IT service meant that Housing Solutions could realise the true benefits of Desktop as a Service, removing the need and cost of relocation to bigger premises, as well as the management of future server replacement. Freeing up time and physical space, with improved cost control.

The need

Housing Solutions had a very traditional IT set-up, with an on-site solution managed by an internal IT team, with the majority of staff working from the Maidenhead head office. As demands on IT were ever increasing to deliver enhanced services to both staff and customers, a workplace review was conducted. It was agreed that a total refurbishment and layout change would be put in place to facilitate a more mobile workforce and digitally engaged customer base.

The solution

As part of the new layout changes, the existing server room was to be moved. Housing Solutions decided to carry out an evaluation with Castleton, on how best to deliver a future-proof IT infrastructure, that would remain fit for purpose for years to come.

Working together as trusted advisors, it was agreed that the best-fit solution for Housing Solutions would be Desktop as a Service (DaaS).

The hosted solution would remove the need to re-locate and replace the existing servers, as all the infrastructure would be owned by Castleton and leased to Housing Solutions on a per user per month basis. This solution would enable the business to transform the way it delivers its digital services both inside and outside the organisation, and would encourage staff to work in a more agile way across the organisation, from hot-desks, break-out areas and even at home. Castleton's Host-IT service enables Housing Solutions to do this, whilst retaining the familiar look and feel of their desktop.

Key benefits

- Enhanced service focus for customers
- Ability to have a mobile workforce
- Effective space utilisation
- No downtime
- Simplified single IT supplier model
- Simplified budget management

Housing Solutions implementation journey



Over the next few years, the organisation is set to fully embrace Digital engagement with its customers.

The new Desktop as a Service with its 'always on' functionality managed by a team of IT experts will ensure this happens and that our internal IT team can focus on the delivery of enhanced services to its customers.

Richard Harvey, Head of IT for Housing Solutions.



The results

Carrying out such a large project required effective project management which Castleton and Housing Solutions achieved together. The transition from the existing IT setup to the new cloud-based solution happened over one weekend, with business as usual for the staff when they arrived on the Monday morning.

A key benefit of the new solution which was realised quite quickly was the ability to avert disaster. Following a successful implementation, the building was hit by a power failure which lasted for two weeks, during which time, staff had the ability to work from either the office

or any other location. There was no downtime of operations.

Other benefits seen from the Castleton hosted solution was the simplification of budget management, as user counts, software licencing and compute power evaluations are now all wrapped up in a per user per month cost, that allows the organisation to flex up and down as the market changes.

The internal IT team now manages a minimum number of internal servers for RDS, rather than managing each user and their application requirements. Upgrades are carried out universally from one place, rather than across 100 plus desktops; saving time, power

and resource. Finally, since 2008, Housing Solutions began to adopt some of Castleton's fully integrated software solutions and have therefore seen the benefits of dealing with a single organisation to deliver both their applications and infrastructure requirements. The integrated solutions are effectively managed to ensure that applications run efficiently on an appropriate hardware platform.

Housing Solutions earlier adoption of SurelTy (Back-up and disaster recovery) plus SupportIT (contracted support) in 2011, offers peace of mind, allowing Housing Solutions to focus on enhanced service delivery to over 7,500 homes.