

NHS trust saves a healthy £400,000 with innovative remote working remedy from Insight

Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides acute hospital services for patients in Surrey. When it was looking for a way to enable 400 employees to work from home, Insight's recommended Microsoft's Azure Windows Virtual Desktop. The Trust achieved its goal within weeks and avoided around £400,000 in hardware costs.

The Challenge

In February 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's staff were working in open plan offices with shared facilities. Social distancing was next to impossible, so the trust needed to enable its 400 employees to work from home rapidly.

St Peter's Hospital had also begun taking in COVID patients, making the need for a remote working solution even more urgent. To relieve the pressure caused by the influx of COVID-19 patients, some of St Peter's services were moved to Ashford. This move led to staff working across different sites on different days – so the Trust also needed to enable employees to access their computers from wherever they were located.

The Trust wanted to put the solution in place within a few weeks. It was initially looking at traditional options that would have taken upwards of five weeks to implement, cost upwards of £400,000 in hardware and required a long-term licensing commitment.

The Trust urgently needed a way to speed up the process and avoid a large upfront capital expenditure.

"Insight's solution was a win-win for Ashford and St Peters. It solved our immediate problem of how to enable staff to work from home without major capital expenditure – and now it's in place we're seeing a 60% reduction in the time spent updating and managing staff computers. The ongoing savings give us money to spend on patient care."

Morne Beck, Head of IT, Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.



Quick Overview

- Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the largest provider of acute hospital services for patients in Surrey.
- The Trust urgently needed to enable 400 employees to work from home at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Insight suggested using Windows Virtual Desktops – a solution not previously put into practice by an NHS Trust in the south of England.
- The solution was in place within just a few weeks and saved the Trust over £400,000 in hardware and software costs.

The Solution

When Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust needed to enable key workers to work from home, it turned to Insight, a trusted partner of nine years standing, for help. When previously faced with a similar problem on a smaller scale, the Trust had supplied staff with laptops for working from home – but procuring, configuring and delivering machines for 400 employees would have taken far too long.

Insight suggested using Microsoft's Azure Windows Virtual Desktop solution. This approach enabled the Trust's employees to securely connect to an optimised cloud-based Windows 10 desktop and applications environment, with access to on-premises data from their own devices. This solution had never been adopted by an NHS health trust in the south of England before.

After the initial consultation and agreement, Insight approached its partner, Concorde Technology Group, to arrange implementation. Despite the high demand for remote working solutions, less than four weeks after the Trust's initial call to Insight, the solution was in place.

The Azure-hosted WVD environment avoids the need for expensive on-site hardware. There is no upfront capital expenditure or long-term financial commitment, and the Trust has the flexibility to scale the solution up and down.

Staff access their Windows 10 virtual desktops with two factor authorisation – meeting the industry standard requirements for security. Windows' built-in management and security features save time on administration, making it easier to perform tasks like granting access to other healthcare organisations, or applying software updates.

The Benefits

Staff at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are now able to work from home, using their own devices, keeping social contact between staff to a minimum.

The Windows Virtual Desktops provide the best virtualised experience that is fully optimised for Windows 10 and Office 365, with built-in intelligent security to keep The Trust's applications and data secure.

The solution was put in place in less than four weeks – roughly half the time that a traditional remote working solution would have taken to implement.

The Trust saved over £400,000 on potential upfront costs and was able to avoid long-term licencing commitment.

The Results Highlights



400 staff at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are now working safely and securely from home.



Over £400,000 saved in upfront costs for physical infrastructure.



Quickly implementing the solution meant minimal disruption to hospital operations.



The Trust spent 60% less time managing staff computers.