

Risc IT Solutions

Adferiad Recovery

Managed Services Case Study



Microsoft
Partner



Gold Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions
Gold Cloud Productivity
Gold Enterprise Mobility Management
Gold Datacenter
Silver Cloud Platform

Challenge

Adferiad Recovery is a Welsh Charity formed from the amalgamation of long-established and leading charities CAIS, Hafal and WCADA. The merger took place in 2021 and established Adferiad Recovery as a leading expert across the fields of substance abuse, mental health, housing support, criminal justice and employment support to help vulnerable people facing complex life challenges.

Having initially worked with CAIS for a number of years, we were approached to assist with the merger due its size and complex requirements.

As all the charities were well-established in their own right - all with their own email systems, telephone solutions, and security setups - a big challenge for them was combining all the different systems that each charity had into one unified and futureproof IT platform. The transition needed to be smooth and the solution needed to be intuitive, fully accessible from any of their offices throughout Wales, and very secure.

Because each individual charity already had their own IT provider, it was important that there was no lapse in support during and after the merge. Some of the existing providers did not have the necessary expertise for the challenges that were being faced, so establishing a structure to provide a timely and effective response for both basic assistance and complex requirements was essential for the newly merged company.

The charity deals with highly sensitive information, so maintaining absolute security throughout the merger and beyond was of paramount importance.

To demonstrate this, Adferiad set out with the goal to achieve CyberEssentials+, a government-backed scheme that consists of a defined set of controls to ensure an organisation operates at the highest level of protection.

Lastly, being a charity, cost was a challenge, so value for money was crucial.



Solution

After discussing the challenges the individual charities were facing, it was clear that to achieve the aspirations of the new merged charity, and to ensure a smooth transition for all, the group's IT estate needed to be unified, managed and rolled out centrally. With Risc providing a "Virtual CIO" role and operating as the group's Managed Service Provider, we broke down our recommended solutions and rolled them out in three strands.

1. Productivity

To ensure continuity across each of the separate offices, we provided a range of Microsoft 365 licences (Business Basic, Business Premium, and E3) to suits the needs of different users. This enabled us to manage all user accounts centrally. Users have access to Outlook, Teams, the Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc), and online OneDrive storage for easy collaborative working in any of their office locations or at home.

We also created a SharePoint site for Adferiad to function as an intranet and group document repository. We ensured that documents were easy to access, but also protected by Azure Active Directory Premium with additional layers of security through multifactor authentication (MFA). We enabled Conditional Access Policies as well which means that if access to files or apps is requested from a new device or a new location, users will be prompted for their password and MFA.

This also works hand in hand with Universal Print which enables secure managed printing across the entire organisation.

Adferiad make full use of Microsoft Teams, using it as their central hub for day to day activities. Branches within the organisation have gone further and enhanced Microsoft Teams by enabling Teams Telephony, providing a helpline for their most vulnerable, at risk service users. The solution is completely Cloud-based, so is accessible on any device anywhere with internet access, and is futureproof as it's without onsite infrastructure. As their MSP, we coordinated the setup of their Teams Telephony system from start to finish, and offer ongoing technical support to the users as well.

Working from anywhere, across devices and locations, was important to Adferiad as they now had offices all over Wales and a workforce of hybrid workers. We recommended Intune to help with the easy deployment and management of apps and devices, making their new IT setup sustainable for the long-term and more secure as company data is only accessible on registered devices.

2. Security

Whilst there are important security features built into Microsoft 365, we wanted to ensure complete protection. To fill those gaps, we recommended Redstor backup for their servers, and Cloud to Cloud backup for their Microsoft 365 data.

This will ensure that a backup of all data is stored securely in the Cloud completely separate from the Microsoft platform and is ready to be restored in a data loss scenario. In addition to this, ESET Endpoint Protection provides advanced, multi-layered antivirus for all their devices keeping their machines and data secure.

Both Redstor and ESET are accessible through easy to manage portals meaning that the deployment and management is sustainable for now and the future.

3. Efficiency

An important part of the project was ensuring that the solutions provided are sustainable and effective long term. We recommended Datto for Adferiad to help with this. Datto provides an IT asset list so it's easy to keep track of devices – and therefore the data that's on those devices as well. It also has warranty information so coordinating replacements of devices when the warranty is near the end is straightforward. Datto also offers a remote support tool meaning we can offer our hands on support for users regardless of where they're working from.

We also provided new hardware. We used Datto to identify laptops that had unsupported OS or were out of warranty and replaced them as required. Additionally, we provided new on-premise servers, switches, and access points to ensure their entire set up was up to date and long lasting.

Results

Thanks to the help and support we provided through our Managed Service, the charity merger was smooth, successful and is now established and operational. We successfully implemented an easy to use and sustainable IT system that meets everyone's requirements and different needs. The systems we've implemented are intuitive to use and allow for productive, secure and efficient working from any of their office locations or homes.

Adferiad Recovery now have full transparency of all their data and their physical assets. This is protected with the highest levels of security ensuring that confidential information stays confidential now and always.

Getting technical help is no longer problematic. They have easy access to technical experts who assist with basic end user queries through to complex projects.

With Risc IT's help, Adferiad met their goal of achieving the CyberEssentials+ certification across the organisation - demonstrating a higher level of assurance they now adhere to. This not only gives peace of mind to the business itself, but provides third party attestation that the IT and security systems meet government recognised standards and best practice.

"The merger and establishment of Adferiad Recovery was a success due to the help and support of Risc IT Solutions. Right from the outset they listened to our issues and requirements and sculpted our entire IT setup. Due to the sensitive nature of our work and the real-life impact it has on our service users, Risc really respected that every decision made had to be considered, and needed to provide strong foundations for the future.

Having completed the work, a testament to its success was supported by the assessor for CyberEssentials+ who complimented us on the maturity of our IT Infrastructure. This is especially important for us as CyberEssentials+ is often a key requirement for funding, as well as an important measure of how seriously we take the security and confidentiality of our data.

With the ongoing first-class advice and technical support that we receive from Risc, alongside having an architecture for growth, we're now in a position for continued expansion, which most importantly means we can provide increased assistance to people in a vulnerable position."

Associate Director - Data & Evaluation - Adferiad Recovery

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