

Case Study

Trafford Housing Trust
IT Services
Not-for-profit social housing

Ricoh helps Trafford Housing Trust build digital transformation platform to drive efficiency, improved customer experience



Ricoh digital transformation services have enabled Trafford Housing Trust to change its IT environment radically. It has established a Microsoft cloud-based

technology platform for launching innovative digital services that increase efficiency, facilitate secure people mobility and improve the customer experience.

Executive summary

Name: Trafford Housing Trust
Location: Sale, near Manchester
Size: 530 staff
Activity: Not-for-profit social housing

Challenges

- Deliver modernisation and digital services vision
- Uphold 'Customer Promise' for accessible, cost-effective services
- Old, restrictive, slow IT infrastructure causing downtime, poor performance
- Legacy issues integrating print with IT environment seamlessly

Solution

- Ricoh Digital Transformation
- IT infrastructure refresh
- Microsoft cloud computing

Benefits

- Transforms IT operating model, delivers innovative efficient digital workplace & customer experience improvement
- Delivers new online customer service portal, speeds up resident services
- 40 Team groups increase collaboration and organisation engagement with SharePoint
- Immediate cost savings by consolidating software licensing agreements
- Improves security with robust mobile technology, Follow Me print features
- Eliminates over-reliance, data privacy risks of spreadsheets

Challenges

Trafford Housing Trust is a not-for-profit housing association in north-west England. It manages 9,000 social and affordable rent, shared ownership and for-sale properties. It also provides a range of in-home care services and specialist care properties. Trafford Housing invests in property development and aims to build 2,000 new homes over the next three years.

Trafford Housing wanted to improve and enhance its services to the community as well as increase operational efficiency, flexibility and mobile working.

The Trust's 'Customer Promise' is a commitment to provide the best services in the most accessible, cost-effective way. But to do so, it had to change its existing IT infrastructure. Systems and equipment were getting old and were not responding effectively to modern working demands.

The vision was a 'Google' approach to increasing people mobility, so staff can work anywhere, anytime securely. Improving mobility was critical because the Trust has many field staff such as its Neighbourhood Team and property engineers who visit homes to look at issues such as rent and repairs, anti-social behaviour and void management. Several multi-unit properties have on-site housing officers.

The Trust needed help to achieve change, so it carried out a tender among several leading IT service providers. It chose Ricoh because of its reputation with other customers, scope of capabilities and services, and its co-operative partnership. What also impressed the Trust was Ricoh's approach to current-state analysis and planning which looked at how people work and what they need to be efficient and productive rather than how to improve technology.



Solution

Initially, Ricoh was brought in to address IT infrastructure, but it quickly became apparent that more fundamental change was needed if the Trust was to begin its transformation to a modernised, digital organisation.

Working in partnership, the Trust and Ricoh moved the organisation to a cloud-based computing environment which involved refreshing and rationalising IT infrastructure and desktop. Existing servers, switches and SAN technology was replaced with Cisco and NetApp solutions to support cloud-based data services and roll out of Microsoft Windows 10 and Office 365 for around 350 seats. As well as standard office applications like Word and Excel, the Trust is using several other products like Azure, SharePoint, Skype and Teams.

Existing business systems were redeployed on the new infrastructure using an enterprise-wide Citrix solution. These include housing management applications for handling property allocations, rent accounting and voids, asset management and controlling engineers and repairs. At the front-end, existing desktop terminals were replaced with laptops for all staff and around 80 tablets for engineers. To support more flexible working and hot desking, Ricoh set up office workstations with two screens, keyboard, mouse and a universal docking station.

Ricoh worked closely with the Trust but was responsible for the entire project from analysis and design to supplying hardware and software, deployment, testing and training. Ricoh advised the Trust on a communication campaign about the change and helped rationalise and consolidate software licencing agreements.

Julian Massel, Director of Technology at Trafford Housing Trust, says, "Trafford Housing and Ricoh didn't always agree on aspects of the project, but in a healthy way. It was an evolution and journey and we worked and learnt together to find the best solution. Ricoh brought in the right people and resources, but only when we needed them, and its documentation was very impressive. Ricoh is actually one of the nicest organisations I've ever worked with."

The Trust is also using a Ricoh Managed Print service comprising around 50 Ricoh Multifunction Products with features like Follow Me print to enhance the user experience and strengthen the security across the organisation. This was connected to the new infrastructure to unify and integrate further business services like print.

Massel says, "When you look at the technology change at Trafford Housing, what's different is moving to Microsoft Cloud and Office 365 and embracing the concept completely. It's a massive step, but we've put all our emails, collaboration

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tools and applications in the cloud and given everyone a laptop or tablet. It's been very positive and now we are starting to realise and take advantage of the benefits."

Benefits

For Trafford Housing, probably the most important benefit has been establishing a strong platform to deliver its business and operational transformation vision for improvement.

"The Ricoh solution has been a fundamental factor in transforming the way we work and deliver services to customers. It is the avoidance of issues like down time, slowness, poor performance, and not having effective remote access that are crippling to a business. On the positive side, we've now got some great tools that enable better collaboration, closer working and building data accuracy so we have the right information at the right time to the right person," says Massel.

The Trust has started developing digital services and applications that increase efficiency and improve the customer experience. The most significant so far is MyAccount – an online portal for customers to manage services such as rent payments and statements, updating details and booking repairs. It is improving and speeding up service provision for residents and helping the Trust reduce management costs.

The new IT infrastructure ensures back office systems are stable and running efficiently to support MyAccount. The Trust is already planning to offer more digital services via MyAccount such as a complex workflow service for rewriting tenancy agreements using Microsoft Flow, Microsoft Power Apps, and SharePoint as a document repository.

To improve operational efficiency, the Trust is developing other digital services. An app for field staff will provide real-time access via a tablet or smartphone to information about homes they visit such as tenancy agreements, gas certificate renewal or repair jobs. Currently this information is only available through existing business systems on spreadsheets and documents which staff print out and take to a property.

The Trust has set up a transformation team to look at other ways in which it can use its improved IT environment to deliver more digital services. Massel says, "The Ricoh solution and services are part of a broad approach to transformation, but the technology absolutely is the enabler."

Trafford Housing has reorganised its office environment with departments physically located closer to one another. This has been replicated digitally with technology enabling groups and departments to communicate and collaborate. There is a new intranet built on SharePoint and around 40 groups of 5-to-50 staff using Teams to collaborate and share information. Digital collaboration has even extended outside Trafford Housing. Around 20 housing associations in the Greater Manchester area have joined a Team site set up by the Trust for sharing resources and discussing experiences and best practice.

Julian Massel represents Greater Manchester Housing Associations on the GM-Connect Leadership Team to look at how information sharing across housing, local government and the NHS can reduce demand on public services and improve the lives of residents.

"Now the focus is on customers, transforming the way we work and getting the most out of the IT infrastructure that Ricoh has helped us deliver. Over the next 12 months we hope to see more digital services like a single view of the customer and a single, better quality version of all our data," says Massel.

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh IT Services:
 - Consultancy
 - Workplace and Mobility
 - Datacentre and Infrastructure
- Ricoh Resource Solutions
- Ricoh Managed Print Service:
 - Ricoh Multifunction Products
 - Print management software
- Cisco switching technology
- NetApp SAN servers
- Dell laptops & Lenovo tablets
- Microsoft Azure cloud, Office 365 and SharePoint
- Windows 10

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