



CASE STUDY

NHS REMOTE ACCESS SOLUTION

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Introduction

One of large NHS trusts had been using a legacy remote access platform for many years. As there were not that many users it remotely, it was not very well maintained. When the recent COVID-19 global pandemic occurred, the trust was in a challenging situation and needed a secure solution, that could scale to the size of the trust, be designed and deployed quickly.

The Challenge

AppDS were asked to develop and deploy the new remote access infrastructure within short notice and in very aggressive time frame. The first challenge was that we needed to assemble a team in less than week and ensure that they were ready to carry out the work.

The second challenge was the scale and timescales that were issued to us. For an organisation with several thousand users, the amount of time we had to deliver on the project was very short.

We had six weeks from start to finish and given that we had to guide the customer through all the pre-requisites as well as complete our own tasks, this was very demanding.

Consult

The client took advantage of our initial free consultancy offer and once we understood the challenges, we assured them that we could assist in the solution.

We worked with the stakeholders in the NHS Trust to decide on the best use of technology available to build the solution. This was to be based on the Citrix environment that already existed but was aged.

Manage

We approached the project the only logical manner, utilising agile methodology. We split out the project in several hundred small tasks that could be worked on in tandem. This allowed us to identify what resources we needed to deliver on the project in the timescales.

Our flexible approach to project activity ensures we can have a team assembled very quickly, for this particular project, we achieved this within a couple of days. Our approach to assign skills to the project itself opposed to naming individual people allowed us to achieve this.

Deliver

We were developing the platform as well as carrying out live testing with a selective group of people at the same time.

This has allowed us to achieve several things:

- Environment was designed and developed to meet real life user needs. As there was no time for requirements gathering – this approach was a critical for the success of the work.
- We have shortened our development cycle without compromising on the quality.

Finally, once the environment design was ready and running while being used by real users – we have used our extensive automation skills to produce all of the required master images and build out quickly:

- Powershell DSC driven master image build
- TeamCity and Octopus deploy driven Powershell DSC configuration updates including unit testing to ensure rapid delivery as well as minimal margin for error.
- Application packaging and delivery using Chocolatey

Succeed

The fully automated infrastructure AppDS put in place for the NHS Trust has allowed for a rapid upgrade process and deployment and it also ensures that future upgrades can be executed in equally short amounts of time.

The flexible and innovative approach that AppDS used to deliver this and other remote access projects, guarantees best possible results. Linking our DevOps skills with Agile project methodology allows us to deliver, automated, scalable and futureproofed solutions that no other consultancy is capable of.

If you are in a similar situation, AppDS will offer a free initial consultancy to determine the root cause, provide a fixed cost plan and resolution.