

Leading UK Legal Charity Selects AspiraCloud for National IT Project

About Law Centres Network

The Law Centres Network (LCN) is the membership organisation that supports the network of Law Centres operating around the UK. Comprising over 40 members, each Law Centre works independently and operates as a registered charity, offering free legal advice to their communities. Specialising in social welfare, immigration and housing law, they defend the legal rights of some of the most disadvantaged people in society, helping them save their homes, keep their jobs and protect their families.

Business Drivers

Each Law Centre is faced with funding challenges and subsequently, the majority of them had significantly under invested in IT infrastructure over the years. Many Law Centres were working with ageing technology and unreliable networks. Internet connections were basic, sharing files and collaboration across Centres was challenging, licenses were often difficult to manage and IT training and ongoing strategy was almost non-existent.

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Explains **Julie Bishop, Director at LCN**: “Our Law Centres provide high quality legal resources, dedicated to helping the most vulnerable in our local communities. Yet the quality of our IT facilities was preventing the Centres from working effectively to support our clients.” LCN recognised the need to deploy a cost effective, nationwide IT service to promote better use of the cloud, improve infrastructure, consolidate licencing and provide better quality, up to date devices to use in order to drive collaboration and improve services for both colleagues and clients.

The AspiraCloud Solution

The solution offered by AspiraCloud allowed the Law Centres to amalgamate their IT services into one Microsoft 365 tenant. This allowed us to standardise licenses and migrate user email and content from ageing servers into one common platform for all. To manage this huge change for the Law Centres, AspiraCloud provided training, individual support and strategic advice, helping the Centres understand the massive benefits this project would deliver. **Julie continues**: “We were able to secure funding and support from our partners to help us kick start this major refresh. After an initial concept meeting with our sponsors and AspiraCloud, we were impressed with their comprehensive project plan and quickly signed up.”

Phase 1 commenced in October 2016, with five Law Centres and the LCN head office migrating to Microsoft 365. Older devices were replaced with refurbished computers, licencing was addressed through the Microsoft NFP Donation scheme and separate hardware and software support contracts were set up.

Phase 2 focussed on another five Law Centres, where the licensing model was adapted to include volunteers and the first Centre looked into an expanded offering by introducing Skype for Business (SFB) telephony in the cloud. Phase 3 supported a further set of five Law Centres as more Centres were adopting Teams telephony as the entrance point for this application.

Key Benefits



Increased productivity & collaboration



Modern, reliable & secure Cloud environment



Confidently meet all regulatory requirements



Reduced IT support & telephony costs

Business Benefits

This major IT scheme has enabled the Law Centres to focus their activities on what they do best: supporting the needs of the local community when they are at their most vulnerable, without having to think about managing their IT services. The move to the cloud has improved accessibility and allowed Centres to strengthen data security and compliance regulations whilst keeping their systems up to date. Working with AspiraCloud and the Microsoft Cloud enables the Centres to work on cases remotely or in the office, at any time, confident that data remains secure and the regulatory requirements of the SRA in terms of GDPR and data sovereignty are met.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated how Law Centres can quickly and safely provide remote legal support to clients with very few changes to their IT systems. This has been invaluable during the recent lockdowns, allowing Centres to operate and offer services to their community without dropping a beat. Many Centres are now making use of Teams telephony and conference calling which has dramatically reduced call costs for the charity, whilst allowing the Centres to work from home and still provide a good service. Phase 3 also saw an improvement in the specification of devices that the scheme delivered. This has improved both hot desking and home working while supporting the development of the modern workplace.

Why AspiraCloud?

Julie reveals: “As a result of the success of the first three phases delivered by AspiraCloud, the LEF agreed to fund the remainder of the project so that we could work with the remaining Centres in the UK and bring them onboard our national IT project.” The cloud first support from AspiraCloud has proved invaluable.

Julie goes on: “With a single point of contact for all support requirements, each Centre can easily report any IT issues, which are swiftly resolved, often remotely. This keeps IT support costs down while offering complete peace of mind for the Centres.

We also decided to implement a common network infrastructure across all member Centres, so AspiraCloud can remotely monitor and proactively provide support if a Centre starts to experience internet connectivity issues.”

In recent months, AspiraCloud has not only helped more Law Centres join the scheme, but the adoption of Microsoft Teams has provided a great opportunity to go back to Centres from earlier phases to offer training and develop awareness of new features in Microsoft 365, such as Bookings, Planner, Forms and Power BI.



The cloud expertise offered by AspiraCloud has meant we are able to work, securely and compliantly, from home and new office locations. Centres are equipped with modern, reliable networks and devices, and staff remain confident that any IT issues can be quickly resolved so they can fully focus on doing what they do best - helping to provide legal support for all.

- Julie Bishop, Director, The Law Centres Network



Future Plans

“A key element of this national IT project is continued improvement,” **concludes Julie:** “We have already started to revisit the Phase 1 Centres to identify any of the initial devices now reaching end of life, along with further funding to make laptops available during the pandemic. We have also asked AspiraCloud to complete an infrastructure refresh project to help the initial scheme members match the new network standards implemented in Phase 3. This is an ongoing and strategic plan to make sure we help Centres keep up to date in future as much as funds will allow.”



AspiraCloud empowers organisations with the best-in-class productivity of Microsoft 365 Cloud solutions and services, such as Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and Azure, to confidently kick start your cloud journey for today's modern workplace. Combined with advanced security and device management capabilities to help safeguard your business, we can work with you to build the right, most cost effective and productive Microsoft Cloud solution.

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