

**citizens
advice**

Gateshead

Case Study

“We would highly recommend ITC to any organisation looking for a responsive supplier that puts the customer at the centre of their work.”

**- Jayne Graham MBE,
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR**

The Client

Citizens Advice Gateshead have helped thousands of people over six decades to access support and advice during times of uncertainty. Now, more than ever, resources such as Citizens Advice are vital to communities to provide guidance and reassurance. Citizens Advice have continued to be fully operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and have managed to continue to provide a seamless service thanks to the swift development of their IT infrastructure.

The Challenge

Citizens Advice Gateshead (CAB) had an ageing IT infrastructure and wanted to both upgrade and futureproof their IT provision. They approached ITC Service to evaluate IT options.

Whilst initial discussions were taking place COVID-19 struck the UK. This meant the planned upgrade and development became significantly more urgent, required absolute minimal downtime and also required all users to be able to access information and systems both on site and remotely.

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The Solution

The original plan was to move Gateshead CAB to a cloud-based solution – which remained the plan, but the work was now required to be completed almost immediately to mobilise effective remote access in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. At ITC we pride ourselves on 'going the extra mile' so we were happy to maximise our resources to get this work completed as a matter of urgency, with a lot of out of hours work required.

We moved the organisation to Microsoft 365 allowing a fully cloud based system and removing the need for on prem servers. We also introduced SharePoint to the organisation, allowing a central point for all documentation and resources for the workforce to access at any time.

The Outcome

The swift implementation of the infrastructure changes meant a seamless move over to the new cloud-based system. With the team working tirelessly around the clock, the result was little downtime for Citizens Advice at what was one of their busiest periods.

The system upgrade has allowed effective continuation of the service, with employees able to successfully work from home with access to all the resources they require.

The efficiency of the organisation both practically and financially have been vastly improved, and Citizens Advice have confidence in their infrastructure for all eventualities in these challenging times.

"As a growing local charity with over 160 staff and limited investment, it was always going to be a challenge to update our out of date IT infrastructure to meet our needs for now and the future. Little did we know when we selected ITC as our partners to take on this challenge that a global pandemic was around the corner! Not only did this test our newly formed relationship, it also served to confirm that we had made the right choice.

Our original plans to migrate into a cloud-based environment were brought forward by a month, and fast-tracked to enable our whole workforce to continue the charity's work remotely pretty much overnight. The commitment of ITC to help us to continue working despite the challenges was remarkable, and hugely appreciated. We mobilised new computer equipment despite a global shortage, shifted to Microsoft 365 to give us cloud access to emails, removed our reliance on servers for file storage to ensure staff could access data away from the office, and launched an intranet to enable effective communications with the team while they worked away from their usual workplace and adjusted to homeworking.

We have now progressed way beyond the turmoil, and are reflecting why we didn't do it sooner – what appeared to the charity as a gigantic and almost insurmountable task is behind us, and we are now reaping the benefits, in agility, reduced cost, future proofing and improved efficiency. I would highly recommend ITC to any organisation looking for a responsive supplier that puts the customer at the centre of their work."

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