

Irwin Mitchell gains exceptional visibility and faster resolution with Softcat and Zscaler



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Irwin Mitchell is one of the UK’s leading full-service law firms, providing legal advice and support to both individuals and businesses across a wide range of practice areas.

Founded in Sheffield in 1912, the firm has grown into a national organisation with more than 3,000 colleagues working across offices throughout England, Wales and Scotland, delivering specialist expertise alongside a strong focus on client care and practical outcomes.

The Key Facts



The Challenge

As Irwin Mitchell continued to evolve its IT strategy, the team saw a clear opportunity to strengthen visibility and control across the user experience. With more applications moving to the cloud and more users working flexibly, understanding exactly how systems were performing from an end-user perspective became increasingly important.

Rather than reacting to a specific problem, the IT leadership team was focused on building capability for the future. As Jon Lucas-Garner, Head of IT Service and Platforms, explains, “We didn’t have a particular issue to fix, it was more that we knew there were areas where we could develop more capability. We wanted better insight and more ownership of how we support our users.”

The existing operating model and solution provided a strong foundation. However, it didn’t quite provide the level of direct visibility the internal team had in mind when it came to investigating and diagnosing issues. “We wanted the ability to dig further into things ourselves, to really understand what was happening and verify what we were seeing,” Jon adds.

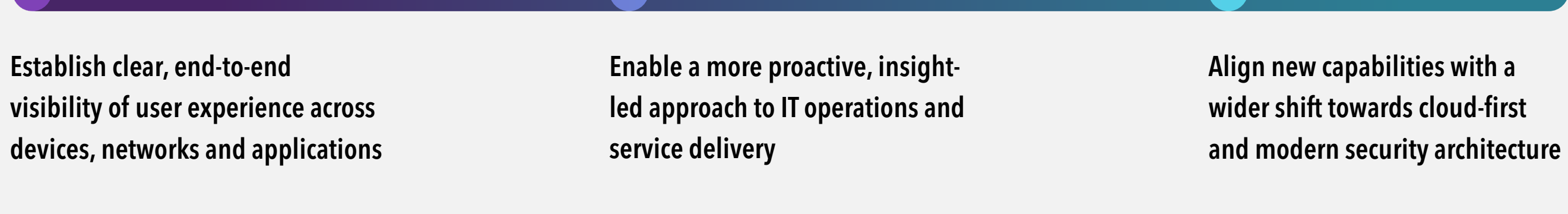
At the same time, the firm was already modernising key parts of its infrastructure. Legacy VPN technologies and

on-premise security solutions were becoming less aligned with the way people worked. As Paul Serkis, Technical Platform Manager for Workplace, reflects, “Our previous setup was becoming harder to maintain and wasn’t really keeping pace with the direction we wanted to go as a business.”

Another important driver was the difficulty of evidencing user experience. While feedback from colleagues was valuable, it often lacked the data needed to fully understand root causes. “We’ve always known there are things that don’t feel quite right, but being able to actually see it and prove it are two very different things,” says Paul.

Another important driver was the difficulty of evidencing user experience. Direct feedback from end users sometimes suggested various reasons for issues, but lacked the conclusive data to fully understand and remediate root causes. This combination of factors created a clear opportunity. Irwin Mitchell wanted to modernise its approach to secure access, improve performance across the estate and introduce meaningful, data-driven visibility into how users experienced IT services day to day.

Critical Success Factors



The Solution

To support this transformation, Irwin Mitchell partnered with Softcat to implement and expand its use of the Zscaler platform, creating a joined-up approach to secure access and digital experience monitoring.

The first phase focused on moving away from traditional VPN infrastructure towards a Zero Trust model, using Zscaler Internet Access (ZIA) and Zscaler Private Access (ZPA). This shift provided a more scalable, cloud-native way for users to securely access applications, wherever they were working.

Paul explains the thinking: “We were already moving towards a more modern, cloud-based approach, and Zscaler gave us a really clean way of delivering that. One client on the endpoint, one consistent way of connecting users to what they need.”

By replacing legacy VPN technologies with ZPA, the firm was able to simplify connectivity while improving both user experience and security posture. The move also reduced the operational overhead associated with maintaining on-premise infrastructure.

Softcat provided valuable market insight and specialist support throughout the early stages of the programme. Working alongside Irwin Mitchell, they helped validate requirements, assess available solutions and inform the evaluation process. This approach enabled Irwin Mitchell to make a well-informed selection, ensuring the chosen

solution aligned with the firm’s strategic objectives and long-term vision. Paul noted, “The process gave us a balanced view of the market, allowing us to select the solution that best met our requirements and future needs.”

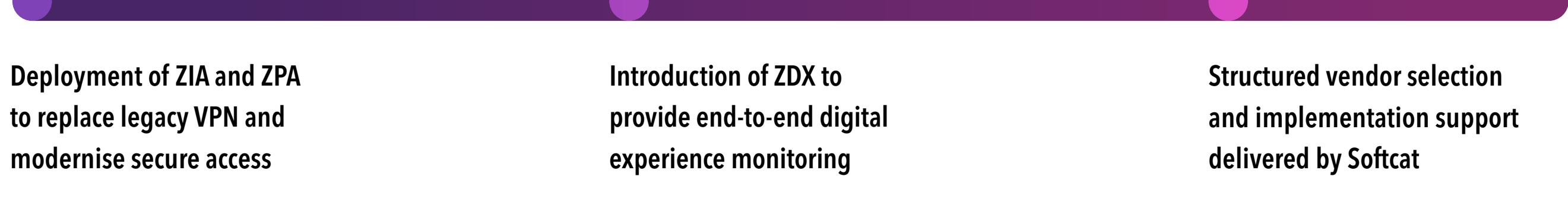
With Zscaler already embedded, the introduction of ZDX felt like a natural next step. As Zscaler’s native digital experience monitoring solution, ZDX could be layered on top of the existing deployment without introducing additional complexity.

“Once we had the Zscaler client in place, bringing in ZDX was a really logical extension,” explains Paul. “It gave us visibility across the full user journey, not just one part of it.”

ZDX enabled the IT team to monitor performance across endpoints, networks and applications in real time. Crucially, it brought everything into a single, easy-to-understand view, allowing the team to quickly identify where issues were occurring and why.

Early demonstrations helped build momentum internally. “As soon as people saw the data and how accessible it was, the value clicked very quickly,” Paul added. From there, Irwin Mitchell began embedding ZDX into day-to-day operations, using it to support both reactive troubleshooting and proactive optimisation across the estate.

Solution Highlights



The Benefits

Although the programme is still evolving, Irwin Mitchell has already seen a meaningful shift in how it manages and improves user experience.

One of the most immediate benefits has been the ability to clearly understand and evidence issues. “We have exceptional visibility now, and it’s drastically improved the way we troubleshoot,” says Paul.

This has had a direct impact on incident resolution times. Instead of investigating multiple potential causes, the team can quickly pinpoint the issue and act accordingly. “We’ve been able to step in and redirect investigations straight away, which has made a big difference to resolution times,” Paul adds.

Just as importantly, the insight provided by ZDX is enabling a more proactive approach. Rather than waiting for issues to be reported, the team can identify patterns and address potential problems early. “It gives us that head start. Even when something is reactive, we’re already halfway there because we can see what’s going on underneath,” Paul explains.

This improved visibility is also transforming conversations with users. Instead of relying on subjective feedback, the team can provide clear, data-backed explanations. “Being able to show someone that the issue isn’t their laptop and enabling them to remediate if needed is a big win for us and the end user,” Paul notes.

Beyond day-to-day support, ZDX is beginning to have a measurable impact on broader business outcomes. Paul highlights a significant improvement in internal

performance metrics: “Over the past six months, we’ve seen a massive reduction in lost time reports and a big increase in our internal NPS score. There are a number of factors behind that, but better tooling has definitely been part of it, and ZDX plays a role by giving us that early visibility.”

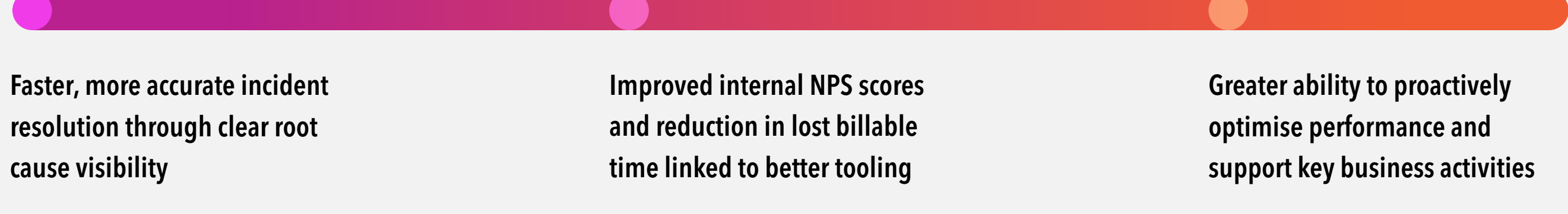
Jon Lucas-Garner reinforces the importance of these metrics: “Those are two of the most important KPIs for us. If we’re improving internal NPS and reducing lost billable time, everything else tends to follow. We can’t attribute all of that to ZDX on its own, but it absolutely supports it by giving us the data and visibility we need.”

The platform is also enabling more targeted, proactive interventions at key business moments. Jon shares an example: “Ahead of year end, we were able to proactively check the devices for people involved in billing and make sure everything was running optimally. That period went incredibly smoothly, with no noise at all, which is exactly what we needed at that time.”

This approach is now being applied more broadly across the business, using ZDX insights to prioritise where attention is needed most. “We’re starting to identify the users and teams where performance really matters at certain times, and make sure we’re supporting them proactively,” Jon adds.

Taken together, these improvements represent a shift towards a more intelligent, data-driven IT function. The combination of faster resolution, proactive insight and measurable business impact is helping Irwin Mitchell deliver a consistently high-quality experience for its users.

Benefits at a Glance



Why Softcat

Softcat’s role throughout the engagement has been defined by collaboration, transparency and a genuine focus on delivering the right outcome. “It always felt like Softcat was focused on what was best for us, not just pushing a product,” says Jon. He added, “Softcat also take a long-term view of the relationship, which makes a big difference. It’s a really easy and productive way to work together.”