

SOFTCAT KEEPS IT SIMPLE TO BOOST HEALTH BOARD'S DR CAPABILITIES

Cloud & managed services



Datacentre



Networking & security



Professional services



Largest Healthcare organisation in Wales

16,000 staff, serving 700,000 clients

£1.3 billion operational budget

The largest healthcare organisation in Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board delivers services to almost 700,000 people across six counties. It has an operating budget of £1.3 billion, employs more than 16,000 staff and has three main hospitals, including Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan and Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

The Challenge

The NHS has undergone significant restructuring in recent years, with a succession of mergers taking place in pursuit of improved services and efficiencies. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) was created following the merger of three former NHS Trusts and, as is often the case, the merger has thrown up multiple legacy challenges for the IT team to overcome.

A solution to upgrade an ageing back-up infrastructure was seen as a priority for BCUHB. As Nick Husbands, BCUHB's Head of IT Systems, said, "I can't overstate just how important a resilient and reliable back-up infrastructure is to the Health Board. We were faced with merging five legacy platforms and rationalising IT infrastructure from three separate organisations."

"What we needed was an agile, easy-to-manage and robust solution that would ensure data integrity and enhance our disaster recovery (DR) capabilities. We also needed the capability to migrate away from tape back-up to take advantage of 'government cloud' services in the future. Softcat took the time to understand our needs and provide the insight needed to identify suitable technologies."

Softcat initially carried out several free-of-charge consultations, followed by a technology workshop, to introduce BCUHB to a range of suitable technologies from multiple vendors to gain a true understanding of its needs. Once the IT team was satisfied that the proposed solution was fit for purpose, Softcat moved to install a back-up infrastructure that would deliver both the functionality and resilience it required, while having minimal impact on BCUHB's ongoing activities.

Critical Success Factors

- Deliver a unified solution to replace legacy infrastructure
- Rationalise and improve disparate back-up technologies
- Ensure data integrity and security of critical patient information

The Solution

Following the merger, BCUHB's IT infrastructure was spread across 100 servers and becoming cumbersome to manage. Clearly, there was a pressing need to rationalise and simplify the back-up estate, as managing such a diverse range of technologies would be hugely complex, overly time-consuming and threatened to undermine the integrity of confidential patient data.

Softcat's consultants identified three suitable vendors that could provide the technology needed to achieve BCUHB's aims: Commvault, Veritas, and Arcserve. An Arcserve Unified Data Protection (UDP) V6 Premium edition, supported by comprehensive professional services from Softcat engineers, was eventually chosen as it did exactly what BCUHB needed, as well as being the best value for money.

The Arcserve UDP V6 Premium Edition solution provided the enterprise capabilities BCUHB required minus the complexity often associated with enterprise solutions. The technology is ideal for enabling smaller IT teams to safeguard physical, virtual and cloud data and helped ensure that BCUHB could easily add on high-performance capabilities as its requirements evolve going forward.

Softcat designed a bespoke solution, which included back-end hardware supplied by Dell, and provided full on-site training for the IT team. As Chris Leigh, Softcat Datacentre Infrastructure Specialist, said, "BCUHB's IT team wanted simplicity. It knew from previous experience that a solution that was easy to implement, easy to manage and wouldn't negatively impact its core BAU activities during the project was needed. That's exactly what we sought to provide."

Solution Highlights

- Free-of-charge, hands-on consultancy services
- Comprehensive analysis of client needs
- Easy-to-manage, bespoke solution with full professional services

The Benefits

The main benefit, of course, is that BCUHB's physical servers and the critical, confidential data they contain are fully protected and future-ready. The Arcserve solution has increased resilience, therefore the IT team is now fully confident in its ability to withstand a major outage without impacting client data, and its scalability ensures the infrastructure can cope with future demands.

The new platform is much quicker to use, the time taken to back-up data, for instance, has been significantly reduced, and every essential activity can be achieved much more rapidly. The Arcserve solution is managed through a single, intuitive console that's far simpler to use than the legacy platform and the IT team quickly got up to speed with the new technology.

During the implementation, all training took place on site, which helped ensure the IT team were always on hand to manage ongoing activities and ensure minimal impact on both service provision and DR resilience. There is also the potential to reduce the number of software licences BCUHB will require going forward, which, in turn, could help to deliver much-needed cost-savings further down the line.

At a Glance (Benefits)

- Critical information protected by improved resilience
- Essential back-up tasks achieved more rapidly
- Single console simplifies infrastructure management

Why Softcat?

"Throughout the project, Softcat's engineers were on hand to assist the in-house IT team and the implementation was achieved on time and at a pace that suited BCUHB. The account management team from Softcat were extremely helpful, friendly and they certainly knew what they were doing," said Nick Husbands. "They quickly got to grips with what we needed and knew exactly what technologies would provide the capabilities we sought. Softcat kept it simple. It delivered a straightforward, value-for-money solution that has helped us achieve exactly what we needed to achieve."