



CUSTOMER STORY

SUPPORT DURING AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS

Delivering devices to home workers, transforming offices and Front of House, and supporting flexible DWP working

SERVICES

- Workplace and Networking Technology Procurement and Integration
- Network Transformation
- Mobility Transformation
- Expert on Demand
- Hardware Lifecycle Management
- Technology and Network Maintenance

USER EXPERIENCE

- Enhanced agility and mobility
- Faster access to new features
- Improved communication/collaboration
- Improved performance
- Increased user satisfaction

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Boosts business agility
- Hardware consolidation
- Improves productivity
- Improves sustainability
- Supports digitalisation

OBJECTIVE

When the Coronavirus pandemic struck in 2020, half of the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) 80,000-strong workforce were unable to attend their local office or provide a service from home without appropriate devices. During this period, new claims for Universal Credit, had increased by over 600 per cent. Initially, DWP needed to equip 28,000 employees with workplace devices enabling them to continue providing critical benefits services remotely, working from home. As the pandemic unfolded, DWP needed to transform their offices to COVID-compliant work environments, support their next wave of business transformation with enhanced flexible working, and set up both new and temporary sites for Front of House support to the public.

SOLUTION

DWP engaged Computacenter who, working within DWP's programme and alongside DWP colleagues, rapidly supplied equipment to home-based users, building and configuring at rates of up to 1,500 laptops per day. We then helped transform DWP's offices to COVID-compliant work environments, performing 37,000 office desk transformations and 59,000 builds of new devices. In late 2020, Computacenter also supported DWP's next wave of business transformation by building, configuring, and delivering another 16,000 mini-PCs and cleaning an existing 29,500 devices. Then, in 2021, we commenced support to DWP's Front of House programme, standing up 200 new and temporary locations across the country by providing Cisco networking equipment, deployment services, and appropriate engineering resources.

OUTCOME

In Spring 2020, Computacenter enabled 28,000 DWP users to work remotely, shipping all required workplace items within the requested 8 weeks. Together with DWP Digital, we then provided devices and engineering resources to facilitate moving 50,000 employees around the country to enable safe office-based working, while in 2021, we also helped enable a rapid and successful setup of DWP's Front of House in 200 locations. During all phases of delivery, Computacenter has provided DWP with a flexible, consumption-based resource and services model, which played an integral part in the department's ability to support the public throughout the pandemic. Our resource flexibility also enabled us to meet rapidly changing demands, whilst still ensuring value for money.





The need to deliver the support that the most vulnerable UK citizens require has never been as vital as it has in responding to the pandemic.”

Kenny Robertson
Director of Technology Services
DWP Digital



We worked with the DWP to find the most cost-effective mechanism for delivering mini-pc and monitor bundles to key DWP staff in a consistent, reliable and clearly communicated manner, for both office and home-based deployments.”

Brenda Day
Lead Project Manager
Computacenter

OBJECTIVE

To keep the provision of UK citizen benefits operational during a period of unprecedented challenge and demand.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are the largest UK central government department responsible for administering welfare and benefits in the UK and are accountable for more than £212bn of citizen payments annually.

When the Coronavirus pandemic escalated in the UK in March 2020, the DWP were faced with an unprecedented crisis. With half of their workforce unable to attend their local office, the department had a major challenge in maintaining service to the public. To put this into context, the number of new claimants for Universal Credit increased by 600%, from a four-week average of around 200,000 claimants in mid-March 2020, to 1,200,000 claimants over a four-week period in mid-April 2020.

As Kenny Robertson, Head of End User Computing Support Function at DWP Digital explained at the beginning of 2021: “At DWP we provide a frontline service for the most vulnerable UK citizens. The need to deliver the support people require has never been as vital as it has in the last 10 months in responding to the [COVID-19] pandemic.”

Faced with this hugely challenging scenario, DWP needed to rapidly supply 28,000 of their employees with appropriate workplace devices to enable them to continue to provide critical benefits services from their own homes. DWP needed an IT partner who could manage this mass procurement, build and deployment on their behalf. As the pandemic unfolded, an IT partner was also required to help transform DWP offices to be COVID-compliant, to support their next wave of business transformation, and to set up both new and temporary sites for Front of House support to the public.

SOLUTION

Rapid build and deployment of more than 150,000 items to support flexible working, along with Workplace and Front of House transformations

DWP Digital is the technology arm of DWP, delivering large-scale, citizen-facing, and corporate services for the department. Their infrastructure supports payments to over 20 million citizens, processes hundreds of thousands of applications, and allows UK citizens to access their services daily. The same infrastructure also supports 80,000 DWP employees. DWP Digital's Technology Services team designs, builds, and operates these platforms, working with several IT partners, including Computacenter, who were the incumbent partner for End User Device Supply and Services.

Due to this existing relationship, and a proven track record of delivery, DWP turned to Computacenter to help support them and to work together to rapidly deliver their workplace objectives during the early Coronavirus pandemic. This required Computacenter, working within the DWP programme, to manage the procurement, build and deployment of appropriate workplace devices, to enable the now home-based workers to continue delivering a first-rate benefits service to the public.



For the office transformations, we leveraged our standing team to enable schedules of work to be submitted at relatively short notice, meaning we were able to execute against industrialised delivery targets.”

Rob Slatem
Delivery Lead
Computacenter

Once engaged, Computacenter stood up a project team that was equipped to manage the required device rollout to 28,000 home-based users within 8 weeks. Devices were rapidly procured, built and configured at Computacenter’s Integration Center at Hatfield, where a Windows 10 SCCM build approach was used; home delivery was managed for 28,000 laptop and desktop bundles of devices and peripheral items, including monitors, headsets, keyboards, mice, etc.

Mike Cook, Computacenter’s Client Director for the DWP account explains more about the device turnaround: “At the start of the pandemic we needed to source many thousands of laptops for DWP, and quickly. Computacenter managed to secure the stock and get them into the UK within a few weeks.

“Usually, we build laptops for DWP as part of their refresh programme, but for this, we had to significantly scale up our teams and service. From a standing start, we were sustaining 250 devices a day after two weeks, 500 a day after four weeks, and 750 a day after six weeks. At the peak of the process, more than 1,500 laptops per day were being built and configured, with our staff working 24-hour shifts to help support this critical national infrastructure.”

This rapid home delivery deployment helped DWP sustain services to the public at the start of the pandemic. Then, in June 2020, Computacenter was asked to help transform DWP’s offices into COVID-compliant work environments. We subsequently provided the devices and engineering resources to facilitate the moving of 50,000 users around the country to enable the department to achieve safe office-based working, eventually effecting 37,000 office desk transformations.

As Rob Slatem, Delivery Lead at Computacenter explains: “For the office transformations, we leveraged our standing team and industrialised delivery plans to enable schedules of work to be submitted at relatively short notice. We used our Agile Delivery Methodology to manage the iterative customer demand and enhanced the service by flexing delivery resource up and down, as required. The central team was then able to forecast and build resource plans for stock, services, engineers and management requirements, thereby minimising costs and ensuring consistent and reliable outcomes.”



At the peak of the workplace device rollout process, more than 1,500 devices per day were being built and configured, this thanks to our staff working 24-hour shifts.”

Mike Cook
Client Director
Computacenter

In December 2020, DWP needed further support with their next wave of business transformation, requiring enhanced flexible working in response to the worsening pandemic. As Brenda Day, Computacenter’s Lead Project Manager explains: “We worked with DWP to find the most cost-effective mechanism for delivering mini-pc and monitor bundles to key DWP staff in a consistent, reliable and clearly communicated manner. Working with DWP Digital and Operations, we introduced two approaches to enable bulk delivery to offices or targeted home deployments, whilst also using innovative packaging to reduce cost and ease transportation.

“We then integrated our ‘Collect and Clean’ service, whereby we clean and recycle existing equipment. Refurbished equipment was provided in a COVID-safe way, or we disposed of equipment securely. Targeted communications and enhanced management information also helped to maximise end user experience and minimise impact to business and delivery of services to the public.”

Moving into 2021, Computacenter commenced support to DWP’s Front of House programme, helping stand up 200 new public reception locations across the country, some on brand new sites, others as extensions to existing sites. These Front of House locations are enabling DWP staff to continue to meet the public to provide guidance on finding employment, but in a COVID-friendly environment. We are providing Cisco networking equipment, deployment services and engineering resources, incorporating these new network services into our existing Agile Delivery Model, while utilising centralised management of demand, scheduling, stock, logistics and communications. Services include wireless surveys, server builds and installations,



Computacenter has provided a flexible, consumption-based resource and services model, providing the DWP with maximum flexibility to meet their needs. By bringing the best that Computacenter has to offer to the DWP we are proud to have played our part in DWP's response to keep the most vulnerable citizens in our society safe."

Mike Cook
Client Director
Computacenter



OUTCOME

An efficient, flexible and rapidly delivered workplace environment, at home and in the office, enabling continued DWP service to UK citizens

Computacenter and DWP were able to successfully deliver against all the targets set by the DWP, which included the following milestones and outcomes:

Phase 1 - March 2020: Home Delivery

- Project team stood up within 10 days
- 150,000 items shipped to 28,000 users within the requested 8 weeks
- 1,500 laptops per day built and configured during the busiest time

Phase 2 - June 2020: Office Transformation and Safe Working

- 50,000 users facilitated for safe working
- 59,000 new devices built and configured
- 500,000 items shipped and tracked
- 37,000 office desk transformations, including installations, moves and device repurposing
- 48,500 decommissions of old equipment

Phase 3 - December 2020: Business Transformation and Flexible Working

- 29,500 existing devices cleaned
- 16,000 new devices built and configured
- 16,000 bundles shipped, including approximately 70,000 items

Phase 4 - February 2021: Front of House

- 200 new and temporary locations kitted out with network equipment

A key component of Computacenter's delivery was the 'Flex' team. As Mike Cook explains: "DWP's needs have been immediate and, to a degree, ever-changing as we all had to adapt to the issues created by the pandemic. Computacenter has provided a flexible, consumption-based resource and services model, providing DWP with maximum flexibility to meet their needs and keeping close to the DWP delivery and transformation projects. By bringing the best that Computacenter has to offer to DWP we are proud to have played our part in DWP's response to keep the most vulnerable citizens in our society safe."

One other positive transformation that was completed by the Computacenter-DWP partnership alongside the other Pandemic-related tasks, was the support that Computacenter provided to DWP during the migration of all remaining DWP staff workplace devices from Windows 7 to Windows 10. This required Computacenter building, delivering, and providing technicians for onsite deployments, and visiting several hundred offices to complete the transition. Once complete, this mitigated security risks associated with the older version of Windows and enabled the department to save money by closing contracts for the support of Windows 7 devices. Furthermore, through these Windows 10 deployments a further 30,000 DWP users were able take advantage of new Windows 10 Evergreen functionality and to utilise Microsoft Teams, thereby improving collaboration and communication with colleagues.

Despite the excessive impact and demands of this unprecedented crisis, the various technical delivery teams have succeeded in keeping DWP operational and supporting the UK public throughout the pandemic. As Kenny Robertson says, when speaking in February 2021: "As a business, over the last ten months, we have not flinched or shied away, and have moved mountains to keep our services going. Our response is publicly acknowledged as being phenomenal and DWP Digital has played a major part."



As a business, we have not flinched or shied away, and have moved mountains to keep our services going. Our response is publicly acknowledged as being phenomenal and DWP Digital has played a major part.”

Kenny Robertson
Director of Technology Services
DWP Digital

network configuration and integration, network build, testing and installation, along with traditional workstation setups.

Finally, DWP and Computacenter has continued to support DWP new hires throughout 2020, 2021 and into 2022 by efficiently managing device deployment to both home and office.

Working with DWP Digital, Computacenter has undoubtedly played a significant role in this extraordinary success, too. Hitting that 8-week deadline for home delivery of devices undoubtedly helped DWP sustain their services during the early weeks of the pandemic, while our office transformation contribution in June 2020 helped achieve safe working for 50,000 DWP office-based employees.

However, the final word on this project will rest with the Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP, who is the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions. “I want to pay tribute to the civil servants in my department as well as contractors and partners who have been working tirelessly to provide help and support to those in need. They are the hidden heroes for many people in this country. They should take great pride in their hard work and dedication to supporting people through these difficult times.”

ABOUT THE DWP

As the UK’s largest public service department, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability, ill health, and child maintenance benefits to millions of people. In the last year, there were around 20 million claimants and £218bn was paid out in benefits, while over 10 million people have been automatically enrolled into a new workplace pension scheme since 2012.

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our enterprise services and read more customer case studies, log on to www.computacenter.com
