



Look Ahead is transformed into a modern workplace through its five-year IT and digital transformation project in partnership with Wanstor



Employees benefit from better collaboration and agility, with simple and effective technology solutions hosted in a modern IT environment.

About Look Ahead

Look Ahead is a leading provider of specialist care, support and housing services across London and the South-East.

It supports over 7,000 people with a wide range of needs across mental health, homelessness, learning disabilities and other complex needs.

They have 1,100 permanent employees, 250 bank staff and 150 offices, all requiring a robust IT support infrastructure and services.

The Challenge

Look Ahead was operating on a legacy IT model with costly servers and applications and unreliable, disparate systems. They had an aging infrastructure and whilst staff were able to be mobile through their portal, it was inefficient, unreliable, and not scalable.

Its team of staff felt glued to their desktops and were unable to benefit from complex and archaic IT architecture.

Look Ahead's IT Director wanted to embark on a huge digital transformation project making technology a helpful ally and business enabler.

This would mean future-proofing the organisation and allowing staff to work from anywhere with secure and safe data at their fingertips.

The charity wanted a modern workplace, benefitting from agility, simplicity and security, and an architecture that would support remote working.

“My vision for information management and technology was to provide secure, agile access to better information at the point of service delivery.

“If we were to enable Look Ahead to grow it’s services and transform the lives of even greater numbers of vulnerable people, then it was essential that our IT was a strategic priority and it would meet the expectations of staff and customers.

“Simplifying our technology was a necessity. We need to be confident about our IT. It needs to be always on, robust, flexible and, in the event of a crisis, promptly and effectively recovered.”

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Our original path would have ended up requiring a huge investment, so I trusted Wanstor’s recommendations to move into their data centres and Azure instead.

IT Director,
Look Ahead

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The Solution

Look Ahead worked with Wanstor to scope a strategy for redeveloping and consolidating its entire IT architecture, moving into the cloud and deploying M365.

This was a huge undertaking to consolidate all the servers and move into Wanstor’s private cloud as well as Azure, but as well as giving them a more efficient and cost-effective environment, it also gave increased security functionality.

Their IT Director’s original intention had been to build on their Citrix stack, but this quickly changed when Wanstor found challenges with the project.

“We would have ended up requiring a huge investment and I trusted Wanstor’s recommendations to move into their data centres and Azure instead,” he said.

As part of the strategy, Wanstor recommended moving away from a Citrix environment and on-premise file manager into SharePoint, embracing the full Microsoft M365 suite to take advantage of license cost savings that Microsoft offer to registered charities.

Solutions delivered ‘as a service’ - like the Microsoft stack - enable organisations to revolutionise their IT with enterprisegrade solutions whilst spending very little. It was imperative for the charity that they had secure customer data.



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In addition to removing the old security gaps which existed in the legacy estate and introducing solutions like Microsoft Defender, we ensured that the charity is placed to become Cyber Essentials Plus accredited.

There are 800 new devices being deployed to team members, and everyone will have new tech that works straight out of the box.

We are also helping the business look at front line app development to help nurture flexible working even further, and gather helpful metrics and insight moving forward.

“It’s challenging getting people to embrace change, but we’ve had lots of positive feedback. Many of our employees aren’t hugely IT proficient - their skillsets lie elsewhere. We’ve put a lot of effort into ensuring there’s now just one interface and place to access documents delivered by Wanstor, and we have provided staff training for everyone.

A modern workplace needs IT anyone can use, anywhere. This will help retain staff and give a competitive edge in hiring new team members who’ll have our new technology as soon as they join. This is instead of the old, almost disabling IT set up we originally had.”

The Feedback

“At every step of the way Wanstor have offered us the best solution for the best value. They’re always focussed on how we can save money, improve our service, and update our approach to IT. We definitely made the right choice, as the project has given us instant agility. Everyone is delighted. We have a great relationship with our account manager and the team. They encouraged revisiting our original model to find a more cost-effective approach which has worked amazingly well. We know Wanstor understand our business model and we don’t stand alone. They’re an extension of Look Ahead, a perception that helps me deliver on strategy, because the business sees an IT team they can put their trust in.”

Look Ahead have gained reliability, agility, flexibility and increased security in equal measure. As the transformation beds in, we’ll introduce automation and a self-service model for things like password resets to enable even more productivity.

Key Outcomes

- ✓ Moved on-premises exchange service into M365
- ✓ Consolidated servers and moved into Wanstor’s private cloud
- ✓ Retired legacy hardware delivering cost savings
- ✓ Data and documents now stored in the cloud and accessed via SharePoint
- ✓ Microsoft 365 deployed on an affordable, not-for-profit license
- ✓ New hardware equipment supplied for all staff
- ✓ Always on, reliable technology with 24-hour service desk
- ✓ A modern estate which will be Cyber Security Plus certified