

CASE STUDY

Anthony Nolan

saving the lives of people with blood cancer



EVERGREEN AZURE VIRTUAL DESKTOP LEAVES BLOOD CANCER CHARITY WITH CASH IN THE BANK

Anthony Nolan is the pioneering charity that has saved the lives of people with blood cancer and blood disorders who need a stem cell transplant for over 40 years. As a technology leader in the charity sector, they had already started the move from expensive legacy data centres to the cloud. When the Covid-19 health crisis struck their planned move to Azure Virtual Desktop proved to be timely. Since implementation, employees have been able to work remotely and securely from home, and the charity has been able to save valuable funds.



“With our evergreen strategy, we want everything to be as fresh on day 1, as it will be in Year 4. For that reason, Azure Virtual Desktop fits perfectly with our strategy.”

Danny Attias
Chief Digital & Information Officer, Anthony Nolan



THE CHALLENGE – DRIVING GREATER VALUE

Leading UK charity and research centre, Anthony Nolan has been helping patients with blood cancer and blood disorders in need of lifesaving stem cell transplants since 1974.

Technology is a vital part of their work - from the specialist systems that underpin its research, to the IT platforms that keep the organisation running. To drive up efficiency, their Chief Digital & Information Officer wanted to replace an unreliable, expensive virtual desktop, hosted in their data centre, with a reliable cloud-based alternative.



“Everybody needs to be able to be able to work from wherever they need to, using whatever equipment they need. They need performance, reliability, and scalability. We need a platform that can flex and scale to everybody’s needs.”

Danny Attias - Chief Digital & Information Officer, Anthony Nolan

THE SOLUTION – WORK FROM ANYWHERE

As soon as notice had been served on the incumbent Data Centre, the Telefónica Tech team needed to work quickly to meet the migration deadline. In less than two months the team had created the design, migrated key workloads to Azure, and deployed Azure Virtual Desktop. “It was great to share our experience with the team at Anthony Nolan; they were amazed at how quickly we could spin up the system using templates in Azure,” added Kristian Harris, Project Manager, Telefónica Tech. While the project was initiated pre-pandemic, it perfectly coincided with the rapid increase in remote working driven by the Covid-19 health crisis.

Previously, if too many employees tried to access everyday apps such as Microsoft Teams remotely, there was often performance issues. But since switching to Azure Virtual Desktop, employees can access apps and systems without issue, including data-heavy interactive visualisation and clinical diagnostics software. This helped the charity carry on their critical work during the pandemic.

“Cancer hasn’t taken a break during the pandemic, and neither have we,” notes Attias. As a further nod to efficiency Telefónica Tech built an Autopilot solution. This allowed all new laptops that were issued to employees to be built remotely, reducing the workload for the IT team.

THE RESULTS – EVERGREEN VALUE

As a charity, Anthony Nolan is always mindful of spend. The cloud-based Azure Virtual Desktop has proved to be more cost effective than the charity had initially hoped for.

“By switching over to this solution we dramatically reduced our operating costs, even after taking into account significant expenditure on laptops for every member of staff. This meant we were able to improve the spec on devices and give everyone the best possible tools. This has given employees the right tools to do the best possible job, rather than them be constrained by technology,” explains their Chief Digital & Information Officer

To stretch budgets further, this cloud-based, scalable VDI solution can be dialled down, as and when employees head back to the office - or back up again - if required.

“I wanted to say a huge thank you to Telefónica Tech, your role in this project was invaluable.”



Danny Attias
Chief Digital & Information Officer
Anthony Nolan

OUTCOMES

- Cost Efficient, scalable VDI
- Evergreen IT - apps and systems can be efficiently updated
- Greater Productivity - with better performance for business apps & systems
- Improved security - no data is stored locally, and IT has greater control over user access

This cloud-first approach is helping Anthony Nolan modernise their end-user environment. Additionally, with greater levels of efficiency, IT staff now have more time to focus on innovation projects. They have also been able to upskill in areas such as DevOps, agile development, and machine learning.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Azure Migration and Azure Virtual Desktop for 400 employees
- Profile management with FSLogix profile containers.
- Group Policy Deployment
- FSLogix App Masking
- Deployment of a mixture of physical and thin OS endpoint devices

