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HOW WE HELPED THE PENSIONS REGULATOR MIGRATE TO MICROSOFT AZURE, MAKING A SAFE AND SECURE DATA CENTRE EXIT

About The Pensions Regulator

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) is a national body responsible for protecting the UK's workplace pensions. They make sure that employers, trustees, pension specialists and business advisors can fulfil their duties to scheme members. TPR commissioned Kainos to be their trusted Azure migration partner for an urgent project.

The challenge

TPR needed to migrate their entire IT estate as it was being hosted in a data centre that was due to be decommissioned by a fixed date. The estate consisted of 300+ servers and 70+ applications with complex firewalls. The project was time-sensitive but also had to be carried out with minimum disruption as TPR provides a 24/7 service. The TPR team had some cloud knowledge at the outset of the project and were heavily involved in every stage of the work. The TPR team wanted to learn as much as possible so Kainos' cloud team helped to enable them through training, 1-2-1 shadowing and workshops. The goal was to level-up their IT team's cloud skills and ensure business continuity following the migration to Azure.

The solution

Our goal was to migrate the full IT estate quickly, whilst ensuring that sensitive data was migrated securely and confidentially. Choosing to migrate to Microsoft Azure provided TPR with a compliant, secure, and stable platform. We also wanted to provide them with flexibility over the platform and allow them to be in full control of configuration, spend and security.

How we did it

We used our proven migration methodology to safely and confidently deliver this project. The methodology has been honed and refined from the experience gained by delivering over 100 cloud projects. The methodology guides the crucial waves of activity that need to be completed within the distinct phases of a project to successfully migrate to cloud and aligns with Microsoft's Cloud Adoption Framework.

Thanks to our strong partnership with Microsoft we had access to support from architects on the Microsoft Azure FastTrack team throughout the project. This provided access to expert Azure knowledge, proven best practices and resources used in successful Azure deployments, helping to accelerate planning, development and deployment - this support was also extended to the internal team at TPR.

Working in close partnership and collaboration with the technical team and application owners within TPR allowed us to gain a full appreciation of the estate, produce the technical designs and the implementation plan for the migration. This was a complex piece of work, with the emphasis on understanding and mitigating risks to live operation. Through thorough planning and testing alongside the customer's team, we have ensured TPR has a sustainable platform in which it has confidence for the future.

We designed the core Secure Landing Zone using proven designs and once the Landing Zone was deployed, the first applications were migrated including shared services like Active Directory, Core Firewalls, SolarWinds and System Centre Configuration Manager. Disaster recovery (DR) was also configured at this stage and a full failover and failback test was completed over a weekend alongside our colleagues in the TPR team - which demonstrated the significant advance in DR over the previous platform, as well as being a fantastic training exercise for the internal team on the new platform.

The rest of the migrations were completed in a series of waves, mainly outside of office hours, collaborating closely with TPR. With testing conducted jointly by Kainos and TPR's team - a total of 300+ servers were migrated with no major issues arising. We ran sessions for the internal operations teams and developers, transferring knowledge including best practice. We also upskilled the internal infrastructure and finance teams on tools and strategies for ongoing cost optimisation, including using Azure Advisor.

Outcomes

No interruptions to service: IT estate migrated safely with no loss of service or data before impending data centre closure

Cost savings: hosting costs reduced significantly

Flexibility: TPR's internal team can configure services quickly and easily to match changing business needs

Security: compliant, secure, and stable Azure platform for future projects

Sensitive data: migrated confidentially and securely

Staff enablement: through training, mentoring and workshops

> " Kainos' cloud expertise was a guiding reason for us to choose them. Their team brought strong technical leadership in helping us successfully migrate our entire IT estate safely and securely and within our deadline.

Richard Dance
IT Director, The Pensions Regulator

Find out more at **kainos.com**

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