

case study

# Solace Women's Aid

## Reducing costs by 55% through digital transformation for registered charity

**Sector:**  
Charity

**No. of Users:**  
200+

**Location:**  
London

**Client Since:**  
2019

Solace Women's Aid exists to end the harm done through gender-based violence. They aim to prevent violence and abuse as well as provide services to meet the individual needs of survivors, particularly women and children.

Their work is holistic and empowering, working alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

### the challenge

Solace is a registered charity, and strict budget control is critical. The charity supporters want reassurance their donations are spent on those most in need, not necessarily on IT-related costs.

Solace wanted greater efficiency and collaboration so that staff spent more time supporting survivors and less time navigating files on their laptops and emailing attachments for teams to update.

The charity also has a flexible workforce, including many volunteers and contractors on short-term projects. They needed support that could quickly set up new employees but also quickly remove access after their contract ends.

Finally, there was a need to train flexible workers on fundamental Microsoft products to ensure the charity achieved high productivity rates.

## the solution

After conducting an audit and scoping exercise, OryxAlign proposed moving from a traditional file server to Microsoft Modern Workplace. Part of the audit was looking at their IT environment from a FinOps perspective and asking, "Where can we reduce cost costs and maximise efficiency?"

The project involved moving Active Directory to Azure, and the remote desktop service was moved to Azure Virtual Desktop. It was housed within the umbrella of a Microsoft-powered Modern Workplace, including SharePoint, Endpoint Manager, and other platforms.

As much of the data held by Solace is sensitive, security was a high priority. We continued making full use of their Microsoft 365 licensing by deploying Microsoft Defender to protect endpoint devices

and servers. However, we also installed CISCO Umbrella for web filtering to ensure staff could not accidentally visit malicious websites.

User adoption was a key element. Adam Weldon-Ming, Cloud Solution Architect Team Lead at OryxAlign, highlighted, "60-70% of cloud migration projects, especially to modern workspace, fail because of poor user adoption." As a result, we conducted a train-the-trainer program that covered sharing, access control, co-authoring, Teams calling, chat messages and more.

Adam added, "Solace has always been at the forefront of technology adoption, moving to Azure when it was Windows Virtual Desktop and still in its infancy. They continue to be a technology leader in the charity sector."

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## the benefits

The transformation project took six months of planning, migration, and discussions. The shift to SharePoint has enabled Solace to improve its collaboration and content management. It provides users with enhanced productivity features such as version control, document co-authoring, and access control.

Our ongoing managed IT service ensures short-term contractors and volunteers are quickly given access to selected applications and equally quickly removed after their contract ends.

Many of Solace's workforce are enthusiastic volunteers who may need to become more familiar with Microsoft 365 applications. The train-the-

trainer sessions we delivered means they can rapidly become an effective team member without Solace incurring further training expense.

For any charity, keeping tight control over costs is critical. OryxAlign and Solace are delighted that together we were able to reduce Microsoft licensing charges by 55%.

Lynda Hewlett, Business Support Manager at Solace Women's Aid, added: "We will always be grateful to OryxAlign for their support during our transition to hybrid working, and for their understanding of how our workforce operates and the need for IT to be an enabler in our mission."



Because OryxAlign optimised our Azure Desktop environment, we saved 55% on monthly licensing costs. We now have a more modern work surface, modern collaboration, plus greater resilience and security.

**Solace Women's Aid**

- Lynda Hewlett, Business Support Manager