



 **accenture**

 **avanade**

 **Microsoft**

CASE STUDY

NHSmile: World's largest email migration to the cloud

Avanade, Accenture and Microsoft enable seamless communication to deliver care more effectively

Business situation: A call for change

As the UK's largest employer, the National Health Service (NHS) cares for more than 1 million patients every 36 hours. So, when the COVID-19 crisis erupted, NHS support was more vital than ever before. Under the strain of exploding national demand, the NHS's frontline healthcare workers urgently needed the very best digital messaging and email tools to work together even faster and more collaboratively – anywhere, any time.

Not only would having the latest cloud-based communication technologies at their fingertips help frontline staff communicate more effectively, it would reduce the burden of administration and, most importantly, improve patient care and safety. From the back office to the doctor's office, a digitally optimized NHSmail platform could enable new healthcare practices and collaboration methods between social care and health organizations throughout England and Scotland.

However, arming more than 1 million NHS employees with the latest digital collaboration innovations amidst the pressures of the pandemic was no small feat. Quite the opposite: The massive undertaking required moving 2.1 million NHS mailboxes to [Microsoft's Exchange Online](#) platform in record time.

Even before COVID-19 hit, the NHS had already planned on the sweeping migration and the pandemic gave it an increased sense of urgency. Establishing connected collaboration tools that allow for easier and more secure transfer of information in support of patient care on a far-reaching scale was long a top focus for the NHS. However, once the pandemic took hold, care teams increasingly worked remotely as the cloud migration unfolded on a vast scale.

The task was easier said than done. The NHS was faced with fully enhancing care team communication and collaboration throughout the organization. At the same time, COVID-19 forced the entire healthcare system to profoundly adapt fast. The crisis placed added strain on service delivery.

This emphasized the importance of keeping dispersed clinical teams connected and underscored the value of the NHS's pioneering "Cloud First" strategy. In such circumstances, seamless, secure, real-time communication and data sharing can make all the difference to the quality of care.

To unlock the full potential of modern communication platforms like [Microsoft Teams](#), the NHS prepared to lay the foundation for a flexible, responsive and future-ready digital solution. The legacy service embarked upon a transformational journey to reinvent how healthcare is delivered.

Solution: When tech meets ingenuity

The mass-scale project was undertaken in partnership with NHS Digital, Microsoft, Accenture and Avanade – a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft. The outcome? A robust cloud-based framework that meets the collaboration challenge while helping the NHS more quickly and efficiently address the UK population's increasingly complex healthcare needs.

In 2020, Accenture delivered multiple service enhancements and supported an organization-wide Microsoft Teams implementation. In just seven days, the integration of the collaborative chat, call and video meeting tool was built, tested and rolled out to 1.2 million NHS employees.

Next came the move to the cloud. The joint teams worked closely together, migrating all NHSmail mailboxes to Microsoft's cloud-hosted organizational email messaging platform at speed and scale. Approximately 22,000 NHSmail accounts were converted to the cloud each evening, and 83,000 accounts every weekend. Knowing that the NHS's new cloud-based communication platform would allow it to collaborate more effectively as it delivered crucial patient care strengthened the team's resolve to produce a solution without delay.

"The migration of NHSmail to Exchange Online has enabled us to provide staff across the NHS with a mail system which is functionally richer, more secure and lower cost." said Sarah Wilkinson, former NHS Digital Chief Executive.

Together, the teams executed the Microsoft Exchange Online migration with minimal disruption and brought a host of specialized program management skills and technology migration expertise to the table throughout the journey. The result: The completion of an exceptionally smooth and successful multi-phase program with the least possible disruption to frontline clinicians and their support staff.

While the NHS and project partners Accenture, Avanade and Microsoft tackled multiple logistical challenges as they arose due to the pandemic, a new benchmark for a large IT migration was established. The comprehensive digital transformation marked a major milestone in the digital evolution of the NHS. Accomplishing a technical rollout of this scale against the backdrop of COVID-19 is a tremendous achievement for the NHS.

Results: 2.1 million mailboxes, improved care and streamlined digital collaboration

As healthcare and technology converge, fast, clear and effective human connection across far-reaching locations is vital to effective care. With its systems transformed, the NHS and its dedicated staff are able to focus even more on their patients and boost health outcomes. Equipping NHS teams with the digital communication tools they need isn't just about trimming costs or boosting efficiencies. It's about using the power of connective technologies and reinventing processes to empower frontline workers to do what they do even better.

That's why the platform supports unprecedented NHS collaboration. With the Teams, O365 and Online Exchange systems in harmonious operation across the organization, the NHS can now conduct secure patient consultations via audio and video calls on a national scale. And they can do this while maintaining employee safety, enabling service continuity, creating additional capacity and improving provider and patient experiences.

The numbers:

- Two petabytes of data copied to the cloud
- Over 700,000 support site hits on migration content
- All 2.1 million mailboxes migrated
- Less than 1.2% of users required support

"We have also deployed a Microsoft Hybrid implementation of Office 365 to the NHSmail platform, which is allowing NHS organizations to provision services much faster, integrate with the existing NHSmail identity, and collaborate more easily. These additional services build on the deployment of Microsoft Teams, which we rolled out at the start of the pandemic, and which is currently used to send almost 1 million messages across the NHS every day." – Sarah Wilkinson, former NHS Digital Chief Executive.

Local NHS organizations now have access to the full Virtual Visits capability using the Microsoft Teams Bookings app across individual institutions. Among these institutions are hospitals and GP practices. On top of having a centralized view of virtual appointments and patient capacity, practice managers and IT leaders can also enable Virtual Visits. In addition, they can review, make and reschedule appointments, identify which healthcare providers have availability and onboard new staff.

With significant benefits realized, Exchange Online now enhances every NHS employee's ability to digitally collaborate in real time all across the organization. Today, the platform is instantly accessible via any device, anywhere. With its new "Cloud First" strategy full steam ahead, the NHS can seamlessly communicate and deliver care more effectively than ever before.

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 39,000 professionals in 25 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at: www.avanade.com

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About Accenture

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services — all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 569,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

About Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.