

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils



Two local UK councils improve network application performance and employee experience across social care departments in a complex hybrid working environment.

Since 2016, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils have operated with a combined workforce of over 4,000 staff serving over 500,000 residents of South

West London. Collectively, they are the one of the largest staff groups in London local government.

Richmond and Wandsworth began using a Digital Experience Management solution from Riverbed in 2017 to improve user experience and gain more visibility of their key systems and applications such as for social care.

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In Brief

Challenges

- Reduce network performance challenges
- Improve visibility across social care departments
- Increase customer self-service processes
- Identify root cause of issues

Solution

- Riverbed® Aternity Digital Experience Management (DEM)

Benefits

- Ability to proactively monitor networks and user experience
- Maintaining employee productivity
- Ability to estimate financial risk of application issues
- Holding software vendors to account

Challenge: Improving network performance and employee experience

For Richmond and Wandsworth Councils, both customer and employee digital experience are key to managing and maintaining an effective IT system infrastructure. The councils have had a history of problematic network performance, particularly across social care systems. They also had trouble identifying the root cause of issues when they occurred.

When the two councils began operating as a shared workforce, they revised their digital approach with the aim of improving the user experience.

They wanted to implement more self-service processes across all departments, enabling users, internal or external to the Council, to easily schedule appointments and register information. The councils also required more network visibility across their social care systems.

Solution: Increasing network visibility and monitoring third-party systems

Riverbed's partner, Teneo, the IT Services company, focused on reducing complexity. They have supported Richmond and Wandsworth Councils with consultancy throughout the partnership to help them realise the full value of Aternity. Teneo has also helped to develop metrics on user traffic across various council offices.

The key driver for the councils choosing Riverbed Aternity initially was to identify where issues were taking place and whether they were related to device, network or application errors.

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Applications Manager at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

James Petersen, Applications Manager at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils, explains, “Being able to identify where the challenges lie – whether with the network, the client, or the backend database – has been incredibly useful. We operate in a hosted environment alongside third party systems, the majority of which are web-based. Having visibility on the performance of third parties is a unique function to Riverbed's Aternity solution.”

Likewise, being able to verify user experiences enables the councils to make more effective decisions and validate their remediation efforts.

“User experience is important to us, and we're now able to use the data we capture to make evidence-based decisions to resolve issues. Aternity allows us to be proactive in identifying problems, which is essential at busy times of the year.

For example, when elections are running, we can't have technical hold ups. Aternity helps us proactively monitor our systems performance, identify when there's heavy use and make adjustments if required,” confirms Petersen.



Benefits: Improved system stability and vendor relationships

Collectively, both councils run approximately 3,000 Aternity licences, which enables them to monitor their applications effectively.

“Aternity is an end-user experience monitoring tool which is easy to use. We don’t raise a lot of support calls with Riverbed because it’s a good product by nature. In terms of architecture, it’s what software should be,” says Petersen.

Since both councils’ infrastructure converged onto a single network, IT has twice the number of devices to manage. With Aternity, they can now proactively monitor equipment and networks across a complex hybrid working environment.

Riverbed Aternity also helps the councils manage hybrid working. IT can now easily locate where people are working, whether they are remote or in an office. This enables the IT team to plan network resources accordingly and it helps inform decisions around future workspace allocation.

It also helps the IT team to identify which hardware is causing issues and which laptops need to be repaired for staff working from home. In turn, this helps staff maintain productivity, while minimising equipment downtime and support the user experience whether they are in or out of the office.

“When we first started using Aternity, it was to validate problems with our social care systems. It has helped us achieve stability and improve our vendor relationships. We can now move on to higher priorities like developing and automating systems,” explains Petersen.

Aternity also enables the councils to estimate the financial risks of running faulty applications. In being able to pinpoint third-party application issues, and provide evidence, the councils can hold software vendors accountable while reducing the need for fault finding.

Knowing that their systems are working well provides the IT team with peace of mind and helps them identify which applications are approaching end of life. The product is also helping IT staff prioritise upgrade projects and business critical operations.

“By providing insight into our IT estate, Aternity will help us to reduce our asset costs and help with our sustainability agenda. We’re able to retire some asset management tools and we’re aware of the time saving advantages of the solution. It integrates well with other systems and can be used to discover other applications,” concludes Petersen.

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Riverbed, the leader in AI observability, helps organizations optimize their users' experiences by leveraging AI automation for the prevention, identification, and resolution of IT issues. With over 20 years of experience in data collection and AI and machine learning, Riverbed's open and AI-powered observability platform and solutions optimize digital experiences and greatly improve IT efficiency. Riverbed also offers industry-leading Acceleration solutions that provide fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app, over any network, to users anywhere. Together with our thousands of market-leading customers globally - including 95% of the *FORTUNE* 100 - we are empowering next-generation digital experiences. Learn more at riverbed.com.