

Customer Success Story

Staffordshire County Council



Technical SAP® Support

Staffordshire County Council's SAP® estate

Staffordshire County Council uses a comprehensive suite of SAP® software products including; ERP 6, PI, Business Warehouse for Business Intelligence reporting, and the SAP Enterprise Portal.

More than 5,000 users have access to Staffordshire County Council's SAP estate within public services which include schools, libraries and emergency services across eight local district and borough council boundaries.

It is imperative that that council has access to their systems 24/7 which is why they were looking for an SAP partner to provide advice and support.

Benefiting from managed technical SAP support

When it comes to providing IT systems support, in particular where the organisation itself offers SAP support to a wide range of establishments, service continuity and flexibility are vital.

Staffordshire County Council sought a reliable, managed technical support service to supplement its in-house SAP team. The council issued a tender and after a competitive process, awarded Absoft with the contract.

Paul Coulman Senior SAP Analyst at Staffordshire County Council says: "We chose Absoft as our support partner because we were extremely impressed by its proposal and quality of the support package. We then decided to extend our contract from three to five years because we knew that Absoft would continue to work well as an extension to our internal team.

"Another important consideration for us was Absoft's ability to ensure the stability of our SAP systems by providing a round-the-clock automated monitoring service."

Under the arrangement Absoft's consultants, based at Absoft's UK headquarters, manage and maintain the council's SAP estate as well as providing technical support to its internal SAP team. The service also provides specialist monitoring, patching and maintenance of the SAP estate.

By using Absoft's technical support service, the council is provided with full time support from a dedicated team guaranteeing continuity of its SAP estate and ensuring vital services are always available to its users.

Ed Duncan, Absoft Principal SAP Technical Consultant says: "As SAP specialists, our expertise is well suited to the council's complex SAP estate and ensures the infrastructure is in place to manage a landscape of such a size."

Customer background



Staffordshire is a large rural county in the heart of England covering 2,623sq.km. Despite the rural nature of the region, the vast majority of its 800,000 population live in the five large towns and numerous market towns across the county.

It is Staffordshire County Council's responsibility to provide vital public services to the people of Staffordshire. These services include schools, libraries, social care, trading standards, waste disposal, planning and highways.



A trusted and proactive SAP support partner

"Knowing who to call upon is an important factor for us and Absoft ensures our internal team know exactly who they are calling for advice at any time.

"They have gone the extra mile to build relationships with our in-house SAP team and have a thorough understanding of our support requirements and it is this proactive approach which led us to extend our contract from three to five years," says Mr Coulman.

As well as successfully handling and solving a considerable range of direct support calls from the council's SAP team, Absoft's consultants have adopted a proactive approach, suggesting improvements to enhance the council's IT infrastructure; including patching and migration projects.

To improve performance, stability and to ensure the systems would continue to run on a fully supported operating system and database platform Absoft provided the council with a recommendation to carry out a Hardware Migration to move their SAP estate from physical hardware over to Hyper-V Virtualisation platform.

"Absoft recommended several changes that were made effective before we migrated our systems. In particular, they reviewed our security arrangements and made suggestions which, by implementing them, have given us further assurance that the council's data is secure," says Mr Coulman.

Absoft has also reviewed all of the council's monitoring and housekeeping processes, standardising the way they are run, resulting in the council benefiting from tidier and better monitored systems.

"For various reasons our housekeeping reports were not up to standard. Thanks to Absoft's efforts in reviving these reports, it is now easier to spot the more important issues in our systems and as these are addressed and our systems become tidier, we have more time to anticipate and investigate those issues in advance," says Mr Coulman.

Providing an automated monitoring service

With such a large and complex SAP estate and the fact that the council needs to have vital information relating to vulnerable children constantly available, it is important for the council to have access to an automated monitoring service that operates on a 24/7 basis.

"A key aspect of Absoft's support has been the monitoring of all aspects of our SAP systems through SAP NetWeaver® CCMS, something which is especially impressive in view of the complexity of our SAP landscape. The system that Absoft has put in place rapidly detects problems and issues, and highlights the likely causes," says Mr Coulman.

Absoft developed the 24/7 automated monitoring service inhouse, which it provides to Staffordshire County Council and other customers.

The service streamlines the process using SAP's internal monitoring system to monitor all of the relevant metrics which relate to the stability and performance of the software.

This data is then read from SAP into a third-party monitoring tool running at Absoft's SAP Support Centre every two minutes. Issues are identified automatically when metrics are outside acceptable thresholds, and email alerts are sent to Absoft's qualified technical support consultants. This means Absoft can react quickly and deal with any problem as well as alert the council's technicians to issues with the hardware or network landscape.

The automated monitoring service stores historical data, which can be used with a graphing tool for trending purposes and to estimate when problems may occur in the future. There is also the ability to produce template-based reporting of the data.

Staffordshire County Council's internal team also has remote access to the monitoring system, and has incorporated the information made available into the routine checks that its technicians make on the council's systems.



"Staffordshire County Councils aim is to provide high quality services which provide value for money and are tailored to our customers and communities', working with Absoft in supporting our SAP system, our partnership is enabling us to do this.

"Over the course of our partnership with Absoft in the delivery of SAP technical support we have developed a co-operation that is like having an extension to our own internal team. The fluid communications between their team of consultants and ourselves has effectively meant they have become more like colleagues and that relationship has enabled us to deliver first class business support services for our SAP systems."

Paul Coulman – Staffordshire County Council

For more information please call Absoft on +44 (0)1224 707088 or email info@absoft.co.uk

Aberdeen | Stavanger

T. +44 (0)1224 707088 E. info@absoft.co.uk W. www.absoft.co.uk

ABSOF
INTEGRATED SAP SUPPORT