

Derbyshire County Council – Working with Sapphire to Keep Data and Systems Secure



With 37,000 employees, Matlock-based Derbyshire County Council is among the largest local authorities in the country. The council recently became one of the few in the East Midlands to be rated as “excellent” under the Audit Commission’s ‘Comprehensive Performance Assessment’. This achievement reflects a focus on maintaining high standards throughout the organisation, as demonstrated by a commitment to implementing robust security solutions and rigorous working processes in order to ensure that sensitive data and systems are fully protected.

To achieve these goals, the Council undertook a procurement exercise to deliver internal penetration testing on its server infrastructure. The Council advertised the contract on Source Derbyshire and invited a number of successful bidders to provide a presentation on their services. Based on the submission of the bid and quality of the presentation, Sapphire was successful in obtaining the contract.

Working Together

Sapphire conducted both an initial penetration test and a follow-up review to ensure that original recommendations had been implemented and the relevant enhancements made to network security.

Phillip Spencer, Principal Auditor and IT Manager, Derbyshire County Council commented, “We believe in doing as much as possible to demonstrate that we are actively improving the security of our networks. By carrying out penetration testing, we are highlighting the fact that we take security extremely seriously and are taking all reasonable steps to ensure that our systems and the data they contain are fully secure.

“While we have internal staff who are focused on network security, we also like to have an annual independent validation of the quality of the network security and the areas that we need to address to improve this quality. To deliver this level of assurance, we need to be working with a credible market player and a security provider that we are confident that we can trust in providing independent assurance that the network is robust and secure. On both counts, Sapphire fits the bill perfectly.”



Positive Relationship

It is a critical requirement for any local authority to keep all data, and particularly personal data, secure and to ensure that the network and applications which contain that information are sufficiently robust to protect it. The work carried out by Sapphire has played a key role in enabling the Council to meet this requirement.

The Council values Sapphire's ability to deliver high-quality work within agreed timeframes. Another key factor in the success of the working relationship has been the flexible and responsive approach, which Sapphire has shown at all times

As Philip concludes "Sapphire is a very approachable company. Everyone with whom we have had any contact from the receptionists and administrative staff to the technical consultants has been extremely helpful".

