

Workplace recovery service rated excellent by Cintra

Cintra is an award-winning provider of HR and payroll services to over 900 happy customers. The company provides a range of solutions, including fully outsourced payroll, in-house or hosted HR and payroll services, and bespoke, hybrid solutions. Established in 1981, the company is head quartered in Gateshead, Tyne & Wear and employs more than 100 staff.

Challenge

More than 250,000 people are paid every month using a Cintra solution. A large percentage of clients use Cintra's outsourced services, to ensure that their employees are paid correctly and on time – failure to perform is simply not an option. Payroll is a heavily regulated industry and compliance is always high on Cintra's agenda. As a BACS accredited, ISO9001 certified and ISAE 3402 company, Cintra's disaster recovery processes are constantly reviewed to make sure that its exemplary service can withstand any form of disaster. Continually looking to improve this area saw Cintra turn to Pulsant, to take its disaster recovery capability to the next level.

Pulsant solution

Pulsant worked with Cintra to design and implement a 35-seat workplace recovery service that met the HR and payroll company's strict security, availability and testing requirements. The service is also scalable to accommodate all staff, if necessary.

Results

Cintra has total peace of mind that, in the event its internal line of business systems, outsourced bureau operations or offices are inaccessible, it can remain operational. No matter the disruption, Cintra has the ability to be back up and running at Pulsant's workplace recovery site within an hour. The solution enables staff to deliver business critical services to clients and fulfils the requirements of Cintra's frequent compliance audits.

Client:
Cintra

Pulsant solution:
Workplace recovery

Outcomes:

- Business continuity
- Risk mitigation



cintra
THE FRIENDLY FACE
OF HR & PAYROLL

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Cintra HR & Payroll Services is a well-established, privately held business based in Gateshead. Established in 1981, the company has doubled in size over the last decade and now employs more than 100 staff.

Cintra's core offering is its outsourced bureau service, handling the payment of salaries and payroll liabilities for more than 900 clients across the public and private sector.

With more than 30 dedicated staff in the payroll bureau, which includes printing room and despatch facilities, this function is business critical and needs to be constantly available. If Cintra was unable to operate due to a power failure, network outage or some other disruption, it would have a major impact on its customers' business. Staff wouldn't receive salaries and customers could face penalties if payroll liabilities, such as tax and national insurance contributions are not paid on time. Such a disruption is not an option.

Maintaining service, minimising disruption

Business continuity is high on Cintra's agenda and as such arrangements are continually reviewed and improved. The growth of the organisation in terms of manpower, service offering and client base saw business continuity become even more of a key focus, ensuring it could continue to operate in the face of any disruption. As a result, Sheila Hughes, Head of Quality at Cintra and IT Manager Sean O'Sullivan began investigating alternative workplace recovery solutions.

“For us, every day is a deadline day. We can't afford any kind of disruption because we're dealing with business-critical services for our clients”

Sheila Hughes, Head of Quality, Cintra.

“As a result, a workplace recovery service is incredibly important for us. We had specific requirements around what we needed in a site and a provider, because in the event of a disaster we need to be up and running immediately. From a logistical point of view Cintra needed a site that was accessible for staff. But when it came to the technical requirements, the company had bespoke needs that proved a challenge for other suppliers.



Sean O'Sullivan, IT Manager at Cintra said: “The first requirement for me and my team was a provider that would be receptive to our needs, someone we could easily work with to ensure the site was fit for our purpose. The providers we approached were very rigid and weren't willing to consider our bespoke needs. Many of them also indicated they didn't work on weekends, so if we had an issue during that time we'd have to wait until Monday to invoke the service, which just wasn't a viable option for us.”

Workplace recovery, a perfect mix of facility, security and personnel

One of Cintra's key requirements was privacy—sharing an open office with other companies was unacceptable, due to data protection and security requirements, given the type of information the company holds. It also required a separate network for the same reasons.

After showing Cintra around the Team Valley facility, Pulsant was able to guarantee Cintra sole access to an entire floor during an invocation and set up a private virtualised local area network (VLAN) to address the company's need for its own segregated network.

For the past four years Pulsant has provided a workplace recovery service to Cintra, working closely with the quality and IT teams to identify areas for improvement and ensure that, in the event of an invocation, the process will be carried out smoothly with minimal disruption to staff and customers.

A critical part of the service is testing; Cintra carries out at least two simulated invocations every year, making use of 35 seats, hosting different staff members from various departments. As they would in a real-life invocation, the Cintra IT team are the first onsite to ensure the computers are up and running. They are followed by the payroll bureau team, who can login and start within an hour of the service being invoked.



Cintra staff are familiar with the workplace recovery site and after each test are asked to provide feedback. To date the feedback has been positive, with staff rating the site and ability to fulfil their roles as excellent.

“We need to make sure not only that our customers experience no disruption, but also that our staff are happy and able to carry out their tasks. They love the facility and are very comfortable there, with the only comment being that the kitchen is smaller than the one in our office, which is definitely feedback we can live with,” said Hughes.

Moving forward, the payroll company will continue to grow and is working with Pulsant to streamline the service even further.

As per the agreement with Pulsant, Cintra has a floor to itself for security reasons, and uses an exclusive network to connect to its systems and applications. Cintra also has its own image (a virtualised desktop) which is deployed to the computers on the floor during an invocation and securely erased once staff have left the site.

Assurance, speed of response and continuous operation

While Cintra hasn't had to invoke the service yet, Pulsant has exceeded all expectations around the agreed SLAs for every testing scenario.

“We haven't had to invoke the service, but we have complete confidence that if we do, we are in safe hands. We have a four-hour SLA with Pulsant, but with each test we've carried out our staff has been able to get to the site, log on to their systems and begin work in under an hour. The staff at the site are unbelievable — so accommodating, helpful and considerate,” said Hughes.

“We are heavily audited to prove we have the capability to carry on working in the event of a disaster, and Pulsant is a major tick in all the boxes we have, proving their efficiency time and time again.”

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Sheila Hughes, Head of Quality, Cintra.

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