

Pulsant delivers complete peace of mind to Scottish Building Society

Scottish Building Society is Scotland's only independent building society. With its headquarters based in Edinburgh, the firm employs 80 staff and operates 6 branches across the country.

Challenge

Scottish Building Society designs and delivers savings and mortgage products to its customers across the region. As a financial institution, security and resilience are key in meeting regulatory compliance and ensuring banking customers receive the best possible service.

The organisation needed a new workplace recovery provider to ensure continuity of service to its six branches across Scotland to mitigate the risk of lost business or revenue and reputational damage in the event of a disruption. In addition, the organisation also wanted to ensure its production servers were housed in a secure location to avoid downtime and guarantee business continuity

Pulsant solution

Pulsant supplied a 40-seat workplace recovery solution, complete with virtualised private network, to Scottish Building Society, working with the financial institution to tailor the service based on its requirements. Pulsant also provided a colocation service based out of one of its secure, enterprise-class datacentres, hosting the building society's production servers

Results

Scottish Building Society has peace of mind that its mission-critical servers are safe in a well-maintained, resilient and highly secure datacentre. In addition, the financial institution has complete assurance that in the event of a disaster its core staff can quickly and effectively relocate to Pulsant's workplace recovery site within four hours, ensuring minimal disruption to branches and customers

Client:

Scottish Building Society

Pulsant solution:

Workplace recovery

Outcomes:

- Business continuity
- Risk mitigation



Scottish Building Society was established in 1848 and has a rich history in designing savings and mortgage products to address the needs of its many customers. As the only independent building society based in Scotland, the financial institution operates six branches across Scotland, as well as around 30 agencies. The company employs 80 staff and is headquartered in Edinburgh.

Ensuring quality of service and minimising downtime

With resilience and compliance playing a key role for the building society, the IT team sought a workplace recovery partner when its current provider stopped offering the service. The recovery site had to be in the right location, easily accessible by staff and secure in terms of physical and network security.

Workplace recovery forms a critical part of Scottish Building Society's business continuity plans and ensures the organisation can operate in the event of a disaster, avoiding damage to its reputation and service delivery.

The staff based at its head office in Edinburgh support the company's branch network that delivers savings and mortgage services to customers across Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Glasgow, Inverness and Troon. While several staff members can work remotely if needed, there are core tasks within the building society that can only be carried out on-premise. As a result, the organisation needs a physical site that can house staff and give them access to the systems that they require in the event of a disruption.

In addition, as part of a wider focus on resilience, the IT team investigated moving its production servers off-premise to a secure datacentre.

"Our head office shares a building with residential housing on the top floor. If a crisis occurred, like a flood or fire, it made sense to have our key servers hosted in a secure, properly maintained datacentre with resilience, power and environmental and security controls," said Alison Quilter, Head of IT, Scottish Building Society.

Scottish Building Society wanted one supplier that could meet both its colocation and business continuity needs. After researching a number of companies in the area, Pulsant was selected based on several factors, including the breadth and flexibility of services on offer, the professionalism and expertise of staff, financial stability as a business, as well as the quality of its facilities.



Alison Quilter, Head of IT, Scottish Building Society

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"Pulsant was very helpful when we approached them and structured the services to suit us. When we began working with them they carefully managed what we needed and moving forward they continue to take an active interest in ensuring we can deliver our recovery plans and are satisfied with our colocation services."

A focus on resilience and assurance

Pulsant now delivers a 40-seat workplace recovery service out of its South Gyle facility to Scottish Building Society, complete with virtualised private network on-site for added security. The space is designed to accommodate staff from core departments, including finance, mortgage administration, underwriting, IT, and risk and compliance.

"These are our core functions that we need to support our branches across the region and ensure they are able to service their customers with the savings or mortgage advice they need. Pulsant came out on top because of a combination of its expertise, facilities and location."



The South Gyle workplace recovery site is the ideal distance from the building society's head office — close enough for staff to easily get to, but far enough from head office not to be affected by the same potential issues, such as power or network outages.

"The fact that the workplace recovery site gives us everything we need, from location and functionality, to knowledgeable and helpful staff, all takes a weight off my shoulders when it comes to operational resilience. I know we're working with a very good third-party provider who understands our organisation and acts as an extension of our IT team."

Scottish Building Society also selected Pulsant to provide colocation services from its Newbridge datacentre. Its production servers are now hosted in Pulsant's ISO27001 facility with 24-hour security.

"Pulsant's datacentres are excellent and well maintained, in terms of security, infrastructure and resilience. The quality of service and security gives me complete peace of mind that our servers that host business critical systems are safe and secure," said Quilter.

Superb service and a trusted partnership

With a firm focus on resilience, Scottish Building Society conducts comprehensive tests twice a year. Working well within the agreed four-hour invocation SLA, Pulsant assists in identifying areas for improvement during the tests.

This includes working with the internal IT team to conduct pre-tests, discuss enhancements and any changes to the service. The service hasn't been invoked yet, but the testing and improvement cycle ensure that when it is needed, everything will go according to plan.

Two tests are carried out annually. The first focuses on users and getting them to site and set up, while the second focuses on IT and ensures the team can deliver on its objectives in the absence of Quilter or the IT manager.

"We report back to the board on our business continuity and resilience strategies and the entire business takes this process seriously. Each test we've had has been a positive experience. Staff love the facility and are comfortable with where to go and what to do, and know what to expect in a real disaster situation."

Pulsant and Scottish Building Society have worked together for three years. Pulsant acts as an extension of the building society's IT team and continues to deliver consultancy across both services, as well as in other technology areas when needed.

"The relationship we have with Pulsant is a partnership, it works because it's based on trust. Pulsant's first-class team and superb service helps us as an organisation deliver that same first-class service to our own customers," concluded Quilter.

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