

Case Study

Coventry City Council
Local Government
Smart Lockers

Ricoh helps Coventry City Council protect key workers and maintain essential services during Coronavirus crisis



Coventry City Council was about to deploy a Ricoh Smart Locker solution as part of its initiative to develop a more agile workforce. But when the Coronavirus crisis hit the

UK, it transformed the Ricoh solution into a critical tool for protecting staff and ensuring business continuity.

Executive summary

Name: Coventry City Council
Location: Coventry, West Midlands
Size: 5,500 staff
Activity: Local Government

Challenges

- Support staff and essential services during Coronavirus crisis
- ICT spending too much time on simple, basic support
- Support digital transformation and agile working

Solution

- Ricoh Workplace Services
- Ricoh Smart Lockers

Benefits

- Ensures staff safety and protection during Coronavirus crisis
- Enables business continuity and maintains essential services
- Cuts the need and risk for onsite ICT team from 20 to 2
- Reduces time spent on basic, mundane ICT support by 95%
- Redirects costly, skilled ICT resources to business critical operations

Challenges

Coventry City Council is a unitary authority responsible for providing local government services to 360,000 people in the city. It has recently been nominated as the UK City of Culture for 2021. The council has implemented a digital transformation programme to improve the operation and delivery of services to the community. It is aiming to develop a more agile workforce with innovative technologies like Microsoft Office 365, communication and collaboration tools and giving all staff mobile technology.

One area targeted for improvement was ICT because it had become too accessible. The team was in Friargate, the council's main building, and it was easy for staff to drop in unannounced when they had an IT issue.

Gary Griffiths, ICT Engagement Lead, Coventry City Council says, "If people were picking up new kit or had a problem, they would expect an analyst to sit alongside them and press the next button which they could do themselves. It was more around people's comfort. The team was spending too much time face-to-face which is an expensive way of dealing with things."

The council needed to manage and distribute IT inventory efficiently and enable a channel shift away from unnecessary hand-holding to more self-service. But this was to be overshadowed by the Coronavirus.

Solution

Ricoh was already providing several business services and solutions to the council and, as one of its key partners, held regular strategy meetings to look at business plans and challenges. The issue of improving ICT resource productivity was raised and Ricoh suggested smart locker technology.



After a competitive tender process via a local government purchasing framework agreement, Ricoh was awarded the contract to supply a smart locker solution. Ricoh was the only company - within the framework who submitted - able to provide the range and functionality of smart lockers the council needed.

As part of its Workplace Services offering - aimed at improving work environments and productivity - Ricoh has deployed a Ricoh Smart Locker solution at Coventry City Council. It comprises a Ricoh Inventory Management and Smart Asset Management Locker system. There is a click and collect unit for new starters and replacement kit with 14 different-sized lockers; a unit with 25 individual lockers housing 16 laptops, keyboards and mice; and a vending machine locker for peripherals. New employees, for example, can pick up an IT equipment pack with everything they need including a simple, step-by-step set up guide, backed up by phone support.

The Ricoh Smart Locker system is an advanced workspace storage solution incorporating the latest connected technology. Management software and an online portal allows the council to control the lockers remotely and get information on how they are being used. The lockers, which are keyless, are accessed via a code sent to the relevant user. Part of the solution includes ongoing support by Ricoh's service team.

The solution will be integrated into other council systems so that when a service request is raised it automatically activates a locker and sends a key code to the user.

The council planned to install the Smart Locker system at its Friargate location. But when the Coronavirus hit and the council closed non-essential sites, the lockers were relocated to the main Council House.

Benefits

Meeting the challenge of the Coronavirus has transformed the Ricoh Smart Locker solution from a system to improve IT operations to a mission-critical technology for protecting staff, maintaining essential services and adhering to Government lock-down measures.

As soon as the Smart Locker system went live, the council needed more lockers to meet increasing demand. The additional lockers have enabled the council to employ new staff immediately and provide them with the equipment they need to bring care and support to people quickly.

"In the face of the Coronavirus crisis, the Ricoh Smart Locker solution has become critical to protecting the Coventry City Council workforce and enabling it to deliver essential services

continued overleaf

Case Study Coventry City Council

to the community. It is the key cornerstone of our Coronavirus planning. Without it I doubt whether we could have implemented such effective social distancing measures as we have done," says Gary Griffiths.

With most council staff working from home and needing fully-functioning laptops, mobile phones and peripherals, safe access to IT equipment is essential. If a homeworker has a laptop problem or needs additional equipment, they raise a service ticket, get new equipment issued and collect it from a Ricoh Smart Locker without contacting anyone. The council's ICT department has a 20-strong team for end-user support. With the Ricoh system, just two people are needed on site to supply and manage the lockers.

Before Coronavirus, there was a churn of around 12 peripherals a week. But this is expected to increase, especially for items like headphones as staff use softphones on laptops to communicate from home. The lockers are also being used to minimise contact by the few staff that still need to work on site. ICT supports a user community of 4,500.

After Coronavirus, the council expects the Ricoh Smart Lockers to help improve day-to-day ICT operations. IT staff will spend less time handling mundane support requests and be able to focus on those users with complex issues and solve them faster. It will also redirect costly and skilled IT staff and resources to more valuable operations that increase efficiency and improve services to the community. The council estimates the lockers will reduce IT transactions and face-to-face contact by 95 percent. For every new starter, the council is saving around 20 minutes that used to be spent on set up.

The system will also help ICT manage asset inventory efficiently since it can track every item, who has used it and when from headsets and keyboards to small items like USB sticks. On peripherals, for instance, the council knows what it buys, but had struggled to identify how these were used.

The Smart Locker system will accurately track use and show how ICT adds value to the council. "I think it is a very powerful thing to have that granular level of detail about how, where, and what volume of peripherals have been consumed," says Gary Griffiths.

There is a stock of emergency loan laptops which staff can take out for 72 hours if their own device suddenly breaks down. When they collect the loan device, they put their faulty laptop into the locker for repair.

The council is planning to extend the system by installing vending-style units to other council locations so that IT equipment is available to staff locally. It is also looking at how smart lockers can be used to improve parcel delivery. Currently parcels are put in the site manager's office and the recipient contacted via email. But sometimes they are lost or mislaid. With Smart lockers, parcels are secure, and the owner issued a code to retrieve their parcel when convenient.

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh Business Services
- Ricoh Smart Lockers
 - Ricoh Inventory Management Locker
 - Ricoh Smart Asset Management Locker

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Gary Griffiths, ICT Engagement Lead, Coventry City Council

