



CASE STUDY:

Coventry City Council works with Ricoh to provide workers with swift, secure access to vital IT equipment and to streamline support services

Using a Ricoh Smart Locker solution, Coventry City Council transformed distribution and management of valuable IT assets. With a streamlined approach, the council saves time for its skilled ICT team, supports agile hybrid working, and enhances control over IT inventory.

Executive summary

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

Challenges

- ICT team spending too much time on simple, basic support
- Support digital transformation and agile working solutions
- Move to flexible self-service model for distribution of IT inventory

Solutions

- Ricoh Workplace Services
- Ricoh Smart Lockers

Benefits

- Enables remote workforce to collect and drop off equipment at their convenience Reduces time spent on basic, mundane ICT support by 95%
- Redirects costly, skilled ICT resources to business critical operations



“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 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.”

Gary Griffiths,
ICT Engagement Lead, Coventry City Council



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 support and asset management. For example, the ICT team previously struggled to track equipment usage, especially for small IT peripherals. Furthermore, when new starters joined the council or employees required support, they would often drop in unannounced on the ICT team to pick up equipment or request help. As a result, skilled ICT teams were drawn into completing time-consuming support tasks there and then, hindering productivity and preventing them from focusing on strategic work.

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 planned a new approach, shifting from unnecessary hand-holding to greater self-service and more efficient management and distribution of IT inventory. The ICT team would continue to support users through recommended channels, though with less reliance on face to face support. To achieve this transformation, users would need to be able to drop off and collect equipment from an accessible, centralised location. But rather than a simple pickup point, the council wanted an innovative solution with secure asset management capabilities, including full tracking of IT assets.

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.

Impressed by the concept, the council launched a competitive tender via a local government purchasing framework agreement. Ricoh won the contract to supply a smart locker solution against two major providers, as the only vendor able to deliver the range and functionality of smart lockers that the council needed.

RICOH SOLUTION/PRODUCTS

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



As part of its Workplace Services offering – aimed at improving work environments and productivity – Ricoh has deployed a Ricoh Smart Locker solution at the main Council House building in Coventry. The solution comprises a Ricoh Inventory Management and Smart Asset Management Locker system, and features:

- A click-and-collect unit with 14 different-sized lockers for new and replacement IT kit
- A 25-locker unit that currently houses 16 laptops, keyboards, and mice
- A vending machine locker specifically for storing and distributing IT peripherals
- Ongoing support from Ricoh’s services team

The Ricoh Smart Locker system is an advanced workspace storage solution incorporating the latest connected technology. Management software and an online portal allow the council to control lockers remotely and to monitor usage. Integration with other council systems means that service requests automatically activate a locker and send a key code to the relevant user, enabling them to access the equipment inside.

Today, new council employees can head to the lockers and pick up an IT equipment pack with everything they need, including a simple, step-by-step set up guide,

backed up by phone support. Furthermore, the lockers contain a stock of emergency loan laptops that employees can take out for 72 hours if their device breaks down. When collecting the loan device, they put their faulty laptop into the locker for the ICT team to repair.

BENEFITS

With the Ricoh Smart Locker solution, the council has successfully transitioned to a more efficient, streamlined model for IT support, asset management, and distribution. The smart lockers enable secure drop-off, collection, and storage of IT assets, and eliminate the need for ICT teams to remain available throughout the day to provide assistance. Of the 20-strong ICT support team, only two are needed on site to manage the lockers.

The new approach is supporting more agile hybrid working. With most staff working from home, access to fully functioning laptops, mobile phones, and IT peripherals is essential. Previously, there was churn of around 12 peripherals per week; this is now increasing, especially for items such as headphones for video calls. Whenever workers have a laptop problem or need additional equipment, they simply raise a service ticket, collect new assets from a Ricoh Smart Locker, or leave their faulty items for repairs – without having to contact anyone.

The council expects the Ricoh Smart Lockers to help to improve day-to-day ICT operations. Skilled ICT staff will spend less time handling mundane support requests and focus more on solving complex issues quickly, and supporting other activities that will improve quality of services to the community. Overall, the council estimates that the project will reduce IT transactions and the need for face-to-face contact by 95 percent. And for every new employee, the council is saving 20 minutes that were previously spent setting up IT equipment.

The Ricoh solution will also help the council to manage IT assets more efficiently and proactively, tracking every item, who has used it, and when – from headsets and keyboards to small items such as USB sticks. In the case of IT peripherals, for instance, the council can use the smart lockers to gain a clear and accurate understanding both of what has been purchased and how items are being used by employees – helping to document and record how the ICT function 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.

Soon after the Ricoh Smart Locker system went live, the council needed more lockers to meet increasing demand. Ricoh moved fast to deliver additional lockers, which have helped the council to onboard employees quickly, providing them with the equipment they need to bring care and support to the community.

Moving forward, the council plans to install vending-style lockers at more locations to increase availability of IT equipment to local staff. The council is also exploring how smart lockers could improve internal parcel distribution: currently, recipients receive an email to collect items stored in the site manager’s office, an approach that carries the risk of loss or damage. With smart lockers, there is the potential to keep parcels safe and secure at all times, and to allow recipients to retrieve items whenever convenient.



ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services, thus enabling individuals to work smarter. With cultivated knowledge and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85 years' history, Ricoh is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communications services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems. Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2021, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,682 billion yen (approx. 15.1 billion USD).

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