



Rotherham Council reduces the cost and complexity of ICT security compliance with SureCloud®

CASE STUDY

The Challenge

The Council recognises the importance of safeguarding its systems and the information held within them. This was particularly significant following the decision to encourage higher levels of home-working amongst employees. Abi Dakin, ICT Compliance Specialist at Rotherham MBC, says: “We have 4,600 workstations alone. Our systems extend to Rotherham’s housing department and schools, as well as to care provision for children and older people. With a reducing budget and limited resources we have to ensure we safeguard the personal information of our employees and those people in our care. Our challenge was not only to assess our vulnerabilities to hacking, data leakage and other security threats, but also to monitor and prove how we’ve reduced those vulnerabilities and therefore risk, year-on-year.”

Like all local authorities in England and Wales, Rotherham must comply with Government Codes of Connection and implement the associated security controls for using the accredited and secure Government Public Services Network (PSN). Further compliance measures are necessary to meet the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) that safeguards credit card data, while the council also has to undergo mandatory annual infrastructure and application penetration testing/IT Health Check assessments.

“We were typically overwhelmed with information following any penetration testing of our systems. Reports arrived in PDF format, making it difficult for us to identify and manage vulnerabilities. Inevitably we ended up simply ticking the boxes in agreement with our IT people that our vulnerability testing had been carried out,” explains Dakin.

The Solution

“What we needed instead was the ability to quickly and easily assess the results of our penetration testing. We needed to identify where we were at our most vulnerable, where we’d failed to take action on previous vulnerabilities and what we needed to do to ensure compliance,” adds Dakin.

Rotherham MBC used both the SureCloud Platform and services from SureCloud to meet its needs. Through the automation of key Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) processes, and centralised risk-based reporting, SureCloud helps organisations improve risk management and meet ongoing compliance requirements.

At a glance...

Customer:

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Industry: Local government

Headquarters: Rotherham, UK

No. of employees: 12,000

Benefits:

- Reduced resource costs
- Reduced monitoring manpower requirements
- Delivered faster and cheaper reporting through automation
- Delivered significant reduction in security vulnerabilities in six months
- Provided value added information (proof of vulnerabilities, security dashboard)

“The SureCloud GDPR Suite isn’t at a time when budgetary constraints mean all local authorities are doing less with less money, we’re actually bucking that trend and doing more with less money. The simplicity of the SureCloud solution means we’ve been able to reduce our salary costs because we no longer require the high level of seniority to manage this work.”

Abi Dakin

“SureCloud’s dashboard access to the PCI DSS scans, with red, green and amber alerts, cuts the number of people required to monitor our PCI security compliance. Our event logging and reporting for the annual IT Health Check is also faster and more cost effective now that it’s in the hands of SureCloud. The platform dissects the information and presents it to us in an easy-to-use format.”

Abi Dakin, ICT Compliance Specialist, Rotherham MBC

The following capabilities were adopted by the council:

- CESG CHECK Green Light security testing services were carried out by SureCloud's certified security consultants. Penetration testing and vulnerability assessments were undertaken and remediation processes were recommended.
- SureCloud Platform Vulnerability Management capabilities provided instant access to information regarding vulnerabilities discovered through penetration tests and automated scanning. Vulnerability management features combined with tightly integrated consultant-based security support, made the ongoing management of vulnerabilities, and resulting posture improvements, an achievable organisational goal.
- Self-service PCI Approved Scanning Vendor (ASV) scanning with additional certified security assistance from SureCloud's integrated support system enabled unlimited and on-demand scans.

Salary cost savings

The SureCloud Platform has delivered a number of benefits to the council, including a reduction in resource costs for managing ICT security and governance. "At a time when budgetary constraints mean all local authorities are doing less because they have less money, we're actually bucking that trend and doing more with less money," notes Dakin. "The simplicity of the SureCloud solution means we've been able to reduce our salary costs because we no longer require the high level of seniority to manage this work."

Traffic light monitoring reduces manpower; automated reporting is faster and cheaper

The council is also benefiting from the ability to monitor the PCI DSS scans. "SureCloud's dashboard access to the PCI DSS scans, with red, green and amber alerts, cuts the number of people required to monitor our PCI security compliance. Our event logging and reporting for the annual IT Health Check is also faster and more cost effective now that it's in the hands of SureCloud. The platform dissects the information and presents it to us in an easy-to use format," says Dakin.

Reduction in vulnerabilities

The SureCloud Platform provides Rotherham MBC with positive proof of vulnerabilities, which enables the council to measure and act on them. This has resulted in a significant reduction in vulnerabilities to its security in just six months. "SureCloud has given us a fantastic tool, as well as a high level of customer service," adds Dakin. "We can now go back to the relevant operations people with proof of vulnerabilities that need fixing. We couldn't do that before. Unsurprisingly, we're looking at adding other SureCloud services to the solution."

Protective monitoring and GPG 13 compliance

The SureCloud Platform also provides Rotherham MBC with a tool to meet Protective Monitoring requirements and ensure compliance with the Good Practice Guidance (GPG) 13. The Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) area of the solution provides an overview of events across monitored systems with the ability to drill down to the technical event data quickly and easily. Dashboards provide council management with an overview of security related alerts and enable tasks to be assigned for follow-up investigations where necessary.

About Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Rotherham MBC serves a population of over 250,000 in 108,000 households and employs 12,270 people. For more information visit.

www.rotherham.gov.uk

Why SureCloud

SureCloud is a provider of Cybersecurity services and cloud-based, integrated Risk Management products, which reinvent the way you manage risk. Certified by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) & CREST and delivered using the innovative Pentest-as-a-Service (underpinned by a highly configurable technology platform), SureCloud acts as an extension of your in-house security team and ensures you have everything you need to improve your risk posture.

www.surecloud.com

US: +1 (972) 996-6989

sales@surecloud.com

UK: +44 (0) 208 012 8544

www.surecloud.com

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