



Business challenge

To make its workplace health and wellbeing services accessible across the UK, BHSF cannot afford interruptions to its essential systems. The company set out to reduce the risk of unplanned downtime.

Transformation

BHSF moved its core applications to IBM® Power Systems™ servers hosted and managed by Meridian, gaining new capabilities such as data encryption and data masking, alongside higher availability.

Business benefits:

567%

increase in claims processed per day, supported by high-performance IBM technology

1 FTE

saved on IT management, liberating team to focus on innovation

Restores

data from within minutes of a disaster rather than 48 hours

BHSF

Insures against interruptions to health and wellbeing services with 24/7 access to critical systems

BHSF ([external link](#)) is a not-for-profit health and wellbeing provider headquartered in Birmingham, UK. The organization offers a range of products and services including occupational health, employee benefits, insurance and employee support.

“We’ve increased our daily claims-processing rate from 150 to 1,000 claims per person per day. We now issue 4,000 invoices a month. Our digital transformation continues apace, with high-performance IBM Power Systems technology playing a key role.”

Richard Evanson

Head of Group IT and Projects

BHSF

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Embracing digital transformation

People work best when they feel at their best. As a result, investing in employees' physical, mental, and financial wellbeing yield benefits for everyone: the staff member, their employer and society at large.

BHSF is a not-for-profit organization built on this ethos. With a proud history dating back to 1873, BHSF builds better workplaces by helping individuals get the support they need to flourish. In recent years, the organization has embarked on a digital transformation to help ensure that its services stay in lockstep with its customers' needs.

Richard Evanson, Head of Group IT and Projects at BHSF, explains, "Before, most of our claims were submitted and processed on paper. Today, half of all claims come in via our online portal and are managed digitally from end-to-end. While automation helps our staff work more efficiently, it also places high demands on our IT systems. As the proportion of digital applications rises year-on-year, the availability of our IT systems is becoming more important than ever."

To protect against interruptions to its services, BHSF began looking for a more robust alternative to its existing IT infrastructure. At the same time, the organization saw an opportunity to strengthen its information security



capabilities and liberate its IT team from time-consuming management tasks.

"Our customers depend on our services being available when they need them, so downtime is not an option," says Richard. "The COVID-19 pandemic saw greater demand for mental health support, and we were determined to be there for our 350,000 policyholders throughout the crisis and beyond. We decided the time was right to look for infrastructure experts we could trust, so we could focus on becoming even more customer-centric."

"We gain access to valuable new IBM Power Systems capabilities that contribute directly to our competitive edge—and Meridian ensures we can use them to their full potential."

Richard Evanson, Head of Group IT and Projects, BHSF

Transitioning seamlessly to cloud

BHSF relies on a set of custom business applications running in an IBM i environment on IBM Power Systems servers. The organization decided to move these systems to the latest generation of IBM Power Systems technology in a cloud environment hosted and managed by Meridian.

"IBM Power Systems has been the core of our digital transformation," comments Richard. "Our servers provide everything we need to serve our customers



Building leaner, more effective operations

BHSF is taking advantage of performant IBM technology to respond faster to customers and help working people across the UK access the health and wellbeing services they need sooner. The IBM Power Systems environment supports a new robotic process automation solution, which streamlines manual tasks and reduces response times further.

“We’ve increased our daily claims-processing rate from 150 to 1,000 claims per person per day,” comments Richard. “We now issue 4,000 invoices a month. Our digital transformation continues apace, with high-performance IBM Power Systems technology playing a key role.”

By moving to the cloud, BHSF has also freed up more time to focus on strategic priorities, confident that its IT environment is in the best possible hands. The organization is channeling this extra time into innovation, helping it to preserve its leading position.

“Outsourcing our IBM Power Systems environment to Meridian freed up the equivalent of one full-time employee, and when you’re a team of 13, that makes a big difference,” says Richard. “We don’t have to maintain in-house infrastructure skills, as Meridian’s team of dedicated IBM Power Systems and IBM i experts run the hardware for us. At the same

effectively and support 80 percent of the BHSF business. We decided to completely outsource our Power Systems environment to Meridian, which is a mark of our faith in them. They were the most knowledgeable and cost-efficient option, and provide value far beyond hosting services.”

With help from Meridian, BHSF migrated to the Meridian data center smoothly. The Meridian team spun up two cloud environments and configured them for continuous data replication. BHSF also benefits from fully redundant network connectivity, enabling unprecedented resilience.

Richard recalls, “Working together, BHSF and Meridian completed the cloud

migration seamlessly, with zero negative impact on the business. In fact, most users didn’t even realize anything had changed, except that their applications were running slightly faster than before.”

Thanks to Meridian, BHSF is now running on the most recent version of the IBM i operating system and has access to the latest IBM Power Systems functionality. Specifically, the organization is employing data encryption and data obfuscation to improve its offering to customers.

“With cloud services from Meridian, we have the latest IBM innovations at our fingertips,” says Richard. “Now that we can encrypt data at rest, it’s easier than ever for us to work with highly regulated companies in government and healthcare.

Using data masking, we can test using obfuscated live data without any risk of compromising our customers’ privacy. That enables us to develop and bring new services to market faster, while staying compliant and protecting our clients.”

“We achieved all this while keeping IT costs flat, and shifting our spend from CAPEX to OPEX. With help from IBM and Meridian, we’re achieving our goal of putting our customers’ needs first, every time.”

Richard Evanson, Head of Group IT and Projects, BHSF

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In the unlikely event of a technical issue, BHSF can now recover much faster. As a result, the organization can offer customers greater continuity of service, fulfilling its goal of being there whenever its needed.

Richard concludes, “Working with Meridian, we’ve reduced our recovery point objective so that we can restore data from within a few minutes of a disaster rather than 48 hours, which means a lot to our customers. Even better, we achieved all this while keeping IT costs flat, and shifting our spend from CAPEX to OPEX. With help from IBM and Meridian, we’re achieving our goal of putting our customers’ needs first, every time.”

Solution components

- IBM® Power Systems™
- IBM i

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Power Systems technology, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit: </it-infrastructure/power>

Meridian is a proven leader in the UK’s enterprise technology sector, with over 40 years’ experience of helping clients build powerful, reliable IT solutions that create real value. Today, Meridian is one of very few technology partners with the skills to provide true end-to-end solutions across a full spectrum of domains, including Infrastructure, Cloud, Security, Software and Artificial Intelligence. Meridian delivers projects in the UK and worldwide as a member of Meridian Group International, a network of skilled resources that combines global reach with local expertise. To learn more about Meridian, visit: meridianit.co.uk ([external link](#)).

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