

WPA makes a healthy choice with Claranet hosting



About WPA

WPA is a major player in the UK health insurance market, providing an extensive range of private medical insurance plans for corporate and individual clients. Based in Taunton, Somerset, and formerly known as Western Provident Association, the company takes considerable pride in its long history of successful business spanning more than a century.

A key component in WPA's long-running success has been its commitment to quality of service. The company has been consistently voted number one in NOP's annual survey of customer satisfaction.

WPA has been a Claranet customer since 2003 when the company took the decision to introduce an interactive website that would enable customers to buy and manage their own policies on-line. Quality was a key driver in the company's choice of Claranet as the Managed Services Provider to host this innovative new website.

The challenges

"WPA recently reviewed their technology as they wanted to minimise any downtime whilst making their systems as efficient as possible," says Nathan Sinnott, Claranet Technical Account Manager (TAM).

Due to their need to store sensitive data for their clients and comply with FSA regulations, WPA had to have a significant level of trust in the technical capability and reliability of the solution.

Adam Powell, WPA's IT Operations Manager, says "As Claranet was already a trusted technology business partner which shares the same values as WPA - one that could consult on best practice and solution management into the future - we asked them to design our new solution."

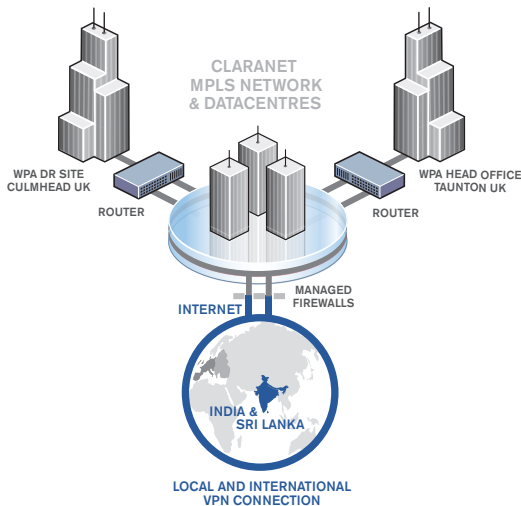
Claranet worked closely with WPA to deliver a Managed Application Hosting and MPLS connectivity service which will:

- Host WPA's customer-facing informational and ecommerce website
- Host their internal accounting and business systems which are used from many locations across the globe
- Host their company-wide Microsoft Exchange platform
- Provide resilient MPLS, and IPSec VPN connectivity between UK locations and India and Sri Lanka
- Meet WPA's storage requirements by way of a SAN



The solution

Claranet implemented a Managed Hosting service comprising 17 servers, with a resilient MPLS Virtual Private Network (VPN) to 3 sites in Taunton, Culmhead, and one of Claranet's datacentres in London. The use of dual circuits and the routing protocol iBGP (Internal Border Gateway Protocol) was employed to deliver automated failover between circuits in a disaster situation and increase availability of the network and its resources.



The service also includes centralised Internet breakout, terminated at one of Claranet's datacentres in London, where Claranet provides WPA with dual circuit, resilient connectivity to the Internet. Protecting this connection is a pair of High Availability Firewalls operating in an active passive mode. These Firewalls also terminate incoming secure IPSec VPN connections from WPA offices in India and Sri Lanka.

In addition, Claranet provided WPA with a Managed Application service whereby we own and operate an environment that provides dedicated clustered Microsoft Exchange services to the WPA user population and the use of a dedicated EMC CX3-20 SAN to meet high performance storage requirements.

The entire solution employs best-of-breed technology such as Cisco, Microsoft, HP, EMC, and Symantec for data backup. The solution is proactively managed and monitored by one of Claranet's monitoring and alarming systems.

"The solution is fully managed by Claranet," explains Nathan, "which allows WPA to concentrate on running their business rather than worrying about their IT infrastructure."

The result

Any downtime would create serious issues for WPA's business and the new service provides them with a secure and resilient network. Adrian Schuler, WPA's Director of Best Practice, concludes, "WPA is committed to delivering outstanding levels of customer service and in Claranet we have identified an organisation that is willing to share this commitment with us. As a consequence the technical solution, and its delivery and management, is at a performance level far in excess of what we could deliver in-house."

Business Benefits

1. **Peace of mind**, providing resilient network and system architecture with high availability of mission-critical applications
2. **High performance**, delivering fast and reliable access to business resources
3. **Secure architecture**, ensuring high levels of security, protecting sensitive WPA client data
4. **Flexible delivery**, with the performance and service required well into the future, whilst also being highly scalable
5. **Access to the Claranet TAM service**, for detailed technical consultation and ongoing performance reviews to ensure it's fit for purpose

For further information, please visit :

www.wpa.org.uk

www.clara.net