

UKCloud Health: Ten reasons to adopt the cloud



Why adopt the cloud?

Cloud technology creates opportunities and challenges for healthcare. On the one hand, it offers a rapid route to cost-effective computing and data storage services in the era of big data and multi-agency care collaboration. On the other, it represents a step change in the way IT supports the delivery of healthcare.

Recognised as a successful and high profile provider of cloud services to the UK public sector, UKCloud Health has the insight to support health and life sciences organisations as they consider their options to adopting the cloud. Our team has collated some useful advice on why such organisations should be embracing the cloud as part of their journey towards digital transformation.

1. The cloud can deliver quick cost and operational efficiencies.

Through its pay as you go model that can adapt according to needs and fluctuating demand, healthcare organisations can provide IT services and applications when required, cutting down the costs associated with providing the required IT support and facilities in-house. Hosting costs, for example, can compare very favourably when using the cloud, compared to traditional off-premise hosting. Data sharing and interoperability issues can more easily be resolved by using a single platform for multiple applications, which can help clinical and nursing staff focus on the delivery, rather than the administration of care.

2. The cloud is flexible and scalable.

New clinical applications and the underlying infrastructure can be up and running within a few hours, providing clinical end users with the tools they need to deliver enhanced care. These can include digital pathways and pre-configured electronic forms, and checklists that can streamline referrals, discharge and clinical care. Other potential benefits being witnessed include using the cloud for existing virtualised workloads and computing power at times of peak demand, and applications such as medical record systems, mobile device management and analytics.

3. The cloud transforms IT into a strategic rather than a firefighting function.

By enabling rapid deployment of services, and releasing staff time from maintenance to benefits realisation, organisations that embrace the cloud can spend more time understanding business needs and



applying technological solutions with positive clinical and administrative impact. Strategic efforts around productivity and transformation, such as going paperless, can be supported through a range of interoperable solutions that streamline workflow and enable the shift of care closer to home, by supporting the rapid digitisation of information in multiple care settings.

4. The cloud is the platform for integrated and personalised care.

As the NHS moves to new models of care working across multiple health and care providers, the cloud offers enhanced interoperability and opportunities to work seamlessly with organisations at a local, regional and national level. Collaborative communication tools bring individuals together around patient needs. Information sharing is simplified through a unified infrastructure, which can adapt to the latest and planned data protection standards such as GDPR, and connect to essential networks such as HSCN. The cloud supports information consolidation from multiple sources and so helps provide care professionals with the information they need at the point of care, enabling the delivery of the personalised care desired by the Five Year Forward View.

5. The cloud is secure and resilient.

Rather than focus on threats at an organisational level, healthcare organisations should be confident that they are working with sovereign UK-based data centres that are maintained to the highest levels of security by a team of specialist staff. Cyber threats to sensitive patient data are in the hands of the experts, with cost-effective and rapid disaster recovery services and uninterrupted data accessibility available to safeguard the delivery of care.

6. The cloud supports big data.

The increasing availability of patient and organisational data means that progress in medical knowledge and business intelligence needs to be underpinned by an infinitely scalable infrastructure. This is what the cloud provides. For example, medical image archiving requires huge amounts of storage if it is to provide a full patient history; such scale is most achievable using the cloud. Big data analytics can examine massive datasets of genomic and patient data to identify trends, provide insights and derive intelligence.



7. Wider healthcare provisioning.

With data gravity, large bodies of data attract applications, services and other data through a vibrant ecosystem of specialist suppliers. This can provide increased opportunity to deliver innovative services that benefit the individual organisation, but also wider healthcare provision. From healthcare-compliant WhatsApp-style communication tools to digitised clinical pathways, the possibilities are growing all the time.

8. The cloud is simple to buy, to use, and to adapt to your needs.

Lengthy procurements can be avoided through using frameworks such as G-Cloud, which allows organisations the freedom to work with vendors in partnership on applications that can meet their precise needs. Servers and storage can be deployed quickly and in response to demand; cloud deployments can start small and grow as end users quickly appreciate the benefits.

9. The cloud provides an ideal solution to legacy and capacity issues.

Older systems often do not have the power or flexibility to support frontline staff to deliver modern healthcare with the best digital tools available. The cloud can replace obsolete and unsupported systems with solutions that scale to meet current and future needs. Through careful identification of those services that can be delivered using the cloud, and working with trusted providers that have a proven platform that accesses data through secure connections such as HSCN, organisations can move away from their creaking infrastructures.

10. The cloud is the go-to platform for digital transformation.

Health, as with any other industry, needs to take a strategic approach to its IT infrastructure in order to realise the cost and operational benefits of digital transformation. Doing this in isolation, such as through private clouds or through on-premise data centres, can be resource-intensive, and does not take advantage of the economies of scale that working with a large cloud provider can deliver. Cloud adoption rates are increasing all the time, and the solutions, the support and the community are in place now to help UK healthcare professionals, organisations and systems use the cloud as the platform for cost-effective innovation.

The cloud is flexible, agile, and has a pricing model that enables innovation without vendor lock-in, the cloud allows organisations of any size to become a real-life centre of excellence in digital health – a local digital exemplar. Talk to a trusted cloud provider on what the cloud can do for you.



"The cloud can provide the system-wide infrastructure that can underpin key initiatives such as integrated care," said Joanna Smith, CIO at Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust. "The more normal using the cloud becomes, the more we will break down barriers and realise the full potential of this exciting technology."



E info@ukcloudhealth.com
T 01252 303 300
ukcloudhealth.com

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