

8x8

Aspire Housing builds stronger digital connections with its workers and customers.



aspirehousing.co.uk



Industry

Housing/Education/Third Sector



Headquarters

Staffordshire



8x8 Products:

8x8 Contact Centre

8x8 Virtual Office



Primary Reason Chose 8x8:

End-to-end cloud capabilities enabling remote working



8x8 Partner:

Social Telecoms

Highlight Metrics

- 8x8 Contact Centre and Virtual Office delivered in just two weeks
- 450 employees equipped with state-of-the-art office communications

Staffordshire based **we are aspire** unites three organisations that blend commercial expertise with social purpose to revitalise communities and improve people's life chances.

Formed in July 2000, Aspire Housing manages over 9,000 homes and invests profits to build more. PM Training spearheads social enterprise and is the largest independent provider of apprenticeships for young people in Staffordshire. And the third organisation, a charity called Realise, helps local people progress with education and employment.

The challenge: Creating digital connections

Aspire Housing's digital transformation was gathering pace – with a major IT infrastructure refresh and a shift to the cloud. Now the group wanted to create a digital workplace that would allow their teams to collaborate and connect with customers, regardless of location and device.

But its legacy communications and telephony was an obstacle. Remote working was impossible for contact centre agents, simple IVR changes were problematic and new channels like self-service and webchat were out of reach. Then the COVID-19 crisis struck, and a solution was needed urgently to safeguard business continuity and their workers.

The solution: Pure cloud, zero compromise

Aspire had already started looking for answers with public sector specialist Social Telecoms and were introduced to the 8x8 Open Communications Platform™, which fitted the brief perfectly.

“Our model was cloud first and digital by default. But only 8x8 could really deliver a true cloud, SaaS, end-to-end solution on a single technology platform. No-one else came close. After guidance from Social Telecoms and site visits to 8x8 customers, we knew this was right for us,” says Grant Sharman, Director of Information and Innovation at Aspire.

Now speed was of the essence – and a planned launch was brought forward by three months. Just two weeks later, the 8x8 platform was up and running with remote access, thanks to outstanding teamwork by each partner, as well as ICT consultants One Consulting (formerly Alysium).

Implementation 'easier than we ever expected'

Aspire selected 20 8x8 Contact Centre licences as well as 450 8x8 Virtual Office licences which offered a unified cloud solution for voice, meetings, collaboration and more for all employees. The desk phones were replaced by softphones and the 8x8 app.

"Implementation was far easier than we ever expected," says Chris Roberts, IT Technical Services Manager at Aspire.

"Within two weeks, we sped through implementation, testing and training. You're often told a solution is simple to use — and it's natural to be sceptical. But with 8x8, this turned out to be true," comments colleague Paul Malkin, Head of Customer Services.

"I've never worked with an organisation that's been so willing to turn things around so quickly, while understanding our needs and take into account the needs of our customers," adds Grant Sharman.

"I was impressed how a global company the size of 8x8 was so engaged with us. Their technology and Social Telecoms' public sector expertise proved a winning combination."

Grant Sharman,
Director of Information and Innovation, Aspire Housing

"Social Telecoms' insight enabled us to accelerate deployment and get great results. They're an excellent partner with the right focus."

Keith Jackson, EMEA Channel
Sales Director, 8x8

8x8



The results: Aspire thrives in the digital era

With the 8x8 Open Communications Platform™ and their new digital workplace, Aspire can ensure business continuity for its colleagues and customers. It's taken digital transformation to the next level, gaining greater agility and flexibility.

As features are activated, the contact centre will allow customers to connect using the channels they prefer, including SMS, social media and chatbots. They can also self-serve easily and make secure, PCI DSS-compliant payments.

Unified communications mean staff across Aspire can collaborate better together — as well as being able to link functional leads and specialists directly with customers. Data insights, including speech analytics, will be used to enhance the customer journey with live IVR changes being made in seconds.

The move to the 8x8 Open Communications Platform™ has also reduced costs and complexity for Aspire. "Previously, we had multiple vendors providing telephony, voice recording software, call management and the hardware," says Grant Sharman. "But now there's just a single invoice which makes oversight and budgeting so much easier. Life is simpler with 8x8."

"We knew 8x8's solution was a perfect fit for Aspire's multi-channel, cloud-first strategy and specification. Our partnership with 8x8 enabled us to reduce cost and complexity for Aspire."

Pippa Saunders, Business Development
Manager, Social Telecoms

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For more information, call **0333 043 888** or visit **8x8.com**



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