access
freedom to do more

G-Cloud15
Access Applause
Service Definition

Contents

1. Service Overview....3
2. Onboarding....4
3. Additional Service Options....5
4. Service & Support Management Details....6
5. Account Management & Customer Success....7
6. Outage and Maintenance Management....8
7. Business Continuity....8
8. Business Continuity Statement/Plan....9
9. Accreditations and Awards....9
10. Development Life Cycle....10
11. Technical Requirements....11
12. Service Constraints....11

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1. Service Overview

Access Applause is a cloud-based employee recognition and reward platform designed to help organisations build a culture of appreciation, improve employee engagement and reinforce company values. Working like the social media apps employees are already familiar with, Applause makes it quick and easy for anyone to give and receive recognition.

Our platform transforms employee recognition by bringing together peer-to-peer praise, manager rewards, long service awards and values-based recognition into a single, engaging solution that employees can access from any device.

Suitable for organisations from 10 to 10,000 employees across single or multi-site operations.

Peer-to-Peer Recognition

- Social Shouts: Anyone can give recognition to colleagues with public shouts visible on a company-wide wall
- Values-Based Recognition: All recognition is linked to company values, reinforcing the right behaviours
- Likes and Comments: Colleagues can engage with recognition posts, amplifying positive feedback
- Private Manager Feedback: Option to send private feedback to the recipient's manager for use in appraisals and reviews

Financial Rewards

- **Points-Based Rewards:** Managers can allocate points with monetary value alongside recognition
- **Flexible Budget Management:** Hierarchical budget allocation from central pot to departments to team leads
- **Instant Redemption:** Employees redeem points against e-gift cards from leading retailers at face value
- **No Expiration:** Points don't expire, allowing employees to save for larger rewards

Awards and Milestones

- **Long Service Awards:** Celebrate employee tenure milestones
- **Custom Award Schemes:** Create nomination-based awards for star performers, values champions, etc.
- **Employee Awards Hub:** Central location for all employee awards and achievements

Administrative Features

- **Budget Controls:** Set spending limits, minimum/maximum award values, and budget rollover rules

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- **PSA Reporting:** Export reward data for accurate PAYE Settlement Agreement reporting
- **Engagement Analytics:** Track recognition activity by department, location, company value and individual
- **Manager Dashboards:** View team recognition given and received with private feedback

Helping to Achieve Business Benefit

Applause helps organisations deliver tangible business value through:

- **Improved retention:** Recognised employees are more committed and less likely to leave
- **Culture reinforcement:** Values-based recognition aligns behaviour with company goals
- **Manager effectiveness:** Easy tools for managers to reward effort and reinforce performance
- **Reduced admin:** Automated reward fulfilment eliminates manual voucher purchasing
- **Measurable ROI:** Track recognition frequency, values alignment and engagement trends

2. Onboarding

Applause is designed for rapid deployment with minimal complexity. As a cloud-based solution integrated with the Access Evo platform, your organisation can be live and recognising within weeks.

Standard Implementation Timeline

Implementation is typically completed within **4 weeks or less** from contract signature to platform launch.

Deployment Complexity	Typical Timeline
Standard (peer-to-peer only)	2-3 weeks
With financial rewards	3-4 weeks
Part of wider Engage suite deployment	Aligned to suite timeline

Implementation Approach

All our implementation services have been designed to be remote-first, providing you with an improved low-risk implementation journey.

Week 1: Discovery & Setup

- Initial kick-off meeting to understand your recognition strategy and company values
- Company values defined and configured

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- Reward budget structure planned (if applicable)
- Integration setup (SSO, HRIS connectivity)

Week 2: Configuration & Training

- Recognition schemes configured
- Budget allocations set up (managers, team leads, central pot)
- Admin training delivered
- Test recognition and rewards

Week 3-4: Launch

- Go-live support
- Employee onboarding communications
- Launch campaign support (optional initial points allocation to drive adoption)
- Early engagement monitoring
- Transition to ongoing support

Implementation Team

Access Resources:

- Sales Executive participates in initial kick-off call for smooth handover
- Account Manager serves as dedicated point of contact throughout delivery and post-go-live
- Dedicated Implementation Consultant oversees configuration and setup
- Client Services team (Sandbach helpdesk) available to address questions post-launch
- Head of Operations oversees customer service delivery and acts as escalation point

Client Resources Required:

- HR/Engagement lead with authority to approve recognition scheme design and values
- Someone who can provide access to basic employee data (or confirm HRIS integration)
- Finance contact to confirm reward budget and PSA reporting requirements
- Individuals willing to test the platform before go-live

3. Additional Service Options

On top of the services included within the standard implementation, the table below highlights the additional value-added services available.

Additional Modules and Features

Service	Description

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Custom Award Schemes	Configuration of bespoke nomination and award schemes for specific recognition programmes (e.g., quarterly awards, values champions, innovation awards).
Recognition Strategy Consultancy	Expert guidance on recognition programme design, launch strategies, and driving adoption.

Complementary Solutions

Product	Description
Access Salary Extras	Employee benefits platform with salary sacrifice schemes, retail discounts, and wellbeing resources. Reward points are redeemed against the same retailer network.
Access Engage Comms	Internal communications platform with social feeds, communities, and targeted messaging.

Note: Additional modules and services may require additional licence costs which should be discussed with your Account Manager.

4. Service & Support Management Details

At Access we know why you choose our products, it's because you want to be more successful. We want you to be more successful too. So, we've taken a good long look at how we support you, taken on board feedback and made it a whole lot better. We're not just here to support you when you need a hand - we're here with you at every stage of your journey.

Support Commitment

We recognise that the systems, software and services we supply may be critical to the well-being of your business. Our aim is to ensure that you have continuous operational capability from our products. We will help you to achieve this by providing efficient support, resolving the majority of tickets at first-line contact.

We will help you maximise your return on investment by providing the best in technical assistance, advice and customer care. We own your support queries and will ensure that they are resolved as promptly and efficiently as possible.

Support Channels

Channel	Availability	Description
Support Portal	24/7	Log and track tickets, access knowledge base

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Telephone	Business hours	Direct line to UK-based support team
AI Chat Assistant	24/7	Instant responses for common queries
Email	Business hours	Support requests via email

Support Hours

Standard Support Hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 18:00 (UK time), excluding UK public holidays

Target Response Times

Priority	Description	Target Response
P1 - Critical	Complete service outage affecting all users	4 hour
P2 - High	Major functionality unavailable, no workaround	8 hours
P3 - Medium	Functionality impaired, workaround available	16 hours
P4 - Low	Minor issue, cosmetic, or enhancement request	24 hours

Note: Response times are targets and represent the time to first meaningful response, not resolution.

5. Account Management & Customer Success

Customer Success Manager

For complex deployments, a dedicated Customer Success Manager (CSM) is allocated to ensure ongoing value realisation and platform adoption. Your CSM provides:

- Regular business reviews to assess recognition programme performance and adoption
- Proactive recommendations for improving engagement and programme effectiveness
- Early access to new features and roadmap discussions
- Escalation point for complex requirements
- Coordination of additional services and consulting

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Account Management

All customers have access to an Account Manager who serves as primary relationship owner for commercial matters, contract renewals, and service expansion discussions.

6. Outage and Maintenance Management

Planned Maintenance

Planned maintenance is scheduled during low-usage periods to minimise disruption:

- Standard maintenance window: 02:00 - 06:00 (UK time)
- Notification: Minimum 5 business days advance notice for planned maintenance
- Emergency maintenance: Communicated as soon as practically possible

Unplanned Outages

In the event of an unplanned outage:

- Status updates published to service status page
- Affected customers notified via email
- Post-incident reports provided for significant outages

7. Business Continuity

Data Protection

All customer data is protected through comprehensive backup procedures:

Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO):

This time starts from when a support call is logged with Access.

Standard RPO & RTO times

SQL Server:

- 15-minute RPO
- 12-hour RTO

Non-SQL Server:

- 24-hour RPO
- 12-hour RTO

Retention for Backups

Non-SQL Workloads: Standard retention for non-SQL data/servers is 30 days with stated RTO & RPO

SQL Workloads

Backup Type	Retention Period
15-min SQL	7 days
Daily	28 days

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Weekly	3 months
Monthly	12 months

Backups will be deleted upon client request following termination of contract, otherwise they will be aged out via retention policies.

Standard Restore Testing

We undertake restores automatically on a weekly basis via an automated process to a separate server to ensure that the backup is consistent and valid on restore.

8. Business Continuity

The Access Group's full and most up to date business continuity plan can be requested by emailing buyer.enablement@theaccessgroup.com

Access has a BCP framework covering all elements of the business should there be a catastrophic event at any one location. Support, Technical Services, Professional Services, and Development teams are spread across at least two (2) distinct geographical locations and are not dependent on any single location to gain access to the primary or secondary data centre within which customer data resides and the SaaS Service is delivered from.

Additional operational support centres in Romania and Kuala Lumpur provide technical infrastructure support ensuring resilience and continuity of service.

9. Accreditations and Awards

As a business we have the following accreditations and awards:

- ISO Accreditation
    - ISO 27001 - accredited through our commitment to best practice with regards to our security controls.
    - ISO 27701 - an international standard that provides a framework for managing privacy information, specifically focusing on Personally Identifiable Information (PII), a privacy extension to ISO 27001.
    - ISO 42001[1] - this is an international standard that provides a framework for organisations to establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS). It helps organisations ensure responsible and ethical AI development, deployment and operation. The standard focuses on risk management, transparency, accountability and alignment with ethical principles throughout the AI lifecycle.

[1] We are one of the first companies in the UK to be accredited ensuring responsible use of AI

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    - Cyber Essentials: a UK government-backed and industry-supported certification scheme that helps organisations of all sizes protect themselves from common cyber threats by implementing basic technical controls

- Payroll Assurance Scheme - Our Payroll Services Division (APS) are CIPP *no recommendations we can make; The Access Payroll Team pass with flying colours!"*
- HM Revenue & Customs - Access payroll services meet the requirements of the published HM Revenue & Customs Payroll Standard and the relevant sections of HM Revenue & Customs Quality Standard. It incorporates online filing and supports Extra Pay Frequencies, Directors' NI, Contracted Out and Net Pension Deductions.

Awards:

- Fosway Group, Core Leader for Digital Learning 2025
- Fosway Group, Core Leader for Learning Systems 2025
- Tech UK, President's Award Winner 2024
- PayTech Awards Winner 2024
- UK IT Industry Awards, Vendor of the Year Award Winner 2023
- UK Tech Awards, UK Tech Company of the Year Award Winner 2023
- UK Business Tech Awards, Tech Company of the Year Award Winner 2023
- Great British Care Awards, Care Innovator Award 2022
- Business Awards 2022 Large Business of the year
- Kofax UK & Ireland, Outstanding Growth Award 2022
- UK Tech deal of the year, UK Tech Awards 2022
- VEEAM Best VCSP Partner of the year 2022

10. Development Life Cycle

As one of our core products Access Applause has a detailed roadmap of improvements driven both by customers and by our own product vision. Ongoing development against each application is supported by a development plan that has high levels of detail for the next 3 months including user stories. Beyond that top line plans are in place by quarter for a further 12 months.

New functionality is added when ready with releases deployed on Thursdays. Platform enhancements and core functionality updates included in your subscription are made available to all customers simultaneously.

Recent & Upcoming Features

- AI-powered recognition message generation (Planned Future Release)
- Enhanced budget management and rollover controls
- Automated long service award triggers (on roadmap)
- Advanced nomination workflows (on roadmap)

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Security First Programme

Product development is governed by Access Group's Security First programme, a formal secure software development policy based on the OWASP Software Assurance Maturity Model (SAMM).

11. Technical Requirements

Browser Compatibility

Applause is accessible via modern web browsers:

- Google Chrome (latest two versions)
- Microsoft Edge (latest two versions)
- Mozilla Firefox (latest two versions)
- Safari (latest two versions)

Mobile Applications

Accessible via:

- Native mobile app (Engage) for iOS and Android
- Mobile-responsive web interface

Push notifications supported for real-time alerts when recognition is received.

Integration Options

- **Single Sign-On (SSO):** SAML 2.0 and OAuth 2.0 supported via Access Evo platform
- **Salary Extras Integration:** Points redemption against the same retailer network as employee discounts

Data Synchronisation

Employee data updates from Evo integrated systems are synchronised automatically, with changes reflected in the platform within 1 hour of receiving updated data. Manager hierarchies are maintained for budget allocation and reporting.

12. Service Constraints

Maintenance windows as detailed above are minimal with the service so that we use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the SaaS Services are available for 99.80% of each calendar month. That is our standard SLA across all Access products.

As a true SaaS solution customisation is not available although the product can be configured to meet all standard setup requirements including:

- Company values and recognition categories
- Reward budget structures and allocation rules

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- Award schemes and nomination workflows
- Platform branding (colours, logos, e-cards)
- Administrator permissions and roles

Offboarding Process

When a customer wishes to exit the service:

- The Renewals team receives notification and undertakes discussions with the client and Account Manager
- Once termination is confirmed, the solution is closed down at the agreed contract end date
- Customer data will be available for export to facilitate transition to alternative providers
- Outstanding reward points can be redeemed or handled per agreed exit plan
- Post-termination, all customer data is handled in accordance with our data retention policies and deleted upon request

All customer data is held in UK-based data centres.

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