

G-CLOUD 15 SERVICE DEFINITION

Cloud review and optimisation

Cloud Support



Cloud review and optimisation

Overview

Our Cloud review and optimisation service helps organisations maximise the value, security, and performance of their Microsoft Azure environments. Whether you are running a small number of workloads or operating at scale across multiple subscriptions, the service provides a structured, evidence-based assessment of your current Azure estate, followed by clear, prioritised recommendations for improvement.

The review focuses on four core pillars: cost optimisation, security & governance, performance & reliability, and architectural best practice. Using native Azure tooling alongside proven cloud frameworks, we assess how your environment is configured today and how well it aligns with Microsoft-recommended practices and your business objectives.

From a cost perspective, we identify under-utilised or mis-sized resources, inappropriate service tiers, and opportunities to simplify or consolidate infrastructure. This includes reviewing compute, platform services, storage, networking, and licensing to highlight practical steps that can reduce spend without compromising performance or resilience.

Our security and governance review examines identity and access management, network exposure, data protection, and policy enforcement. We assess how effectively controls are applied across subscriptions and environments, and whether guardrails are in place to

support compliance, consistency, and safe day-to-day operations as teams and workloads grow.

The performance and reliability assessment looks at how workloads are designed and deployed, including availability, scaling, monitoring, and backup strategies. We identify risks to service continuity and highlight improvements that can enhance resilience, observability, and user experience.

Finally, we review your overall Azure architecture, focusing on alignment with modern cloud patterns such as platform-as-a-service adoption, automation, and environment separation. Recommendations are pragmatic and prioritised, taking into account technical complexity, cost, and business impact.

The outcome of the service is a clear, actionable report that summarises findings, highlights key risks and opportunities, and provides a roadmap of recommended improvements. Where required, we can also support implementation - either working alongside your internal teams or delivering changes as cloud hosting support.

This service is suitable as a one-off health check, a pre-migration or post-migration review, or as part of an ongoing cloud governance and optimisation programme.

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Beyond Azure, we also have experience across other major cloud platforms including Microsoft 365, Rackspace and Amazon Web Services (AWS). Our consultants help clients evaluate options and select the most appropriate cloud services to meet their technical and strategic objectives.

Our clients



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales



Our approach

We believe that technology should enable business goals not drive them. That's why we offer services and support tailored to the way you work. We use best of breed processes and industry standards, combined with our own unique methodology to ensure you receive the very best in quality and value for money.

Experience

The extensive experience of our staff in real world application development means that we provide the right technology for your requirements, and our rigorous testing procedures ensure quality assurance throughout. Aspire Systems employs rigorous coding standards to facilitate the readability and maintainability of source code. All development is reviewed against these standards throughout the project lifecycle.

Methodology driven

Our agile approach to software combines commonly accepted best practices, such as an iterative, user-focused development process and use of industry standard design patterns. Aspire Systems has employed this approach successfully on many development projects.

Reuse

Our application development framework and suite of products allow us to increase productivity by spending more time on meeting the business requirements of our clients, rather than the low level nuts and bolts of the system.

The benefits

- Systems that reduce effort and increase the efficiency of processes
- More timely, accurate data from which valuable analysis and reporting can be conducted
- Cost savings by reducing the time taken to capture, validate and report on your organisations key data
- An agile collaborative approach to the design, delivery and management of your system implementation
- A highly qualified team with experience in delivering complex systems
- Lightweight, reusable components ensure cost effective rapid delivery

Our Services

- Innovative cloud solutions and cloud adoption consultancy
- Analysis, design, and development of bespoke applications
- Database development and integration
- Secure application delivery through web technology
- Multilingual applications including bilingual Welsh / English interfaces
- Business intelligence and flexible reporting solutions (Including Power BI)
- Automated data validation
- Systems integration
- Technical project management

- Secure data exchange
- Comprehensive support and maintenance
- Social media integration
- Mobile Web and Apps
- Azure App Service, Azure Functions, Azure AI Search
- Responsive web design and user experience (UX) design
- Geographical and mapping solutions (including Google and Bing maps integration)

Technologies

Web and Windows based solutions

- Microsoft .NET
- Microsoft Azure
- Web services and API (REST, SOAP, OAuth authorisation)
- XML, XSLT, JSON
- React, Angular, HTML5 , CSS, JavaScript, JQuery, AJAX
- Microsoft SQL Server

Business Intelligence

- Microsoft Power Platform (Power BI, Power Apps)
- Business Objects
- Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services (SSAS)

- Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS)

Content and Collaboration Platforms

- Microsoft (Office) 365
- Umbraco
- Microsoft SharePoint Online

Government and Industry Standards

- Government Open Standards principles
- W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2)

Standards and accreditations

ISO

Aspire Systems operates to the ISO 9001:2015 standard as a business and on individual projects. The project manager and team members have all worked within ISO 9001 accredited environments and have had individual projects audited as part of accreditation renewal. Aspire Systems first acquired accreditation in September 2006.

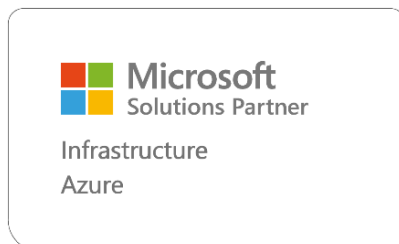
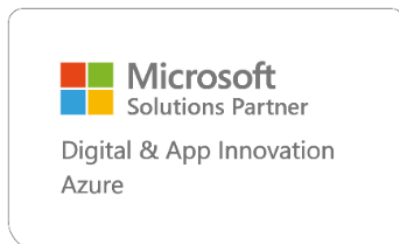
Aspire Systems operate in accordance with the ISO 27001:2022 standard and first acquired accreditation in March 2015. A number of our systems process sensitive data and frequently undergo penetration testing by external security experts. We have a solid understanding of security in web applications and develop all of our systems according to the recommendations of OWASP (open web application security project) and other industry best practise.

Cyber Essentials Plus

Cyber Essentials is a Government-backed and industry supported scheme to guide businesses in protecting themselves against cyber threats. Aspire Systems is fully accredited against the Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus schemes.

Technical Accreditation

The following Microsoft accreditations are held by Aspire Systems and its staff:



The following Umbraco accreditations are held by Aspire Systems and its staff:



Umbraco Partner



The following Scrum accreditations are held by Aspire Systems and its staff:



Experience

The following is a small selection of Aspire Systems' comprehensive experience in offering this service. For more of our work please take a look at our website <https://www.aspiresys.com/uk/insights>

Azure consultancy, Qualifications Wales

We delivered Azure consultancy services for Qualifications Wales, focused on reviewing their Azure subscription, producing clear recommendations, and supporting the implementation of agreed actions. This work centred on the Azure resources used to host the Qualifications Wales public website.

Our engagement involved a structured review of the existing Azure subscription, carried out by an Azure Architect. The scope of the review covered configuration, deployment approach, security controls, and cost-related considerations, with the outcome documented in a formal report containing prioritised recommendations.

Key areas addressed during the review included:

- Application and service configuration, ensuring Azure App Services were configured appropriately for availability, performance, and security.

- Deployment and access controls, including the use of modern deployment methods and least-privilege role assignments for Azure DevOps service connections.
- Security hardening, such as disabling legacy publishing methods, restricting access to non-public app services, and aligning identity and access settings with recommended practices.

Cost optimisation actions, including the decommissioning of unnecessary or duplicated Azure resources once validated as no longer required.

Following the review, we worked collaboratively with Qualifications Wales to support and implement a number of the recommendations. This included hands-on changes within the Azure environment, coordination with client administrators where elevated permissions were required, and validation of changes once completed. Recommendations could either be actioned directly by Qualifications Wales or implemented by our team, providing flexibility based on internal capability and governance preferences.

The consultancy was delivered in a way that prioritised clear communication and transparency, with follow-up discussions used to walk through findings, confirm implementation steps, and ensure changes aligned with operational requirements. All of the agreed cost-optimisation and configuration items were completed and closed.

Annual hosting costs savings were around four times the cost of the consultancy.

This engagement demonstrates our experience in providing practical Azure subscription reviews for public sector organisations, combining technical assessment with actionable recommendations and real-world implementation support within an existing client-managed Azure tenant.

This engagement demonstrates our experience delivering cost-focused Azure subscription reviews for private-sector organisations, combining technical assessment with pragmatic recommendations that support better cost management while respecting client control of their cloud environment.

Azure cost consultancy, Private-Sector SaaS Organisation

We delivered Azure consultancy services for a private-sector SaaS organisation, focused on reviewing an existing Azure subscription with the primary objective of identifying cost-optimisation opportunities. The engagement was advisory in nature and did not involve taking on hosting or operational ownership of the Azure tenant.

Our work involved a subscription-level review of the Azure environment, assessing how services were sized, configured, and organised in relation to actual usage and Microsoft-recommended best practices. The review focused on identifying areas of unnecessary spend, inefficient resource utilisation, and opportunities to simplify or rationalise the Azure footprint while maintaining required levels of performance and reliability.

The outcome was a set of clear, prioritised recommendations, centred on reducing ongoing Azure costs and improving cost control. These recommendations were documented and we ensured they were practical, proportionate, and aligned with the organisation's operating model, enabling the client to take informed decisions on which actions to implement.

G-Cloud details

Information Assurance

Since we offer specialist consultancy, development and support services we are able to comply with any Impact Level accreditation required when developing the solution.

Backup / Restore / Disaster Recovery

A robust backup and maintenance plan will be supplied where required. Should a failure occur the plan will set out the series of steps that must be taken to restore the service in accordance with the agreed SLAs.

Our approach to project management allows us to evaluate and identify suitable responses to risks, set tolerances for risks and ultimately select risk responses that will ensure project delivery is achieved. We have experience of creating many varied and tailored plans for our existing SharePoint customers.

On-boarding and Off-boarding processes/scope

On-boarding and Off-boarding process will be discussed and confirmed with a Aspire Systems Account Director during initial engagement. Typically there would be no cost associated with entry to the service.

Pricing

Please see pricing document.

Service management details

For Support projects or projects that contain a support element the following service management procedures will be followed.

Enquiries will be received via email or telephone.

All communication and associated actions will be logged in the Issue Log, which will be accessible 24/7 via the project Extranet (SharePoint).

Enquiries that result in changes to the system will be communicated to the client prior to work commencing. Changes to systems will be transferred to the live and/or staging environment by Aspire Systems (as applicable) directly upon acceptance and all relevant documentation will be updated. Aspire Systems will advise the client of completed changes to the live environment.

Service Levels

All calls will be categorised by Aspire Systems as follows:

- Category 1
These are problems with the system for which there are no workarounds and have a serious impact on the processes of the system and the ability of the users to perform essential tasks. The problems may relate to data or the software itself.

- Category 2

These are problems which affect part of the system but do not prevent continued use but do limit the effectiveness of the system. Processes can continue and workarounds are available.

- Category 3

User generated queries requiring no modifications to the system or data, but will require guidance to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

The SLAs offered would depend on the type of support being provided and would be agreed at the start of the support period. The following response times would typically be offered:

Category	Response time	Investigation time
1	30 minutes	3 hours
2	1 hour	7 hours
3	7 hours	15 hours

Under our existing frameworks, 100% of calls have been resolved within the agreed SLA.

Change control

Issues that result in changes to the system will be subject to formal change control and communicated to the client for agreement prior to work commencing. Changes to the system will be transferred to the live environment directly upon acceptance and all relevant documentation

will be updated. We will advise the client of completed changes to the live environment.

System monitoring

During a busy support period, system performance and activity would be monitored to identify any potential problems before they occur. This typically includes:

- Monitoring event logs
- Checking that backups have completed successfully
- Monitoring storage space

We recognise that at critical times such as the day new functionality goes live, additional system monitoring should take place. This will ensure that unexpected issues can be identified and resolved with minimum impact to users.

Resources

The support service team will partly be provided by the same consultants who undertake project work. All consultancy staff will be trained in the implementation of the helpdesk service to ensure a uniform service is provided.

We will establish and maintain a test environment to allow support requests to be identified and resolved in an efficient manner.

Financial recompense model for not meeting service levels

The details of any financial recompense model would be determined based upon the size and scope of the project and the level of technical or

organisational uncertainty on the side of the client. This will be decided during final contract negotiations.

Training

Our approach is one of flexibility and we seek to work in an integrated collaborative manner with the client, fostering an environment that promotes knowledge transfer throughout the project.

In order for the client staff to support software applications it is important for us to pass on knowledge of the systems and technologies used. We always aim to develop software that can be administered as far as possible by the client.

Both formal and informal tailored training and mentoring can be provided maximising the benefits of training time.

Examples of training could include:

- Training in the use of service management features
- SharePoint training
- Umbraco training
- Configuration of bespoke system functionality
- Training on how to undertake user acceptance testing
- Mentoring

Ordering and invoicing process

Ordering

The ordering process generally constitutes the client accepting a written proposal for the work, which details the project deliverables, costs and timescales.

Invoicing

Aspire Systems payment terms are 30 calendar days from the date of invoice. Invoicing will be based on the type of the project. For development projects this is typically 10% on specification signoff, 70% on delivery for User Acceptance and 20% on final signoff.

Termination terms

By consumers (i.e. consumption)

- Time and Materials projects

Termination terms will vary depending on the service offered, and will be agreed at the time of service commencement. Our termination notice for consulting, development and deployment activities is 2 calendar weeks (Termination Period). Any actual days worked, (according to timesheets) up to the end of the Termination Period will become immediately payable by the client. Any finalisation of deliverables will need to be performed at that time.

- Fixed Price projects

For fixed price/fixed scope projects the client will be liable for the full cost of the fixed price projects if it is terminated early. Aspire Systems will be prepared to examine whether / how clients' costs can be minimized if larger / longer term projects are terminated early.

- Resale of 3rd party Cloud services

Where Aspire Systems is reselling 3rd party services to the client as part of our cloud services, clients will be required to comply with the standard terms of service offered by 3rd party suppliers. These will be clearly communicated prior to service commencement. Should early termination by the Consumer attract contract penalties from any 3rd party, Aspire Systems will pass these penalties to the Consumer. Any such penalties will be payable in accordance with any terms expressed by the 3rd party.

By the Supplier (removal of the G-Cloud Service)

The G-Cloud termination terms are agreed within the framework agreement. In general, all services purchased under this framework can continue to be supplied to consumers should the framework be withdrawn by the Supplier.

Consumer responsibilities

The proposal from Aspire Systems to the client will make clear the contribution required from the client. Generally this will include providing business knowledge during workshops, reviewing outputs and involvement in user acceptance testing.