

# Navigating complex IT updates

## seamless VPN upgrade at the MoJ

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is one of the largest government departments, supported by 35 agencies and public bodies and employing over 79,000 people (including those in the Probation Service). They operate through their agencies in locations across the UK, including 500 courts and tribunals, and 122 prisons in England and Wales.

The Ministry of Justice has undergone significant transformation. Methods have been a trusted partner of the MoJ since 2019, when we ran the MoJ Prisons Technology Transformation Programme (PTTP), setting up their Project Management Office. This programme completed in December 2022, and due to its success, Methods were contracted to support with the next phase of their transformation.

### Challenge

The MoJ required a critical corporate VPN upgrade to keep them in line with vendor's guidance. This upgrade would affect over 40,000 staff, across physical and virtual devices, requiring a reliable VPN to keep information secure, and the ability to access information on the MoJ servers from remote locations.

Methods were brought in to lead the upgrade due to our expertise, gained from experience in successfully completing similar upgrades, and history of successful collaboration within the MoJ.

Since a large part of the MoJ user base was affected, we needed to ensure minimal disruption. With many teams contributing to the project leading to additional complexity, careful planning, and seamless delivery were crucial. Methods collaborated with various technical specialists and leads across several MoJ teams: Devices, Applications, Virtual Desktops, Networks, Assistive Technology, and User Engagement.



## Solution

We developed an action plan articulating the project goals and dependencies and worked closely with our MoJ colleagues to secure universal agreement. By ensuring all colleagues involved in the upgrade understood their roles at each stage of the process, most of the orchestration could take place with minimal oversight as we moved smoothly through the Microsoft Managed Desktop deployment rings.

The team presented the MoJ Change Approval Board with comprehensive requests for them to review and assess any impacts of the changes as a result of the upgrade without introducing project delays.

We also provided draft communications to the internal MoJ communications team to disseminate, and to the service desk, ensuring all users were fully informed and ready for their devices to upgrade themselves.

The team worked closely with MoJ's Assistive Technology experts to ensure the update was inclusive and wouldn't disrupt colleagues using assistive technologies. This collaboration aimed to maintain accessibility while implementing improvements.

Once all these foundations had been laid, the change was successfully rolled out in pre-determined phases, resulting in a seamless upgrade with no disruption to users.

## How did our way of working benefit the MoJ?

Our Methods Senior Delivery Manager mentored an MoJ Project Manager throughout the process, facilitating knowledge transfer. This approach empowers MoJ colleagues with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct future upgrades independently, enhancing their internal capabilities.

This upgrade also formed a key part of the MoJ's roadmap to enable a holistic shift to a more efficient method of provisioning network connectivity in the future.

