



Brent Council Prioritises Data Security Amid Global Rise in Ransomware



INDUSTRY

Public Sector

LOCATION

UK

PREVIOUS CHALLENGES

- The time-consuming and cumbersome legacy solution
- On-premise setup that demanded disk storage and ongoing maintenance
- Legacy backup solution that couldn't guarantee security or peace of mind

SOLUTION WITH RUBRIK

- Built-in ransomware recovery assurance
- Automatic critical backup operations free up valuable IT team resources whilst eliminating the potential for errors, security breaches and downtime associated with manual processes
- Automatic Cloud-Native backups to encrypt data and produce immutable records
- Seamless installation with minimal downtime

RESULTS

- 50% in time savings on average, which is expected to further increase following final onboarding
- 100% compliant
- Robust ransomware remediation capabilities

Brent Council, Greater London, is one of 32 boroughs across England's capital. The council is headquartered in Wembley, though it relies on locations across the city and beyond, including a data centre location in Bristol.

Brent Council's IT team supports over 11,000 users across three boroughs. It has over 200 sites and includes only 30 infrastructure engineers to manage its data centres, messaging and collaboration tools, emails, telephony and more. Among this team is an additional 30 engineers dedicated to its first line service desk.

Kevin Ginn, Brent Council's Head of Operations, and his team, who manage petabytes of data for Brent Council - the biggest combined authority in London - became increasingly concerned about the security of that data as ransomware attacks began to increase in frequency and maturity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While we were due to renew our backup solution in 2021, the rise in successful ransomware attacks—notably against Hackney Council (practically our neighbours) and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council - was the catalyst for moving this up our priority list and refreshing our environment sooner," said Ginn.

To ensure his team was suitably prepared to deal with a potential ransomware attack, Ginn and his team began looking at safer, more secure, and easy-to-manage modern backup solutions.

THE CHALLENGE

Ginn and his team went through a lengthy evaluation process to ensure they chose the right partner for their data security needs. "As a government body, we naturally do a lot of tendering, so our process is well defined," added Ginn. "We began by looking at things like the Gartner Magic Quadrant and what others like Forrester were recommending. We looked at the leading backup and recovery vendors out there and spoke to other councils to see what they recommended."

While Brent Council conducted its own research, it also reached out to Gartner for guidance. "We have a subscription with Gartner and can turn to them for quality assurance," said Ginn. "We were able to ask them pointed questions and find out exactly what solution they would suggest for our specific needs, budget, etc."

After a series of demos from their shortlist, Ginn and his team had already decided that Rubrik was the best solution for them - a notion supported by Gartner, who suggested Rubrik as the prime partner for Brent Council's data security needs.

"While we knew Rubrik was the leading choice, we had to go through the formal tender process. That being said, considering how specific our tender was, it was a

short process, and Rubrik quickly proved themselves to be the ideal choice,” added Ginn.

THE SOLUTION

Brent Council chose Rubrik’s backup and recovery and ransomware protection solutions to improve its recovery capabilities should it ever fall victim to a ransomware attack. “Recovering using our previous solution would have been convoluted, and we weren’t entirely convinced our backups were secure,” recalled Ginn. “Now, with Rubrik, we have an immutable, cloud-based file system that is already making me feel better about our data security.”

The cloud-based nature of Rubrik was another draw for Ginn and his team, particularly when compared to offerings from other vendors. “Some of the solutions we had demos for were traditional, on-premises setups that would have required a lot of disk storage to accommodate. Comparatively, Rubrik is an on-premise brick that stores a segment of data for the short term. Otherwise, everything else is stored off-premises in the cloud, eliminating the need for infrastructure and ongoing maintenance that frankly we don’t have the resources to see to,” said Ginn.

The installation itself was a smooth process for Brent Council. Ginn and his team utilised Rubrik’s professional services team for support throughout the installation and beyond, making it a “smooth, seamless transition”, according to Ginn. “Installation was a great experience, and I am very impressed about how Rubrik delivered its solutions and the relationship we have with them.”

THE RESULTS

The installation began in February 2021 and has been fully functional for over six months. In that time, Ginn and his team have seen a range of benefits that have enabled them to better focus their time and energy on other mission-critical activities.

Today, almost all of Brent Council’s environment is virtualised—and protected by Rubrik—apart from a handful

of legacy workloads. “99% of our environment is now virtual, minus a few old physical servers,” added Ginn. “And Rubrik now protects all of it.”

Speaking of Rubrik’s role in backing up the council’s Office 365 deployment, Ginn commented: “Since bringing Rubrik on board for the O365 backups, everything has been incredibly smooth, almost in the background, with virtually no intervention required by our own engineers; Rubrik has just quietly and confidently ticked away in the background with 100% compliance, may I add.” Not only has this freed up Ginn and his team to focus their efforts elsewhere, but it has also given them greater confidence in their ability to deal with any future attacks. “It’s granted us a peace of mind we didn’t have this time last year, which is priceless.”

“Six months in, we’re really seeing the benefits of Rubrik,” said Ginn when asked if Rubrik has alleviated the pressure on his team. “We’ve saved on average 50% in time savings and fully expect that number to go up as we finalise onboarding the remaining workloads.”

Finally, reflecting on the primary driver for renewing Brent Council’s backup management, Ginn was pleased with his team’s ransomware protection capabilities. “Among us, we’ve seen various backup solutions come and go over the years, but Rubrik is by far the best backup service we’ve seen to date. With Rubrik, if we were to come under a ransomware attack, we have the ability to see what the blast radius of that attack was, and should be able to see exactly what’s been affected and needs our attention.”

All of these benefits have been rounded off by a quality customer experience for Ginn and his team. “Every single person we’ve dealt with at Rubrik has been fully attentive to our needs, so much so that even now, I still have my account manager ringing me up every week to check we’re happy, and everything is running smoothly.”

“We’ve built a great relationship with Rubrik throughout this project and wouldn’t hesitate to work with them again in the future.”



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