



# The Midcounties Co-operative chooses colocation with Six Degrees for continuity, security and protection

A partnership with Six Degrees that began six years ago has enabled The Midcounties Co-operative, the largest independent Co-operative Society in the UK, to achieve not only systems continuity for products and services across its entire business portfolio, but also security and protection for the company's core data sets.

Six Degrees supports the platform, data and unified communications products for the Society, which has its headquarters in Warwickshire. Six Degrees' Birmingham South data centre now hosts all of The Midcounties Co-operative IT services and data. This colocation ensures stable IT systems across the Society's portfolio, with secure, protected and compliant data – ultimately Six Degrees' support of mission-critical systems enables the Society to deliver a seamless experience to its customers and allows certainty around the management of IT costs.

## Background

The Midcounties Co-operative is the UK's largest independent consumer co-operative, and has a primary retail focus in the Midlands, with trading outlets in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Shropshire, West Midlands, Avon, Somerset, Dorset, Worcestershire and the surrounding counties. The Society's diverse portfolio includes food, healthcare, funeral care, travel, energy, childcare, flexible benefits and the post office, which collectively generates a turnover of more than £1 billion annually. Each of the Society's products and services is underpinned by IT; therefore, it is crucial that all of the Society's systems are up and running at all times.

To facilitate this 'always on' functionality, the Society transitioned from a traditional on-premise infrastructure to an external data centre in 2011. The Midcounties Co-operative contracted Six Degrees for this colocation and many accompanying services, such as Smart Hands, to support its business systems. Since the initial implementation, the Society has engaged Six Degrees to support more of its IT needs: Six Degrees currently hosts all of The Midcounties Co-operative IT services, as well as the primary instance of the Society's data, including files, transactions and email servers, in the Six Degrees Birmingham South data centre.

Speak to our experts today on +44 (0)207 858 4935, email [connect@6dg.co.uk](mailto:connect@6dg.co.uk) or visit [www.6dg.co.uk](http://www.6dg.co.uk)

## The Midcounties Co-operative



CONNECTIVITY



DATA CENTRE

"Six Degrees has the relevant certification and expertise to ensure that our data is properly, and legally, managed and protected. Our partnership with them not only provides us with complete assurance, but also the freedom to focus on achieving our core business objectives."

Aaron Clayton  
Deputy CIO

## OUR SOLUTIONS



### Challenge

Three of the Society's business streams – energy, healthcare and childcare – are heavily regulated; therefore, the Society has to ensure that the data within each branch of its business is both secure and compliant in accordance with current and future legislation.

This constantly evolving regulatory climate meant that the Society had a need to build upon the expert knowledge and capacity within its own internal IT team in order to manage these security challenges. The Midcounties Co-operative was able to leverage further expertise and capabilities from Six Degrees to protect and manage all of its sensitive data.

### Solution

Six Degrees provides the data security, management and resulting compliance that The Midcounties Co-operative needs to protect its collocated data. The Society has peace of mind in knowing that its security and compliance requirements are met – while also saving costs.

All three Six Degrees' data centres are ISO 27001 accredited and PCI DSS certified, giving customers like the Society the assurance that their data is secure. Six Degrees uses a multi-layered approach to physical security with perimeter fencing, anti-tailgating portals, biometrics security and airlocks. For customers with higher security requirements, Six Degrees also provides dedicated cages to meet Government OFFICIAL security standards. The Midcounties Co-operative has a dedicated pod contained in a branded, locked area - essentially its own data centre, in its own space and environment, within the Six Degrees building - combining the increased security of a separate IT environment with the improved operational performance and economics of using a Six Degrees data centre.

### Outcome

In using Six Degrees' colocation service, The Midcounties Co-operative has experienced multiple benefits, including:

- Convenient access to an enterprise-grade data centre that is just half an hour way from their head office
- High capacity, always available internet connection, power supply, secure space and cooling to ensure systems remain up and running
- High performing systems - thanks to effective, fast and low latency connectivity allowing the business to deliver services at the required speed to ensure customer satisfaction
- Data that is properly stored, managed, protected and compliant with data protection legislation, again mitigating the risks of data breaches and the related impact to customer service

The partnership between The Midcounties Co-operative and Six Degrees is not limited to colocation services. In 2015, Six Degrees developed and deployed a customer-facing unified communications solution that has reduced costs and ensures constant, consistent communication with the Society's customers. It has proved to be the ideal foundation for the business to grow and improve customer perceptions.

### The future

The nature of The Midcounties Co-operative business model is one that is suited to colocation services, with the newest part of the business, the energy division, also to be serviced by Six Degrees. Looking ahead, Deputy CIO, Clayton commented that the Society may consider moving certain components of its business to the cloud, depending on the business evolution.

### About Six Degrees

We are a leading hosting and cloud managed services provider, specialising in delivering application performance management, monitoring, reporting and security, deployed on hybrid public/private cloud platforms of innovation. Everything we do is underpinned by our own data centres, data network and voice switching infrastructure. For more information:

**CALL**  
**+44 (0)207 858 4935**

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**connect@6dg.co.uk**

#### THE CLIENT

**Aaron Clayton**  
Deputy CIO

“Six Degrees provides us with a strong IT portfolio with which we are extremely happy. They are always very responsive – no question ever goes unanswered. The Midcounties Co-operative would not hesitate to endorse the provision of Six Degrees' colocation services to others.”

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