

# CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas doesn't have to be Crisis with the Aimar Foundation and IGEL



Crisis, the UK national charity for single homeless people, uses IGEL endpoints as part of the technology solution provided at nine Crisis at Christmas locations to support around 4,700 homeless guests during the nine-day festive and New Year period.



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~ Simon Clark  
Aimar Foundation's CEO and executive director  
at Morgan Stanley

## THE CUSTOMER

- Crisis at Christmas
- National charity for homeless
- Helping more than 4,000 people each Christmas

## THE CHALLENGE

- Quickly establish and decommission network of secure desktops
- Save management time
- Reliable remote management of desktops

## THE SOLUTION

- Provided by the Aimar Foundation
- IGEL UD3 desktops
- IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS)
- A hosted desktop from Nasstar running Citrix XenApp

## THE BENEFITS

- Fast set-up and decommission time
- Secure desktops
- Time saving centralised management

Each year, Crisis at Christmas centres serve over 30,000 nutritious hot meals, carry out almost 800 health screenings, repair over 600 items of clothing and deliver close to 1,500 advisory sessions. More than 10,000 volunteers gave up almost 250,000 hours to help. Crisis provides around 26 services to homeless guests ranging from counselling, hairdressing, dental and eye care, Internet Cafes – even kennels for pets.



The IGEL equipment is part of a total IT package provided to Crisis at Christmas by the Aimar Foundation, a charity founded in 2005 by IT staff from global financial services firm, Morgan Stanley, as part of its strong culture to give back to the communities it works in.

Simon Clark, Aimar Foundation's CEO and executive director at Morgan Stanley says, "The IT provided helps people to not only get in touch with loved ones at Christmas but allows them to work on their CVs and access other support and social services online to help turn their lives around."

Unfortunately, homelessness is still a major issue in society. According to research from Crisis, last year 57,890 households were accepted as homeless in England. In Scotland, 34,100 applications were assessed as homeless and in Wales 9,210 households were threatened with homelessness.



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## A TIGHT WINDOW TO GET SET UP SOLVED BY USING VDI AND ENDPOINTS FROM IGEL

Crisis at Christmas used to take over disused buildings to locate its support centres but this has evolved with the charity now using schools and colleges given staff and students are on holiday and the facilities empty. Simon Clark explains, "The academies and colleges have kitchens, are heated and come with structured cabling for IT. Obviously, we have to wait for term to end before we can go into set up. This presents its own challenges given – on some sites – we literally have half a day to do it."

This is where Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) and endpoint terminals come into play. The Aimar Foundation provides Crisis at Christmas with a hosted desktop from Nasstar running Citrix XenApp. Around 320 powerful IGEL UD3 endpoints are lent to the Aimar Foundation which are optimised for multimedia applications. The system is secure, quick to set up and easy to remotely manage by Aimar's core team of 15 staff and 150 volunteers who help to install and decommission the solution.



A whole range of volunteer firms assist the Aimar Foundation to do this including Google, Microsoft, Credit Suisse, JP Morgan, the London Stock Exchange, Vodafone, EE, Atomwide Managed Services, London Grid for Learning, Project Fusion, Everything Corporate, RDC and MoveIT.

Guests will be provided all the normal Microsoft Office applications, Internet browsing, storage and Voice over IP. The latter is being delivered for free by Gradwell Communications. In addition, the system supports seven languages – English, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Romanian – and is configured to allow some-one working on a CV for example to then download files to a portable USB memory stick.

Clark concluded, "What I love about our work with Crisis is that by using our day to day skills – be it technology or management – we can give back to the people most in need in society at a very critical time of the year."

  
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