

Partners in technology

Helping NWG become 'the most digital water company in the world'.

Creating a genuine partnership

Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) has ambitious plans to lead the world in digital technology for water companies. To make that bold claim a reality, the company's digital strategy combines a range of initiatives including unified communications, cloud, machine learning, AI and integrated services, all working together to improve efficiencies and develop new ways of working and communicating. To find the right technology partner to help them move forward, the company was keen to find a provider with a similar mindset and culture that shared its forward-thinking, can-do ethos.

First in digital

O₂ is providing a range of key services to help NWG's employees work together better and to improve communication with customers. These innovations have been developed as part of an integrated partnership approach, with O₂ learning about NWG's ambitions and issues, and working closely with them to develop bespoke solutions. Martin Jackson, NWG's Head of IS Strategy and Enterprise Architecture, says: "O₂ has been collaborating with us to come up with innovations and applications to help us transition towards a more digital way of working."

Winning with intelligence

Using technology to develop a more insight-driven way of working with NWG, O₂ is providing a reliable, secure network that will enable smart technologies like Internet of Things sensors coupled with AI and machine learning to detect and even predict leaks. Other innovations include the Uteyles app which allows customers to send video of a problem direct to NWG's Customer Centre.

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We were really looking for an organisation that shared the same values as us. We wanted a partner that has the same feeling of being innovative, that's at the heart of a community, and really cares about its customers. We believe we've found that in O₂.

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Nigel Watson,
NWG's Group Director of Information Services

O₂ business



Better communication

One of NWG's key aims is to engage more fully with both their employees and their customers. With much of its workforce on the move, carrying out maintenance in the field, O₂'s award winning mobile network helps them become more efficient by underpinning their workforce management platform to allow them to record and process their work whilst travelling, without the need to return to the office, saving time and reducing duplication.

Improved landline systems will mean that customer care agents will be able to process more calls and customers will have less wait time when they dial in, because calls will be routed more efficiently.

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As part of our ambition to be a national leader in digital, we were looking for a new breed of partner, one that would invest time in understanding what we want to deliver for our customers. O₂ fit the bill perfectly.

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Martin Jackson, Head of IS Strategy and Enterprise Architecture, Northumbrian Water Group

Working with the community

O₂ and NWG have also become very involved in each other's events, both to help engage their employees and the local community. Nigel Watson says: "Right now we're working with O₂ and a company called Jobskilla to take people out of long-term unemployment and find them their first job by equipping them with the right digital skills and then finding them a role within our business. I love that we're doing that with O₂, it's a great programme very much needed in our region."

He's also been impressed by the contribution that O₂ made to NWG's Innovation Festival, which brings employees together as a team: "O₂ really threw themselves into the event and helped us to explore employee wellbeing in depth. They really invested the time to understand our business and the problems that we're trying to solve, and deliver the kind of experience that we want to deliver."





Innovation is key

NWG has an ambitious target. With O₂ on board, the two companies are developing innovative new approaches to working methods for employees, and communication with customers, some of which are still relatively new to the water industry.

O₂ has also joined with NWG both in supporting 'hard' business objectives and also 'softer' aspirations such as employee wellbeing and development, as well as giving something back to the local community through initiatives like StartUp Academy which offers support and advice for small businesses.

This 'all-in' approach has helped O₂ get deep inside NWG's business so it can better understand the company's requirements and develop bespoke solutions that work best for NWG.

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Digital isn't just about technology, it's about the culture, the people and the partnerships, all coming together to help us work more flexibly and provide truly leading customer experiences. O₂ are helping us to deliver that vision.

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Martin Jackson, Head of IS Strategy and Enterprise Architecture, Northumbrian Water Group

Services provided by O₂

- **O₂ Gateway** – easy-to-manage single platform that combines fixed phone lines, mobile network and wifi
- **WAN** – secure, reliable, wide area network makes it easy for NWG to communicate and collaborate
- **IoT** – making it easy to activate, deactivate and suspend devices in the field, while remote diagnostics and alerts help NWG maintain peak performance
- **Mobile** – mobile devices so employees can work more efficiently in the field
- **Fixed line services** – improved call quality and enhanced services for communications within NWG and with customers
- **Access to innovation and co-sponsorship of events** – Telefónica's relationship with Wayra connects innovation with our end customers through a global hub of start-up businesses and academies. We are also proud to sponsor Northumbrian Water in their innovation festival event.





NORTHUMBRIAN **WATER** *living water*

About Northumbrian Water Group

**Aiming to be the world's most digital
water company.**

Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) provides water and waste water services in the North East of England. The company also owns Essex & Suffolk Water, providing clean water services only in those parts of the South East. In total, the group has a little over 3,200 employees serving 4.5 million customers with a turnover of just under £1 billion a year. It supplies a total of 1.1 megalitres of fresh water every day and maintains 30,000 kilometres of sewers.

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We weren't looking for a supplier relationship, we wanted a partner that would invest time coming into our business to understand the outcomes that we want to deliver for our customers. O₂ has been great at doing just that.

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**Martin Jackson, Head of IS Strategy and Enterprise
Architecture, Northumbrian Water Group**

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