

Softcat strengthens recoverability with Harbor

Evolving from managed backup to tested disaster recovery readiness

~10 years RELATIONSHIP	BaaS + DRaaS + Archive SERVICES	London & Manchester SITES	IT Solutions & Reseller INDUSTRY
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Softcat is widely recognised for helping organisations modernise and manage their IT. What’s less visible is the resilience discipline required to run internal IT at pace — especially when balancing operational continuity, security requirements, and audit expectations.

Softcat is also a long-standing partner of Harbor, and a Harbor customer, using Harbor to protect and recover its own data. In this case study, Megan Leadbetter, Head of IT Operations at Softcat, and Ian Southwell, Infrastructure Manager, share how Softcat has evolved its approach over time — from managed backup to a more mature recovery posture underpinned by replication, runbooks, and regular testing.

FOUNDATION

From managed backup to a broader resilience foundation

Softcat operates across two data centres in London and Manchester and has worked with Harbor internally for close to 10 years. Initially, the Harbor service focused on protecting Softcat’s core backup requirements.

“Originally it was just a BaaS service... covering our main data centre for core backups, and our DR site as a replication point.”

IAN SOUTHWELL — INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, SOFTCAT

Alongside this, Softcat leveraged Harbor’s archive service to maintain a separate, fully offsite copy of key data.

“We utilise Harbor’s archive service for completely offsite backups of key data.”

IAN SOUTHWELL — INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, SOFTCAT

This provided a foundation that supported both operational recovery and longer-term retention requirements.

GROWTH

Adding replication for core services

Around 2 to 3 years ago, Softcat expanded its use of Harbor to include disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS) with Zerto, enabling continuous replication between its sites.

“Since then it’s grown to include the DRaaS service. So Zerto... we are always replicating about 50 servers directly from London to our secondary site.”

IAN SOUTHWELL — INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, SOFTCAT

This approach was intentionally focused. Replicating everything is rarely practical, so Softcat prioritised the systems that keep the business running. Megan described this as replicating the “heartbeat” of Softcat — focusing on the applications that matter most when time to recover becomes critical.

TURNING POINT

Proving recovery through testing

Following an ISO audit, Softcat identified a gap. Disaster recovery and business continuity processes were not being tested regularly enough. The technical capability existed, but Softcat needed a more structured and repeatable approach to readiness.

Working with Harbor, Softcat introduced runbooks, playbook reviews, and structured recovery testing.

“Our environment continues to grow in complexity... having strict clarity on what we back up, what we don’t, how we restore it, and how we test it is becoming more important as we do audits.”

IAN SOUTHWELL — INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, SOFTCAT

“We’ve had support from Stefan and the team around testing Zerto, how do you test it, the right way of doing things, and they’re always really open and helpful.”

IAN SOUTHWELL — INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, SOFTCAT

OPERATIONS

Service reviews that drive action

Softcat highlighted that resilience is sustained through ongoing operational governance. Regular service reviews play a key role in maintaining alignment and ensuring the environment evolves alongside business needs.

“We’ve got regular reviews on the BaaS and DRaaS service... and they’re really useful.”

MEGAN LEADBETTER — HEAD OF IT OPERATIONS, SOFTCAT

Crucially, actions are followed through.

“It’s part of that partnership, we feel like we’ve been listened to. It’s not a case of we bring things up in a meeting and they don’t go anywhere.”

MEGAN LEADBETTER — HEAD OF IT OPERATIONS, SOFTCAT

WHAT’S NEXT

Cloud backup and continued alignment

Softcat is now extending its backup and recovery planning into cloud services, including Microsoft 365 and Azure.

“We are starting to look at how we back up from a cloud perspective better... 365 applications... and Azure services.”

MEGAN LEADBETTER — HEAD OF IT OPERATIONS, SOFTCAT

“There’s always a good communication path between us... where we need to go, where Harbor’s going, where Rubrik’s going... to ensure it’s fit for purpose long term.”

MEGAN LEADBETTER — HEAD OF IT OPERATIONS, SOFTCAT

PARTNERSHIP

Built on delivery, evolving into advisory

For Softcat, the relationship with Harbor continues to evolve beyond technical delivery into a broader advisory partnership. It is a model Softcat understands from both sides — as a reseller partner and as a customer relying on Harbor internally.

Today, the value is clear. Softcat has greater confidence in its recovery readiness, supported by regular testing, clear processes, and alignment with future cloud direction.

As Softcat’s environment continues to grow in complexity, the requirement remains the same. Not just to back up data, but to demonstrate that it can be recovered when it matters most.

“It’s part of that partnership, we feel like we’ve been listened to.”

MEGAN LEADBETTER — HEAD OF IT OPERATIONS, SOFTCAT

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Softcat	IT Solutions & Reseller	~10 years	BaaS, DRaaS, Archive	London & Manchester