



Cornwall College Group (CCG) - Case Study

Cornwall College Group (CCG) is a further education provider operating across eight sites throughout Devon, Cornwall and beyond, serving a broad community of 12,000 students with 1,500 members of staff.

As a public sector organisation, CCG must ensure that every element of its IT investment delivers tangible value. As part of its ongoing commitment to proactively strengthening cyber security and providing a more secure, modern, and seamless digital environment for students and staff, CCG invested in Microsoft 365 E5 licencing and rapidly sought to maximise its returns.

This is where funding from both Microsoft's FastTrack vouchers and Microsoft's Partner Cybersecurity Investment Program (CSI) to deliver Threatscape's Overwatch assessment provided immediate benefit. Delivered at no cost to CCG, the assessment and subsequent recommendations gave the internal team access to expert, deeply personalised guidance on how to align with best practice, unlock meaningful capabilities, and prioritise changes that would provide the most impact. The result was a clear and practical roadmap to help CCG to maximise its Microsoft investment without any additional spend.

With a clear understanding of their goals, CCG entered the assessment with a specific focus on unlocking value from their new E5 tools, and a keen desire to build ongoing internal capabilities, enabling them to continue their work on optimising their Microsoft security environment long after the engagement had concluded. To support this, they were partnered with Nathan Hutchinson, Microsoft MVP and one of Threatscape's Microsoft Security Consultants.



"We were absolutely delighted when Nathan was assigned to our particular project. We built up quite a rapport throughout that process, and he worked really well with my team."

– Steve Cant, Head of IT at Cornwall College Group



Threatscape's Microsoft Funding Opportunities Utilised

The FastTrack programme assists customers in planning, onboarding, managing, and driving value and satisfaction from their Microsoft deployment. FastTrack partners are trusted by Microsoft, on the back of their engineering expertise and proven track record of delivering guidance and service enablement. Threatscape's status as a FastTrack partner enables us to provide end-to-end support to customers and ensure maximum ROI on Microsoft's security solutions.

The Partner Cybersecurity Investment Program, or CSI, is an invitation-only programme created by Microsoft to offer funding to eligible organisations to enable them to expand their deployment through preliminary engagements with new services. Where appropriate, Threatscape may deliver a Microsoft Sentinel Engagement, a Cybersecurity Assessment, a Threat Protection or Data Security Engagement, or a tailored Overwatch Initial Assessment, utilising our leading Microsoft Security technologies.

FastTrack Vouchers and CSI Funding In Action

As part of their transition from Microsoft E3 to E5 licencing, CCG received a FastTrack voucher from Microsoft to support effective implementation of the advanced feature set.

After engaging with a selection of Microsoft partners, CCG chose to invest their voucher with Threatscape because of our demonstrated expertise, attention to detail, appreciation of CCG's requirements, and ability to outline and offer tangible benefits.

Along with further funding sourced by Threatscape via the CSI program to deliver our Overwatch Assessment, CCG's FastTrack voucher enabled Threatscape to work with the college to rapidly implement the newly acquired E5 tools, aligned to the recommendations identified in the assessment, providing a joined-up and comprehensive service, at no cost to the organisation.

The Overwatch Assessment was critical in CCG's journey towards optimum implementation of their new Microsoft security licences, helping them to understand exactly where they were, what they needed to do, and how to prioritise tasks going forward based on risk and business impact.

Ultimately, both branches of funding provided CCG with complementary services to assess, remediate, and optimise their Microsoft security environment.

From Assessment to Independence

What followed was an engagement built on trust, shared goals, and a clear understanding of what success should look like. After completing a set of pre-engagement tasks to prepare, CCG's assessment phase began by collecting detailed data from their Microsoft 365 environment. This included a thorough review of applications, devices, identities, and data, allowing Threatscape to assess more than 350 control points.

The resulting data gave Nathan a point-in-time baseline of CCG's Microsoft 365 security posture and provided a clear starting point for the organisation's journey towards better visibility, improved optimisation, and ongoing control.

A central focus of the engagement was internal enablement. Rather than simply producing a report and stepping back, Threatscape worked closely with CCG's IT team to interpret the findings of the assessment, agree priorities, and action necessary changes.

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“The reasoning and approach were both clearly and effectively communicated, which is of paramount importance for the development of internal capability.”

– Steve Cant

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Nathan remained hands-on, actively involving CCG's team throughout and encouraging questions and opportunities for upskilling. He explained configuration decisions, shared practical knowledge, and ensured that improvements to CCG's Microsoft environment could be sustained by the internal team after the engagement ended.

With clear documentation and an increased practical understanding following Nathan's mentorship and skill transfer to CCG's team during the process, the engagement built on CCG's internal capabilities to not only manage their Microsoft 365 E5 features independently, but also to further extend its uses after the fact, maximising their investment and the utilisation of their tools. It also helped to shape their ongoing workload, knowing that future efforts would only build on a baseline of best practice.

Business Benefits Demonstrated

In light of recent extremely high-profile cyber breaches affecting well-known organisations across the UK and beyond, cyber security has moved firmly into the spotlight as a board-level priority. No longer thought of as solely the responsibility of technical teams, the conversation around cyber preparedness and organisational resilience now spans the entire leadership structure.

While this expanded focus is beneficial in terms of prioritisation and investment, it also brings with it new expectations. Namely, the need for clear, demonstrable evidence of progress. Leadership teams require metrics that go beyond technical jargon and insights that can be reported on, compared, and understood across departments.

For CCG, Microsoft's Secure Score provided a practical and accessible way to benchmark and track their security posture. Although cyber readiness cannot be reduced to a single number, Secure Score offers a valuable starting point.

By reviewing their Secure Score before and after their Overwatch Assessment engagement with Threatscape, CCG was able to quantify improvement in a way that resonated internally. Importantly, they were also able to compare their position to similar organisations, giving context to their progress. Now scoring well above peers of a comparable size, CCG are armed with compelling evidence of their growing cyber resilience and value of investment in a format easily communicated to management.

This improvement in preparedness also minimised the time it would take CCG to respond to a potential breach or incident, should one arise. With better optimised tools, a greater internal understanding of the features and capabilities of their cyber environment, and crucially, improved visibility, CCG's ability to respond to threats has never been stronger.

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“We can now see the bigger picture, and how everything links together, and where to focus our effort.”

– Steve Cant

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Access to award-winning Microsoft expertise also helped CCG to validate their existing work, safe in the knowledge that they were on the right track and working to best practice standards. Early in their Windows 11 device roll out journey and eager to ensure a well optimised and security-maximised result, CCG worked closely with Nathan to confirm their plans for the project would stand them in good stead, while also incorporating key additions from Nathan's expertise in this space.



Getting More from Microsoft with The Right Partner

Cornwall College Group's work with Threatscape exemplifies what can be achieved when an experienced partner meets a focused internal team.

By helping CCG to successfully implement and utilise their Microsoft E5 capabilities, Threatscape has enabled CCG to achieve demonstrable advancements to their Microsoft security environment and provided a road map for continuous security strength.

For organisations looking to optimise their Microsoft security posture, sweat their existing assets, and demonstrate clear improvements to board-level stakeholders, CCG's experience offers a practical example of what is possible.

Why Threatscape?

We are one of very few specialised security companies with a dedicated Microsoft Security Practice. Our Microsoft consultants and engineers work exclusively within the Microsoft suite, guaranteeing a reliable depth of knowledge and technical excellence in a constantly evolving feature set.

As now five-time winners of the Microsoft Security Partner of the Year Award, including the global award in 2020, Threatscape's expertise in this space is backed by Microsoft's own stringent frameworks for partner success.

Threatscape's experience and technical capability has been validated through five Microsoft Advanced Specialisations, demonstrating the breadth of our Microsoft skill. Advanced Specialisations are subject to an external audit of subject-related processes, methods, documentation, and reporting, considering both the knowledge and professionalism of in-house staff, along with the organisation's overall expertise in relevant areas. In order to be awarded an Advanced Specialisation, all facets of the audit must be met, without exception.

We are also positioned to deliver Microsoft funding through the Partner Programme, including both FastTrack and the Partner Cybersecurity Investment Program, or CSI.

Microsoft's FastTrack programme assists customers in planning, onboarding, managing, and driving value and satisfaction from their Microsoft deployment. FastTrack partners are trusted by Microsoft, on the back of their engineering expertise and proven track record of delivering guidance and service enablement.

Similarly, CSI is an invitation-only programme created by Microsoft to offer funding to eligible organisations to enable them to expand their deployment through preliminary engagements with new services.

Where appropriate, Threatscape may deliver a Microsoft Sentinel Engagement, a Cybersecurity Assessment, a Threat Protection or Data Security Engagement, or a tailored Overwatch Initial Assessment, utilising our leading Microsoft Security technologies to create a real-time baseline based on 350+ security controls to enable prioritised, evidence-based security optimisation.

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