

Accessing Microsoft-funded resources



A guide for FY26

Introducing Microsoft funding

As an award-winning Cloud Managed Service Provider (CMSP), we know that cloud projects aren't cheap. Costs are often one of the biggest barriers to entry for organisations, with projects often delayed or – worse – shelved altogether.

We also know that cloud projects don't happen overnight. They are complex in nature, affecting each and every aspect of the business, and take plenty of time and resource to get right.

So, if you're considering your next cloud project, it's likely that you're looking to reduce the costs, and accelerate the process. You want to unlock all of the possibilities presented by the cloud, making your organisation more agile, scalable, and innovative, without exorbitant, uncontrollable costs and timescales that just grow and grow. Well, you're in luck.

Microsoft offers a wealth of funded resources for organisations like yours to leverage, and help you get the most out of their technology. From

funded proof of concepts and assessments that give you a greater understanding of your current standing and what can be achieved, to tailored workshops that accelerate your adoption of new technologies, these funded resources are available across a whole host of Microsoft's technology suite.

These resources are there to get your project going, and to empower your organisation with Microsoft's suite of technology products as quickly as possible.

Throughout this guide we'll explore the different funding opportunities, assessments, and workshops that are available to you, give you the lowdown on how you can access them, and point you in the right direction.

Microsoft Partner

Azure Expert MSP



What's on offer?

Microsoft offers three different types of funded resources, each with the ability to accelerate your latest transformation project. There's no one-size-fits-all solution – it all depends on your project, your business needs, and your timescales.

Funding

When working with Azure, Microsoft offers exclusive funding opportunities to optimise your environment at each stage of your migration. These range from initial Proofs of Concept and Landing Zone deployments, to migrating your initial workloads to the cloud. When a full project has been scoped and costed, these funding pots are leveraged against the total costs and removed from the charge to the customer.

Recently, we secured \$75,000 (around £59,000) of Partner-led funding for a local government authority that was migrating a 300VM estate to Azure.

Assessments

Microsoft's assessments are thorough, detailed, and give you the exact lay of the land before you get started with your project. Before embarking upon your next transformation project, undertaking an assessment is crucial in ensuring you aren't wasting time, effort, or resource – and that's where funded assessments come in.

When we were working with an international law firm based in Bristol, it wasn't until a Solution Assessment was undertaken that the costs of migrating the firm's SQL server to Azure were fully realised. It was evident that the project was only going to get bigger, more complex, and therefore costlier, but the funded assessment would lead to funding opportunities totalling more than \$35,000 (roughly £27,500) to be secured.

Workshops

As one of Microsoft's closest partners, we offer bespoke one-to-one workshops that will help you accelerate your journey in adopting, optimising and maximising various Microsoft tools and technologies. These are tailored to your specific business context so that they address your needs and solve your challenges.

We work with Microsoft to cover the costs of these workshops, making them free of charge to your organisation. This was the case for one local government authority, with which we explored and evaluated the full suite of end-to-end security offerings from Microsoft as part of the Cybersecurity Investment programme.

What they mean

We've covered the funding, workshop and assessment resources in a nutshell, but what do they really entail, and what do they mean for your business? Let's delve into a bit more detail.

What is funding?

Microsoft supports their customers' technological transformations by providing financial incentives and technical assistance. It helps businesses overcome the challenges and risks of migrating and modernising their applications and infrastructure on Azure.

How much is available?

Microsoft funding packages are ranked in t-shirt sizes, with 'small' starting from **\$5,000** and 'XL' reaching up to **\$100,000**.



Azure Migrate and Modernise

This does what it says on the tin. Azure Migrate and Modernise (AMM) is a funding programme that aims to accelerate the migration and modernisation of your existing workloads to Azure. Whether you want to lift-and-shift your applications, refactor them to use cloud-native services, or rearchitect them for greater scalability and resilience, AMM can help you achieve your objectives faster and with less risk.

There are six key scenarios that this funding covers:

1. Infrastructure and database migrations
2. Migrating to Azure VMware solution
3. Migrate Enterprise apps
4. Virtual Desktop Infrastructure
5. SAP migration to Azure
6. SAP RISE

The funding amounts that businesses can receive vary depending on the type of workload, the duration and complexity of the project, and the involvement from Microsoft or your chosen cloud partner. Typically, funding ranges from \$5,000 per customer to \$100,000 in exceptional cases (roughly £4,000 to £80,000), but this can change depending on the specific case.

Businesses that are looking to move their on-premise or other cloud workloads to Azure, or to update their existing Azure applications to leverage the latest features and best practices, are eligible for this funding, which can help businesses accelerate their cloud adoption, reduce risks, improve performance and security, and ultimately lower costs.

How does it help?

With business-critical infrastructure running on soon-to-be obsolete servers, Rouse Partners could either make an investment in expensive new server licensing and on-premise hardware, or into a cloud migration project that would empower the organisation and unlock new opportunities, security features and scalability.

Transformation is expensive, but the projected return on investment made the decision an easy one and Cloud Direct was able to deliver large financial savings by securing two funding grants to cover around 70 per cent of the total project cost.

“Looking at the initial figures of the project cost, we might have been having thoughts otherwise,” David Bevan, Assistant IT Manager at Rouse Partners, explained. “Having some of that financial burden reduced made the project possible, and that’s not something we were aware was possible until we spoke to Cloud Direct.”

Read on

Azure Accelerate

Technology is developing quicker than ever before. Microsoft is leading the way when it comes to innovation, as it strives to empower your business with the latest and greatest technology to better service your teams, customers and clients. If you aren’t looking to leverage technologies like artificial intelligence, then you are already falling behind your competitors.

Azure Accelerate funding offers financial support and technical guidance to businesses that want to accelerate innovation by using Microsoft Cloud to unlock AI, empower their data, and delve into analytics. This funding can be used in a whole host of scenarios...

- Developing new products, services or applications powered by Azure
- Migrating existing applications or infrastructure to Azure
- Increasing developer productivity
- Scaling up existing Azure solutions to meet growing demand
- Leverage data to gain insights and drive business decisions

The amount of funding that businesses can access through Azure Accelerate depends on their eligibility criteria, project scope and business objectives, but it can be as much as \$50,000 (£40,000). It’s the master key for unlocking innovation.

What are assessments?

Microsoft offers various assessments to help accelerate your cloud projects by providing you with a clear understanding of your current situation – your ‘as is’ – and outlining a pathway to where you want to be. These assessments cover infrastructure, applications, security, sustainability and more, leaving you with...

- A clearly identified plan aligning to business goals and objectives
- A clear understanding of your current data estate
- Expert analysis of how to optimise your investment
- A ready-to-implement cloud migration strategy

If you are looking for a way to transform your business with the power of cloud computing, then really you need look no further. Microsoft’s assessments come in an array of shapes and sizes, each tailored to specific scenarios.

Azure Infrastructure and Datacentre Migration

If your datacentre exit is right around the corner, then your next step should be planning its migration to Azure. In this assessment, you’ll get a comprehensive analysis of your current environment, a migration readiness report, a cost optimisation report, and a migration roadmap with recommendations and best practices for your move.

Azure Application and Database Modernisation

Upgrade your legacy applications and databases to the latest versions and platforms in the cloud with a detailed inventory of your current applications and databases, a compatibility analysis and migration assessment for each. You’ll receive recommendations, best application modernisation practices, and learn how to use Azure’s innovative features.

Azure Security and Compliance

Protecting your business from today’s threat landscape is more important than ever before. You will get a thorough evaluation of your current security and compliance practices, policies, and controls, gap analysis and recommendations for improvement, as well as guidance on how to use Azure’s built-in security features and tools.

Azure Sustainability

Sustainability has increasingly become a business priority, with customers showing they prefer to buy from vendors and suppliers that are making an effort to protect our planet. This assessment helps you measure and improve your environmental impact in the cloud, as well as providing best practices for implementing green IT strategies.

What next?

The insights that your solution assessment provides are invaluable – now it's a case of putting them in the right hands. You'll gain a clearer picture of the road ahead, showing you where you are, where you need to be, and how to get there. To put that into action you'll need to work with a Cloud Managed Service Provider.

We've been there, done it, and got the t-shirt. Off the back of your Solution Assessment, one of Cloud Direct's experts will be on hand to help you decipher the findings and put them into action. Together, we'll unpick the results, address the pain points, and work collaboratively to create a clear and achievable roadmap to get your next project off the ground.

[Speak to an expert](#)

Self-guided assessments

If you want to gain a better understanding of your current posture before engaging with Microsoft or one of its Partners, a self-guided assessment is the perfect next step. This resource gives you a view of your environment and provides actionable steps to take next.

These self-guided assessments are available across four areas:

Cyber security

Make sure your business is properly protected.

Security for AI

Prepare your business to adopt AI safely and securely.

Copilot for M365

Get the most of our your Copilot for M365 subscription.

Microsoft Portfolio

Not sure what to assess? Let Microsoft take you through it all.

What are workshops?

While assessments provide you with an objective overview of your current environment, Microsoft's funded workshops provide the opportunity to work directly with an expert partner and look at your specific business context, its goals, and the challenges you face.

These interactive sessions allow you to dig that little bit deeper, to ask those scenario-specific questions, and gain a deep understanding of the work that needs to take place.

Microsoft offers a vast array of funded workshops, which are delivered by select partners like Cloud Direct.

Threat Protection

Security parameters are always expanding. It's important to identify current and real security risks by leveraging threat protection.

Microsoft offers a workshop that will provide you with Microsoft security recommendations to help you gain visibility into threats across your email, identity and data, enabling you to remediate vulnerabilities and upgrade your security posture for the long term.

Outcomes

- Identify ongoing security threats and discover vulnerabilities
- Actionable next steps based on specific needs and objectives
- Security strategy for the benefit of key stakeholders
- Understanding of how to accelerate security journey with Microsoft tools

Data security

Data is the most valuable thing to your organisation as it fuels your business decisions, shows business growth and much more. With 83 per cent of organisations experiencing more than one data breach in their lifetime, it's important that you have the right security in place to protect it.

Microsoft has created this workshop to help you intelligently investigate and take action on your data security risks.

Outcomes

- Understanding of risks and dark organisational data
- Opportunity to learn about internal risks
- Overview of environment against data protection standards
- Report on findings and associated data risks
- Tools and services that can help you mitigate risks

...and so much more

Funded resources don't stop with Microsoft. Cloud Direct offers an extension to these programmes with a whole host of funded opportunities to explore.

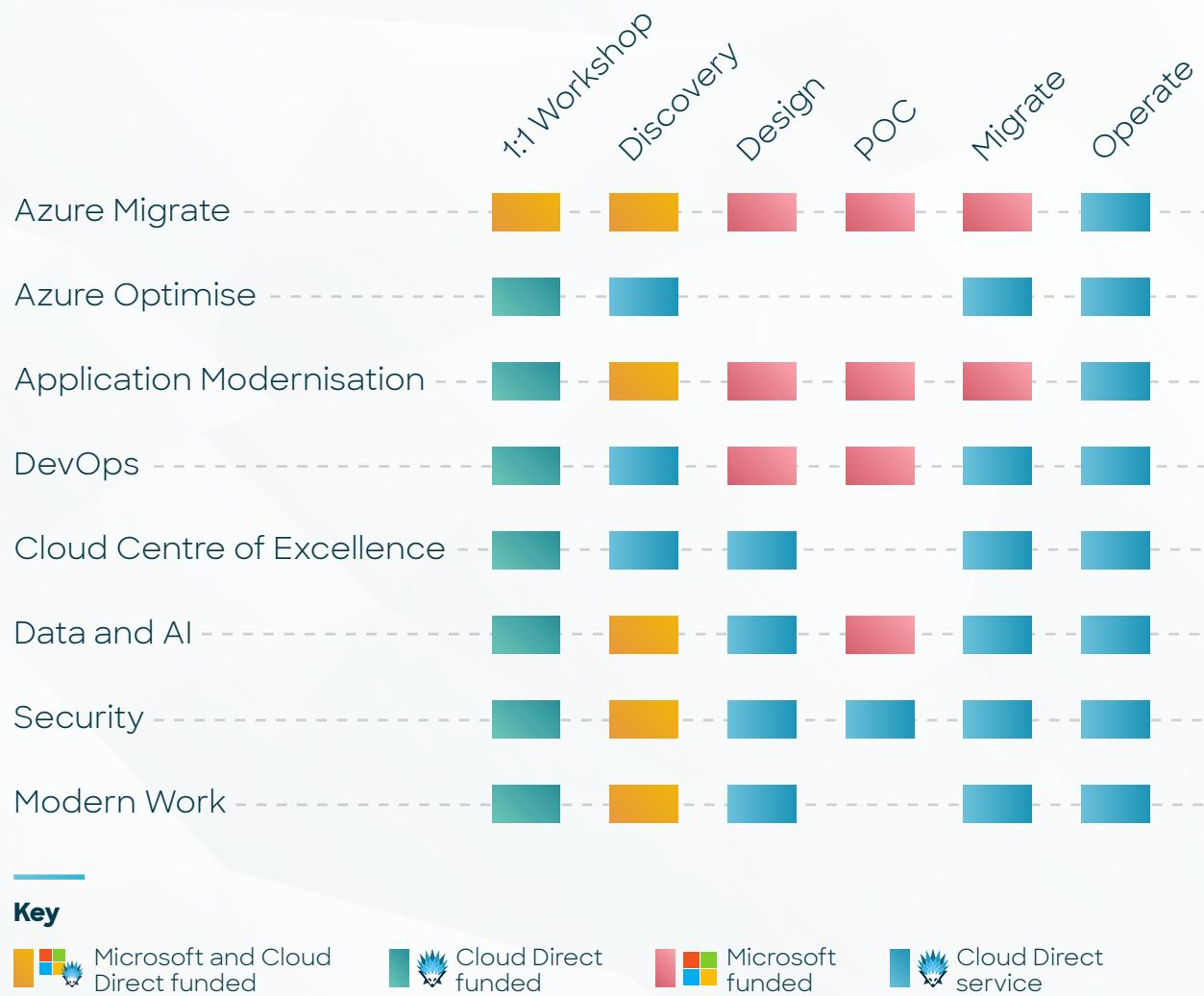
Our exclusive 1:1 workshops help apply Microsoft solutions to your specific business context. Over the course of a couple of hours, our experts work with you to explore your current environment, identify improvements, and create a roadmap that outlines your next steps. They clear up the confusion, and set you on the path to transformation.

Interested? Select from our range of workshops below and click for more information.

-  [Azure Innovation](#)
-  [Data and AI Innovation](#)
-  [Security Innovation](#)
-  [Cloud Operations](#)
-  [Copilot](#)
-  [AVS](#)

Our solution areas

The diagram below outlines where both Microsoft and Cloud Direct funding opportunities fit into our solution areas, and demonstrate which areas of your transformation you could receive financial support with.



How do you access this funding?

All of these resources are there, sitting in a glass cabinet for all to see and ready for your organisation to tap in to – all you need now is the key.

Finding the keys and unlocking the cabinet is simple. They're held by select Microsoft partners across the globe, who form a cornerstone of Microsoft's partner ecosystem. These funding opportunities can't be accessed by a customer – a trusted partner is required bridge the gap.

What might you be eligible for?

Find out for yourself with our Microsoft Funding quiz. In just a matter of minutes, you'll know if your next transformation project can be accelerated by Microsoft Funding, and get information on how to access it.

[Take the quiz](#)



As one of Microsoft's most-trusted UK partners, Cloud Direct is perfectly positioned to help your business unlock innovation. Supported by an extensive list of accreditations, including being one of the most established Azure Expert Manager Service Providers, we build the foundations that ambitious organisations need to grow, to innovate, and to succeed.

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How we've helped

Migrating an organisation of SafetyKleen's size is a complex, and therefore expensive task, but by working with a leading Microsoft partner in Cloud Direct it was able to access funding opportunities worth more than £110,000.

By reducing their initial migration bill by more than £70,000, SafetyKleen was able to free up some of its IT budget to put towards additional security and innovation projects – which, in turn, garnered more funding.

This included Cloud Direct workshops to optimise and modernise its cloud platform, security workshops to ensure the organisation was protected in the face of an increasingly dangerous threat landscape, and more than £40,000 towards rolling out Microsoft Defender and Microsoft Sentinel.

Project	Funding
Azure Migration	£73,000
Defender rollout	£32,000
Sentinel 24/7 SOC rollout	£12,000
Total funding received	£117,000

This funding was only accessible by working with a Microsoft Partner, like Cloud Direct.

To find out more about SafetyKleen's funding story, watch our Senior Cloud Sales Executive Henry Bird walk through it at our CISO Security Briefing.

[Watch here](#)