9 reasons why client cloud platforms will be central to the future of payroll services

New cloud technologies can positively impact the way bureaus offer payroll services

Payroll servicing is evolving to encompass a move towards cloud access and flexibility for you, your clients and their employees.

Be ready to offer a new level of payroll and HR related services by embracing cloud innovation.

> "Payroll is now much easier thanks to online tools and applications"

Online payroll platforms are central to the future of payroll

Up to now, the process of managing your client's annual leave requests, recording leave, sending payslips and payroll reports, updating contact details and accurately recording employee hours on behalf of clients can be time-consuming and costly. Payroll software systems can only take you so far when it comes to finalising payroll and issuing payslips, but what about those other payroll related tasks? Simple questions such as 'How much annual leave have I left?', 'Can you resend my last three payslips?' or 'Can I request a week's annual leave?' can become a daily, time-consuming process. Another time consuming part of payroll is requesting and receiving employee hours and timesheets from your payroll clients.

Today, managing and tracking this information is much easier thanks to online tools and applications. Furthermore, an online payroll approval facility allows bureaus to securely send their clients a payroll summary before the payroll is finalised. Clients can review and authorise the payroll details for the pay period through an online employer dashboard. Ultimately, your client becomes accountable for ensuring the payroll information is 100% correct before the payroll is finalised.
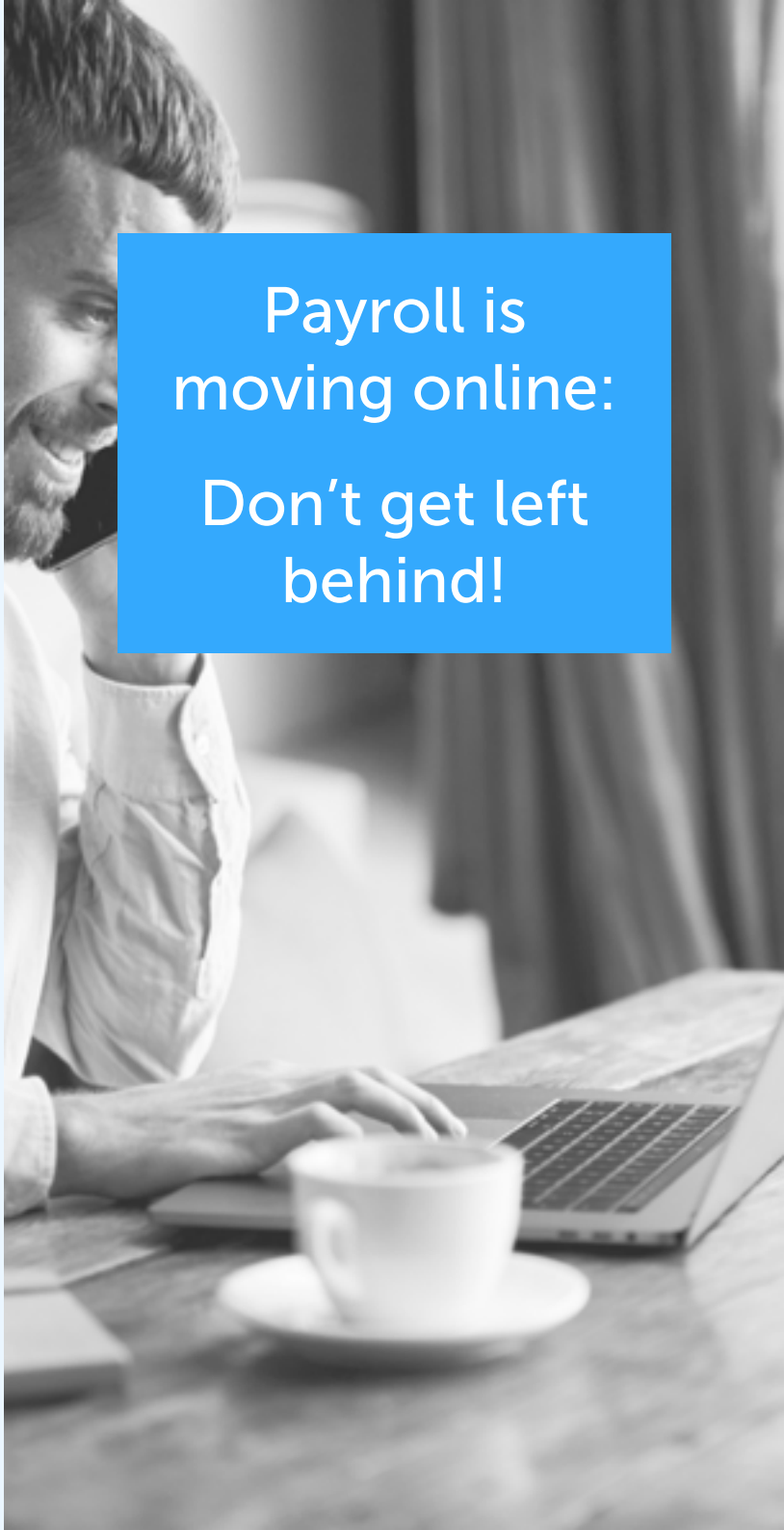
Online payroll & HR platforms

The day-to-day tasks of annual leave management, payslip distribution, uploading employee hours and backing up your payroll files can be process-driven and handled by cloud technology.

The payroll and HR landscape is fast evolving as business savvy bureaus move towards new-world online technologies offering:

- Automatic cloud backup

- Client online portal

- Employee self-service & epayslips access

- Employee smartphone app

- Annual leave automation

- Employee hours / timesheet upload

- Client approval functionality

- Payroll audit trail of client communications

- Managed employee records

Your payroll and HR processes can be more integrated with the cloud and streamlined with your payroll software than ever before. Offering payroll services is all about efficiency and there are several exciting developments that are happening right now in the cloud.

Payroll is moving online:

Don't get left behind!

Automatic Cloud Backup

Data security is becoming more and more important in today's world, especially when we store, process and send confidential information such as payslips, employee hours and payroll reports. If you only keep your payroll data on your desktop, you are at risk of losing your information. Ask yourself:

- How prepared am I for a disaster recovery situation?

- What happens if my computer breaks down or is hacked?

- If there's a fire or flood, how will I get my clients' data back quickly?

- Will employees still get paid if the payroll data is lost?

Clients want and need their data stored in a secure place. Your payroll software provider should offer integration with a cloud backup facility to automatically backup and store your payroll data, safely offering your clients an additional layer of data protection. Backing up and storing payroll data in the cloud offers the perfect solution to protect your clients' data.

Client Online Portals / Dashboards

Generally, bureaus send payroll reports to clients each pay period by email which aside from security issues, can be quite a laborious and time-consuming task. A client online dashboard can automatically synchronise payroll reports and client information in one central online location providing the following time-saving advantages:

- Access to an overview of all payroll reports, employee payslips and amounts due to HMRC.

- Saved payroll reports are automatically available to clients each pay period.

- Seamless annual leave management, with leave requests instantly added to a company-wide online leave calendar.

- Upload employee hours and timesheets to the cloud.

- Approve the payroll summary statement before the payroll is finalised.

One simple client portal can save bureaus hours every pay period while simultaneously reducing HR queries and payroll administrative tasks.

Employee Self-Service & ePayslips

Online payslips eliminate time spent distributing paper copies or emailing attachments to employees each pay period. Employees can access their own secure personal online payroll portal where they can view and retrieve their historic payslips and other payroll documents such as a P60 or P45. These documents can be exported to PDF and printed.

Moving to an online payslip model offers:

- Significant time savings

- Increased productivity

- Password-protected self-service

- Cloud GDPR security

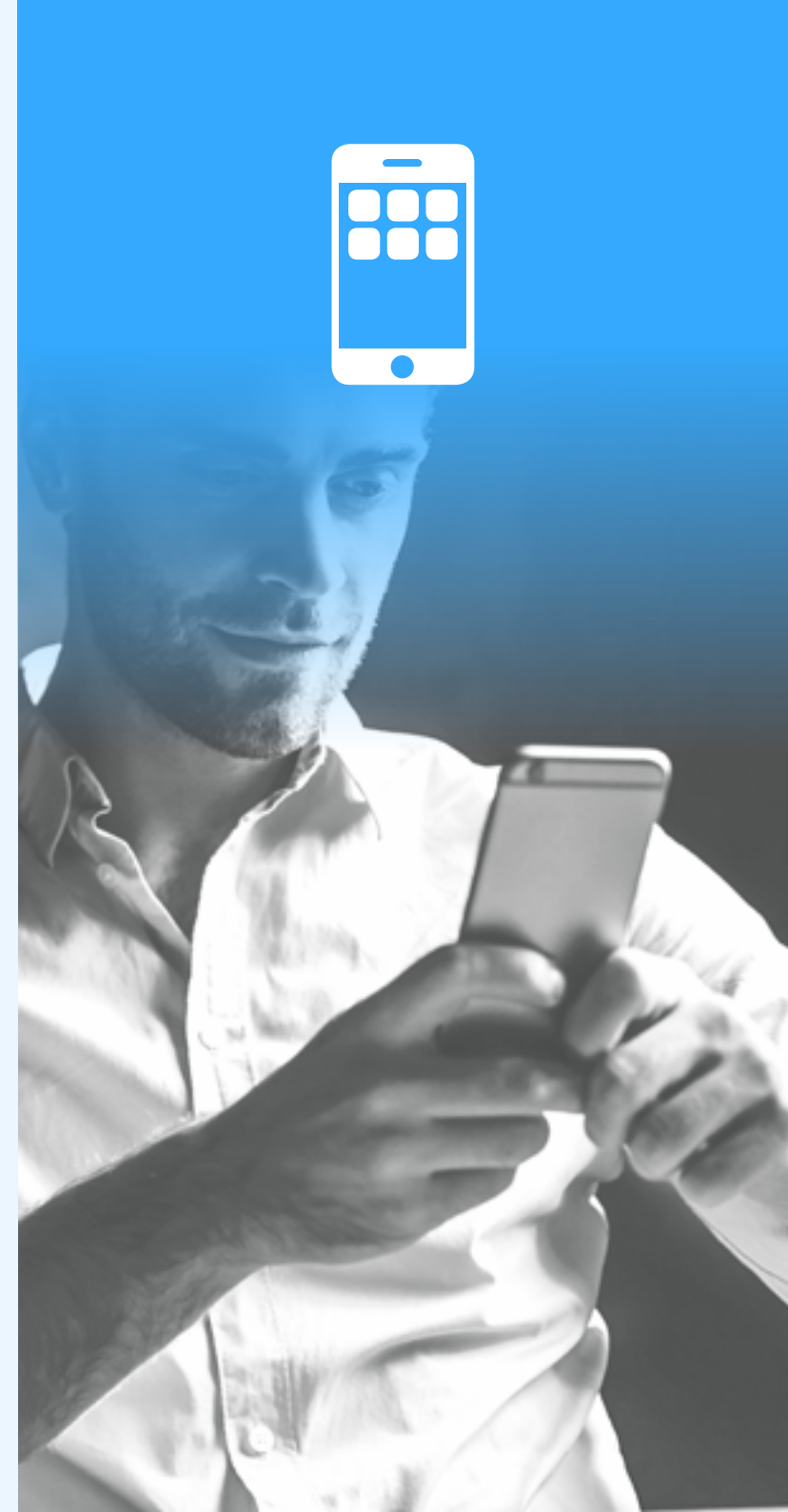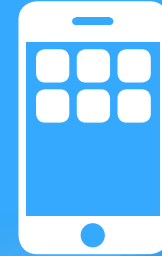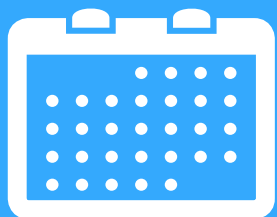- Online access to historic payslips and payroll documents

Employee Smartphone App

Most of us are very attached to our mobile devices with the average time spent using them coming in at over four hours per day. An employee smartphone app can improve the payroll process even further by increasing the level of accessibility to payroll information.

Employees can login to their secure mobile self-service app to:

- Access all current and historic payslips

- View and edit their personal data (such as phone number or postal address)

- Request annual leave on the go

- View annual leave taken and days remaining

- Access HR documents such as contracts of employment or company handbooks

This level of online flexibility offers a better employee service and experience while simultaneously reducing administrative time for payroll bureaus and clients alike.

Annual Leave & Employee Absence Management

The process of annual leave management can still be very much a manual, spreadsheet or paper-based, form-filling exercise which consumes a significant portion of a bureau's time. Surprisingly, up to 15% of a payroll bureau's time is spent handling queries regarding remaining leave balances for employees.

Online annual leave tools will:

- Allow employers to effectively plan their company calendar and staff resources

- Allow employees to request leave on a portal or smartphone app

- Allow employees to access leave taken and leave remaining records

- Simplify leave management procedures

- Automatically record leave on payroll software & sync to the cloud

The cloud flexibility of an online annual leave tool will save administrative time and reduce errors due to undocumented leave not being recorded correctly by your client. Employees can view their leave taken and leave remaining on their self-service portals.

Employee Hours / Timesheet Upload

Accurately recording clients' employee hours is a real challenge for any payroll bureau. Cloud payroll portals now allow clients to securely add their employee's hours, saving bureaus hours of administrative time and minimises potential errors. Modern file upload or timesheet software solutions have advanced integration and automation benefits. Clients can easily enter employee hours plus additions and deductions that have been set up by the bureau on the payroll software to be included by the payroll client.

Additionally, cloud portals also have the ability to add new starters including name, address, date of birth, NI number, email address, phone number, Tax Code, NI table letter, start date, starter declaration and if a student loan deduction plan is applicable. Once the employee hours and new starters have been submitted by the employer and checked by the bureau, these details can be automatically downloaded and added to employer file on the payroll software.

Client Approval Functionality

Enabled by cloud technology, client approval functions is transforming how payroll bureaus manage their client requests and payroll services. Gone are the days of having to email back and forth with clients requesting employee hours or final authorisation for the payroll information each pay period.

By using a cloud platform, bureaus can securely send their clients a payroll summary for approval before the payroll is finalised. Clients can then review and authorise the payroll details for the pay period through their online employer dashboard. Once the Payroll Entry Request has been submitted by the employer and checked by the bureau, the new employee's details will be automatically downloaded, added and updated to the payroll software.

Payroll Audit Trail

The payroll audit trail has transitioned from a manual process to automated online logs that keep track of the communication between you and your clients. Cloud based platforms will record each of the requests and interactions with clients making this transactional information more accurate, readily accessible and usable. Should clients ever question the payroll, bureaus can provide a historical record of the requests, including the date and contact details which is vital in adhering to ever-tightening Service Level Agreements.
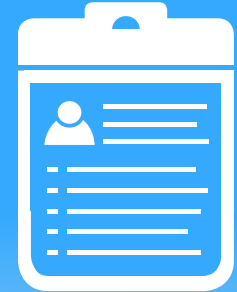
Managed Employee Records

The days of chunky paper files packed away into a filing cabinet are long gone due to online storage and flexibility. Online payroll and HR facilities allow employers and bureaus to manage and update employee contact details instantly and seamlessly.

A cloud employee management system will:

- Store employee's contact and payroll information in one place.

- Allow online access to payslips, leave taken and leave remaining.

- Store HR documents such as contracts of employment, company handbooks, newsletters, disciplinary documents and much more.

- Allow employees to update their contact information easily with changes automatically updated in the payroll software.

The GDPR legislation introduces a best practice recommendation whereby organisations should be able to provide remote access to a secure self-service system which would provide individuals with direct access to their information. With this in mind, bureaus can help their clients by moving their data to a cloud self-service option to assist with their GDPR compliance.

Future-proof your bureau service for success

Cloud functionality can improve your payroll service offering by reducing manual processes, automating payroll tasks and increasing profits. Successful accountants and payroll bureaus are now adopting specific cloud and HR add-ons that fully integrate with their payroll software and offer clients a new level of payroll performance. The advantages of cloud backup and self-service software are numerous, but namely, it significantly increases the efficiency and effectiveness of payroll and HR-related work. Workflows are improved since payroll bureaus no longer waste valuable time on manual data entry, therefore working faster and more efficiently maximising profits.

BrightPay Connect offers impressive and innovative cloud features for you and your clients. The cloud portal acts as an in-house HR system, streamlining many internal administrative duties. BrightPay Connect is an online add-on that will remove the manual data entry requirement for annual leave management, automatically updating employees details, eliminating payslip requests, automate employee hours upload, backup your data and improve your payroll processing.

BrightPay Connect offers:

Cloud Backup:

BrightPay Connect provides a secure and automated way to backup and restore your payroll data. BrightPay Connect is hosted on Microsoft Azure for ultimate performance, reliability and scalability maintaining a chronological history of your backups.

Connect automatically backs up to the cloud every 15 minutes or each time you log out, ensuring that your always have access to your most recent data.

Bureau / Client Dashboard:

Invite clients to their own employer online dashboard which can be branded with your bureau's logo. Clients can access payslips, payroll reports, amounts due to HMRC, annual leave requests and employee contact details.

Employee Self-Service Portal:

Employees can be invited to their own online portal where they can view and download payslips, P60s and P45s and easily submit holiday requests, view leave taken and leave remaining.

Annual Leave Management:

Clients can view all upcoming leave in the company wide calendar. Easily authorise leave requests with changes automatically flowing back to the payroll. Upload HR documents including contracts of employment and handbooks.

Integration with Payroll Software:

BrightPay Connect is fully integrated with BrightPay's payroll software. Payslips, payroll reports, employee leave and changes to employee contact details are automatically updated and synchronised from the cloud to the BrightPay payroll.

BrightPay Connect offers:

Employee Hours Requests:

Bureaus can send their clients a [Payroll Entry Request](#) asking for their employee hours. On the client portal, clients can simply input the hours eliminating re-entering the same data on the bureau side. Employee hours are added quickly and easily by your client, saving hours of administrative time each pay period. The upload process is ideal for client data verification and increased accuracy.

Client Approval:

Bureaus can prepare the payroll summary, and send a [Payroll Approval Request](#) to the client. As the client authorises and confirms information on the payroll statement there will be less edits to make to the payroll. Bureaus benefit from this as the actual onus for the information to be correct rests with the client.

Audit Trail:

The audit trail documents each of the steps taken by your client including payroll files approved and submitted by the client. Bureaus can view outstanding requests, files awaiting approval, completed approvals or files ready to be downloaded to the employer file on BrightPay payroll software.

Reduce HR Queries:

By eliminating manual and paper processing, BrightPay Connect will drastically reduce the number of HR queries such as payslip requests, annual leave requests, managing employee contact information, storing HR documents and updating employee payroll records.

24/7 Online Access:

BrightPay Connect gives your clients and their employees secure mobile online access to their payroll data anywhere, anytime.

BrightPay Connect for Bureaus

Watch this short video below for an overview of how BrightPay Connect can benefit your payroll bureau.

Book a Demo