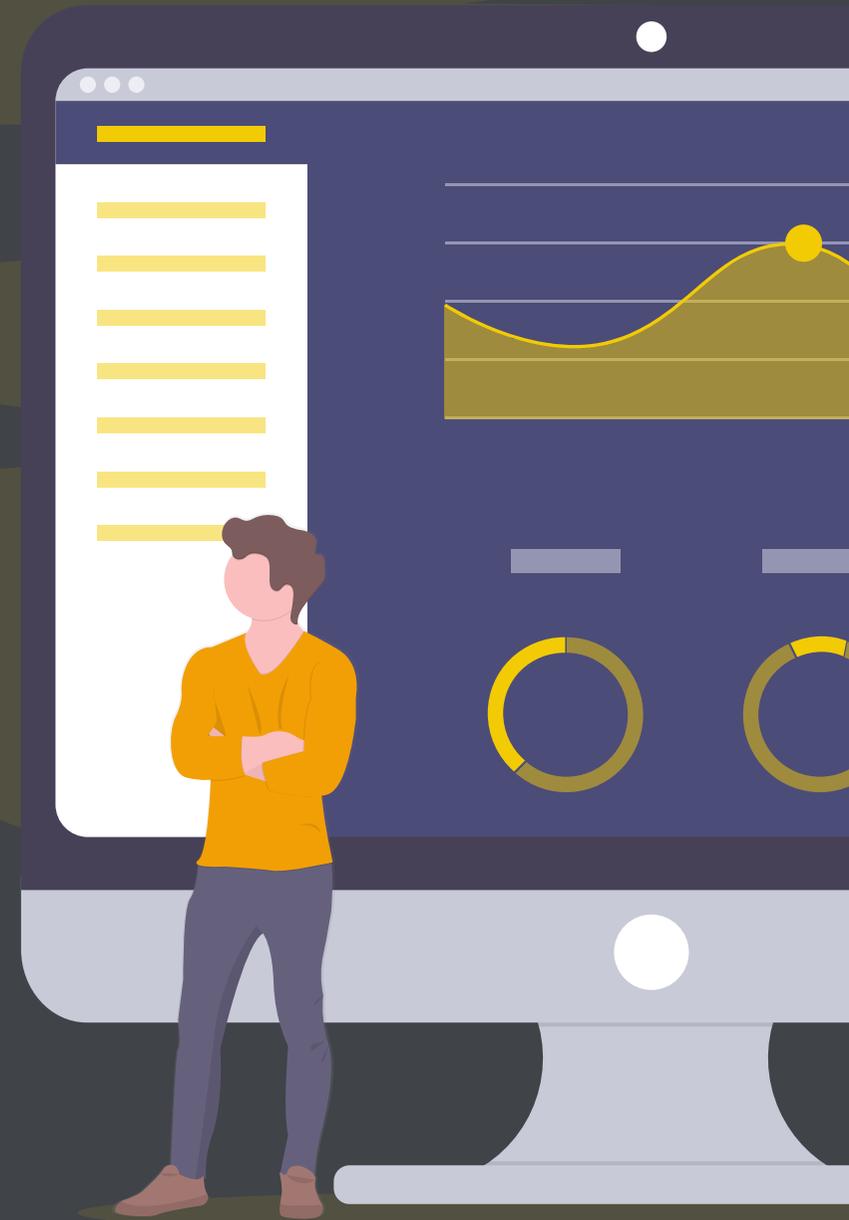




Payroll transformed:

How client cloud
platforms supercharge
your bureau



Be more expert: The freedom of client online platforms

Accounting and payroll processing is best left to the experts. That's always been true - and it remains true. The steady hand of a seasoned accountant or payroll professional is a powerful commodity that can't be replaced by software.

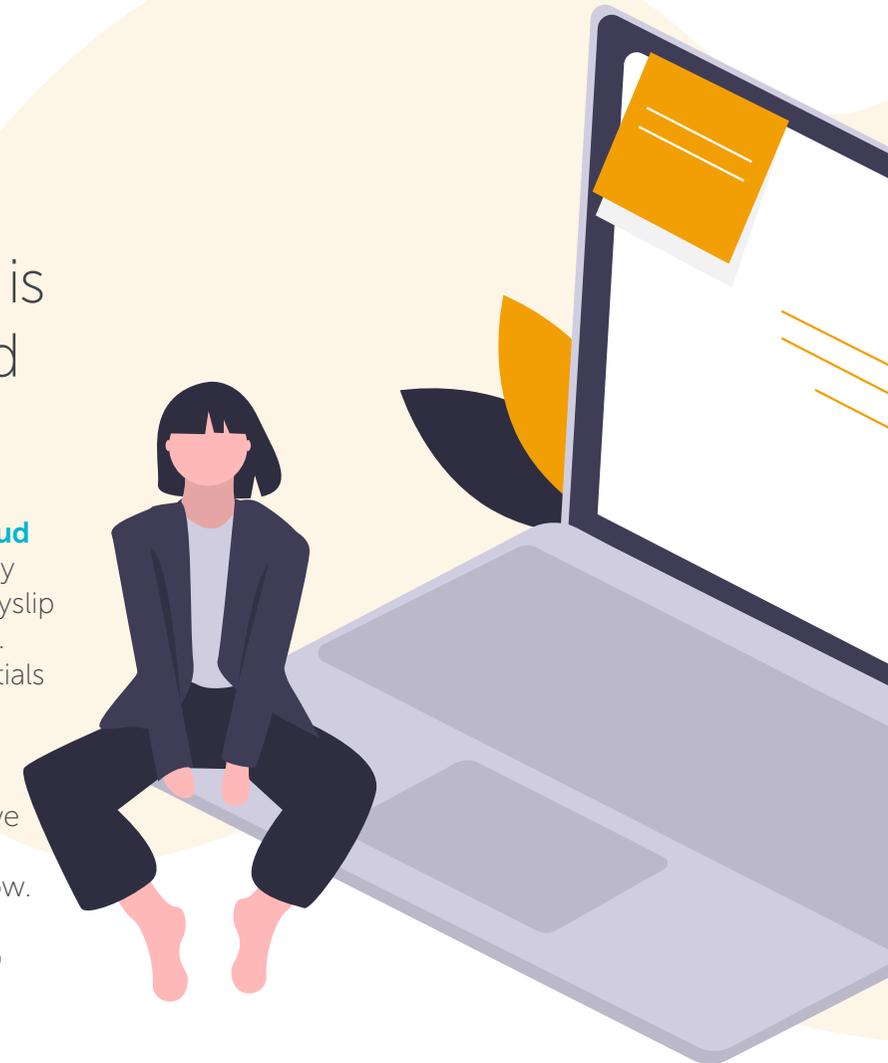
But as much as things have stayed the same, other things have changed, too. The relationship between client and professional is no longer one-directional. What software has created is a new collaborative framework in which the payroll professional can thrive.

Payroll services can -- and should -- be a team effort. Gone are the days of payroll bureaus continuously slogging through manual processes, and the frustration of clients who need to approach their payroll services provider with every minor tweak.

In its place is **payroll software with cloud integration** that envelops the day-to-day tasks like annual leave management, payslip distribution and backing up your payroll. That's more time to focus on the essentials and provide better service.

In this guide, we'll zoom in on six exciting ways client cloud platforms have transformed payroll services. Not in the distant or even medium-term future: now.

Here's how cloud integration can help you today. →



It's totally automatic: Cloud backup and the new security conscious client

Do you remember the heady days of May 2018? In the lead-up to GDPR D-day, the profession was consumed by a mass panic as the far-reaching data security laws loomed on the horizon.

But then, the day came and passed and -- nothing. Well, not exactly nothing: GDPR is in full effect, but the hectic GDPR-mania dissipated rather quickly as no massive fines or crackdowns materialised.

In an [entertaining column](#) marking GDPR's one year anniversary, AccountingWEB's editor Tom Herbert compared May 2018 short-lived hysteria to the Dancing Mania that swept Europe in the Middle Ages. Men and women, sometimes thousands at a time, would dance for hours on end before collapsing of exhaustion and sometimes dying on the spot.

Europe's dancing mania disappeared as mysteriously as it appeared. And rather similarly, GDPR mania also slipped away into the night as 25 May came and went.

The thing is, GDPR is still very much around -- and while some might procrastinate on their duties, being compliant now will pay off once the Information Commissioner's Office pulls out the compliance stick.

Using the right payroll software with in-built data security as best practice will make **GDPR compliance** a much simpler endeavour. Add in online synchronisation and automated backup of payroll data in the cloud, your data accuracy and GDPR compliance improves further.

But GDPR's very existence indicates a deeper point: Data security is important in today's world. Client's expect it, especially when we store, process and send confidential information such as payslips, employee hours and payroll reports. Being compliant is not only right, but it's also an important point of differentiation between you and your competitors.

If disaster strikes, how prepared are you for a disaster recovery situation? Or, if your computer breaks down or is hacked? Under the old regime before cloud backup, the consequences would be dire -- but now, these problems can be solved quickly.

BrightPay Connect, our cloud integration, **maintains a chronological history of your backups** automatically for you. These backups can be restored at any time, if required. It's simply an added layer of data protection. And if the worst happens, you know you can salvage the situation.



Not quite a stargate -- but pretty damn good

Perhaps the most famous portal in popular culture is featured in the classic sci-fi film *Stargate*. In the film, when a *Stargate* is discovered on Earth, human space travel is altered overnight. Just like that, we become an inter-galactic race, able to travel vast distances in the blink of an eye.

Back in real life, there are no fanciful *Stargate* portals. But there are the more everyday variety of online portals that have transformed self-service and made business simpler. Okay, it's not interstellar travel -- but the impact of client portals shouldn't be understated.

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 eliminates these twin concerns by empowering clients to help themselves.

The **BrightPay Connect client portal** automatically synchronises payroll reports and client information in one central online location, providing your clients with:

- 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.
- Enter employee hours, payments, additions and deductions for the pay period.
- Approve the payroll summary statement before the payroll is finalised.

No more laborious, repetitive admin. Just one simple client portal that can save you hours every pay period while simultaneously reducing HR queries and payroll administrative tasks.



Self-service: What we can learn from supermarket queues

Consider the checkout queue at a supermarket. If you only have a few items, it's faster and simpler to go to self-service. But if you have more complex needs -- say, a trolley-full of shopping or you need a pack of smokes perhaps -- that's when you need human service.

All throughout our daily lives, self-service has become a byword for simple convenience and speed. When the task required is simple and we know what we need, sometimes it's simply better to just DIY.

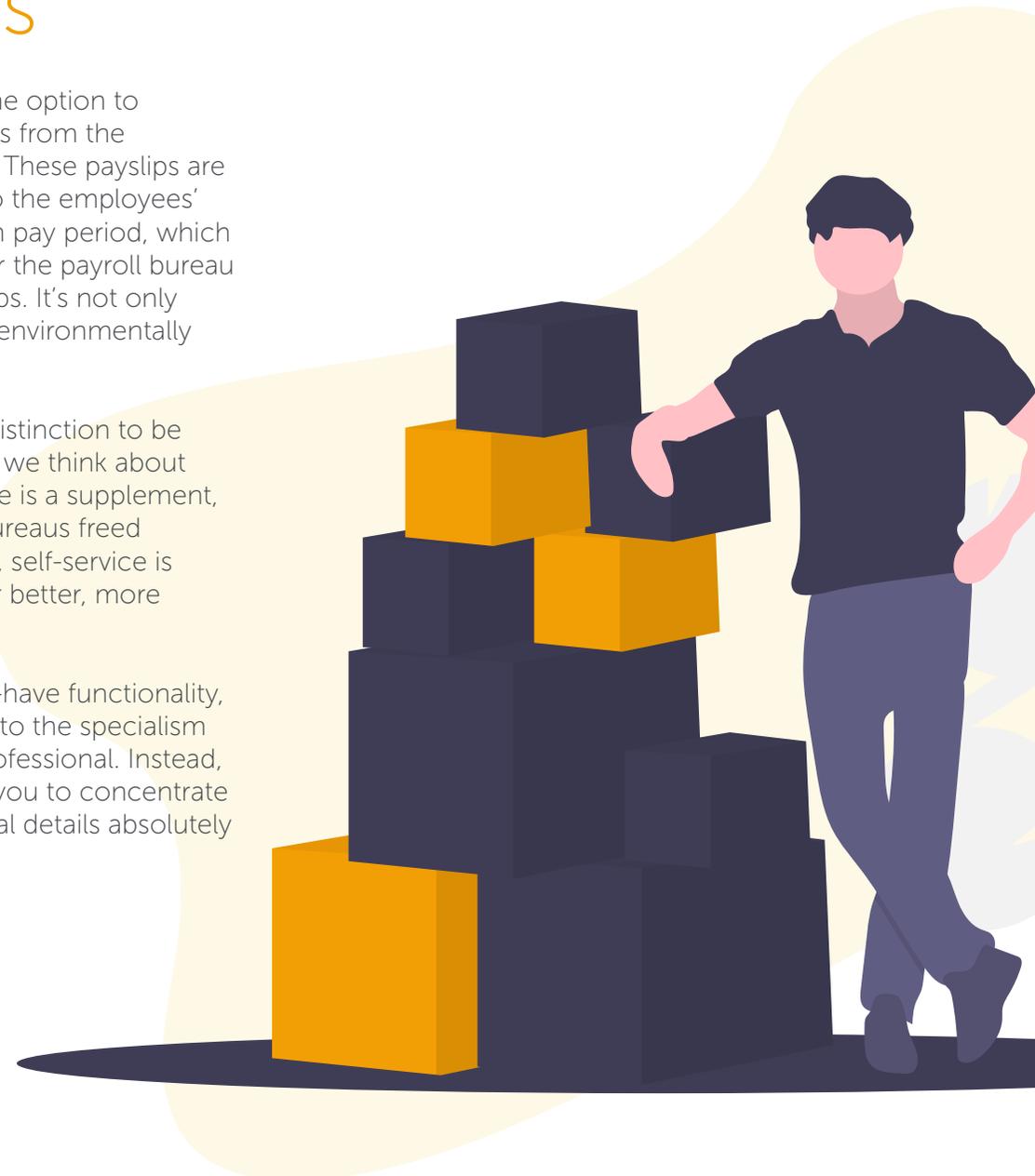
Payroll bureaus can offer this same convenience to clients. As we saw earlier, you can now offer clients their own personal employer dashboard. But BrightPay takes this further, offering employee self-service, too.

An employee can easily access their own personal payroll information through **BrightPay's employee self-service functionality**. Employees can view and retrieve their historic payslips and other payroll documents such as a P60, P45, or P11ds and auto enrolment communications. These documents can be exported to PDF and printed.

Employees will have the option to download their payslips from the employee self-service. These payslips are automatically added to the employees' self-service portal each pay period, which eliminates the need for the payroll bureau to print or email payslips. It's not only convenient, but more environmentally friendly.

There's an important distinction to be made, however, when we think about self-service. Self-service is a supplement, not a substitute. For bureaus freed from humdrum admin, self-service is an opportunity to offer better, more personalised service.

So while DIY is a must-have functionality, it pales in comparison to the specialism offered by a payroll professional. Instead, it aids focus, allowing you to concentrate on getting the technical details absolutely spot-on.



Payroll: There's an app for that

If you're looking for the exact year smartphones took off in the UK, the best guess is probably 2008. The iPhone and Android had just launched in the UK market, while only 17% of people owned a smartphone.

Fast forward to now, and that figure has risen to 78%, and 95% among 16-24 year-olds, **according to Ofcom**. And the smartphone is more than a device, it's practically an extension of our limbs.

The average adult now checks their smartphones, on average, every 12 minutes of the waking day. Two-in-five adults (40%) first look at their phone within five minutes of waking up, climbing to 65% of those aged under 35.

Alongside the smartphone's rise is the app. Ten years on from Apple's famous 'There's an app for that' campaign, there truly is an app for just about anything. That's because consumers are comfortable with using their phones to complete important tasks.

For payroll bureaus, it's important that whatever **payroll software** they use complements this trend toward smartphone and app usage. That's why

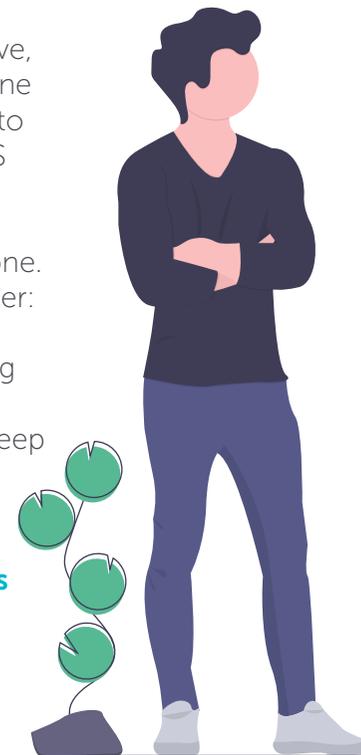
BrightPay has developed a smartphone and tablet app, so employees can access their data wherever, whenever.

BrightPay's employee app is available with BrightPay Connect. For employers and HR Managers, the user-friendly portal will streamline payroll processing while reducing the number of payroll queries from employees.

Meanwhile for employees, the app introduces powerful features on the move, with secure access using their smartphone or tablet. The employee app is available to download for free on any Android or iOS device.

This app is BrightPay's own proprietary one. It's not an add-on, or a third-party provider: it's us. With GDPR, you need to know where and how your client's data is being stored. If this data is strewn among different suppliers, it's simply harder to keep tabs.

Convenience and data security don't need to be at odds, and with **BrightPay's employee app**, you get the best of both worlds.



Life's a holiday: How client platforms automate annual leave

In the run up to the holiday seasons, such as Christmas and summer holidays, employee holiday requests transform from a trickle into a flood. Christmas, school holidays and the warmer weather mean people taking some well deserved time off.

For businesses and bureaus, however, booking a two-week break is far from relaxing. The process of annual leave management can still be a manual, spreadsheet, paper-based or, worse, email heavy exercise.

According to our estimates, up to 15% of a payroll bureau's time is spent handling queries regarding remaining leave balances for employees. That's time you could be spending elsewhere, providing better service or even taking your own vacation!

BrightPay Connect's online annual leave tools completely eliminate these cumbersome people management tasks. It's more than just **payroll software**, it's a ready-to-go, easy-to-use HR software solution.

HR software shouldn't be an expensive luxury reserved for big corporates. BrightPay Connect is affordable and designed with small businesses in mind.

The benefits of BrightPay Connect's online annual leave tools come in three main prongs, enabling:

- Employers to effectively plan their company calendar and staff resources
- Employees to request leave on a portal or smartphone app
- Employees to access leave taken and leave remaining records

All the while, leave is automatically recorded on the payroll software and synced to the cloud. It's easier for everyone: the bureau, the employer and the employee. The annual holiday rush should be a reason to be excited, not an admin nightmare.



No more back-and-forth: Client approval and the watertight paper trail

Everyone hates email tennis. There's a simple task that needs to be performed or something that needs to be okayed but conducted by email it becomes a multi-message nightmare.

These cumbersome interactions add-up. On average, office workers receive 200 emails a day and spend about two-and-a-half hours reading and replying to messages. You could pick up the phone and call, but if you have many clients that's unrealistic, too.

There's a better way to manage client requests and payroll services. A routine task like adding a new employee to the payroll is all done seamlessly within the software. Once the new employee's details have been entered in the online portal by the employer and checked by the bureau, the new employee will be automatically downloaded and created in the payroll software. No back-and-forth on email needed.

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 details for the pay period through their online employer dashboard.

For the bureau, keeping these interactions within the software also creates an easily searched payroll audit trail. Automated online logs keep track of the communication between you and your clients. Should a client query the payroll, you have the historical record of the requests, including the date and contact details.

BrightPay's client approval functionality eliminates onerous email communications, makes routine tasks easier, and covers the bureau's back by creating a watertight paper trail. Everyone is a winner.



You deserve five-star payroll software

Software can never replace the core professionalism of a payroll professional, but it can supplement it in many ingenious ways. Through self-service, through apps, through cloud backup: payroll software is about making your life easier.

You do the hard work, you get the credit, while your software hums along quietly in the background, automating and simplifying the repetitive aspects of the job and keeping you compliant.

It's here where BrightPay stands head and shoulders above the rest. Last year, our software won 'Payroll Software of the Year' at AccountingWEB's Software Excellence Awards. BrightPay also has **a five star rating**, a 99% customer satisfaction rate and is used to process the payroll for over 200,000 businesses across the UK and Ireland.

We've only covered six examples of how BrightPay Connect's client cloud platforms will help you become more efficient. But there's so much more on offer. If you'd like to hear how BrightPay Connect can help you, get in touch today.

