BlakYaks.

AZURE SPECIALIST OPERATIONS

Optimising your Azure platform operations 24x7

Service Overview

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Introduction to SpecOps.

As businesses transition to cloud and cloud native services, they need to rethink and redesign their technology operating models

BlakYaks empower your Azure cloud native journey. The team have over a decade of experience designing, deploying and operating Azure platforms and services. We are an Azure cloud native specialist and dedicated Microsoft partner that provides our customers with the additional experience and capacity they need short or long-term to support the transition to modern cloud platforms.

Our Azure Specialist Operations (SpecOps) team is a modern service function designed specifically to support cloud platforms, workloads and services. We work closely with our customers own IT operations team, bolstering their capacity and capability to as they transition to cloud native architectures in line with industry trends.

The team manage all Azure platforms with code (IaC), providing the capabilities evolving technology departments need to ensure they leverage the full benefits of Microsoft Azure.

This solution guide provides an overview of the SpecOps service.

The SpecOps Service comprises four key service offerings:

01 CORE AZURE SUPPORT
Proactive support for Azure deployments. Supporting all or a subset of services.

02 RUN AZURE SUPPORT
Full support, including 24/7 reactive facility for all or a subset of Azure services.

03 CAPACITY-ON-DEMAND
Flexible contract that provides monthly resource capacity on demand.

04 SPRINT SQUADS
Dedicated squad resources working alongside your own teams, adding capacity and skilled/certified resources

Message from Head of Operations.

A finely tuned team specialising in modern Azure platform operations blending SRE & ITIL

We support your own IT teams to meet the demands of managing Azures extensive offering alongside traditional IaaS infrastructure. We offer the necessary reinforcement to help our customers transition to a modern operational model.

We stand by our customers side for as long as needed, working in harmony to deliver business outcomes. Together, we evolve operational processes, adopt cloud native technologies, improve automation, and manage costs effectively.

"Right by our customers side as they embrace modern cloud native operations and the wide array of services in Microsoft Azure."

Neil Allgood

Key challenges.

We see common obstacles in customers:

1. PENT-UP AZURE DEMAND

As developers discover the diverse array of Azure services, the demand for new cloud native features grows quickly, often outpacing operations and security teams' capacity to integrate and provide adequate support.

2. LACK OF OPERATIONS CAPACITY

Customer teams can be burdened taking care of extensive legacy technology estates and often lack the capacity to provide quality for the extensive array of cloud native platforms and applications.

3. LIMITED CLOUD NATIVE SKILLS

Acquiring quality cloud native skills is time consuming and involves team certification, R&D and quality hands-on experience. Many internal IT operations teams or their incumbent managed service partners have not had requisite development time to manage modern cloud native platforms that need to be integrated into mature DevSecOps processes and managed with code.

4. STALE OPERATIONS

Even those teams with the requisite capacity and skill, often lack the dedicated time needed to improve and modernise existing operational frameworks, so they accommodate the wide array of cloud native technologies such as containers, Kubernetes, Azure cognitive and leading graduated CNCF technologies.

Modern Azure operations.

Operational maturity is crucial for adopting new Azure services like containers, Kubernetes, ADO, Data Warehouse, and other PaaS services.

Our team collaborates with yours, integrating essential components for scalability, support, and smooth migrations. We excel at establishing design and operational artifacts in your Azure environment, enabling confident and efficient service onboarding.

We prioritise seamless integration with existing technologies, including ITSM tools, logging/analytics, monitoring/alerting, and API gateways. By establishing strong foundations, we expedite onboarding, address increased demands, and smoothing access/service provisioning in Azure.

CORE SERVICE PRINCIPLES

CLOUD AUTOMATION

Prepare to manage the end-to-end Azure service life-cycle with code (IaC).

DEVSECOPS INTEGRATED

DevSecOps at the core of your Azure platform operations.

SECURITY COMPLIANCE

Always secure, always compliant. Aligned to industry standards.

PLATFORM STABILITY

No single points of failure. Fully fault tolerant. Business and tech is always-on.

AUTOMATED SCALING

Platforms built to scale horizontally or vertically to meet application needs.

GRANULAR REPORTING

Rich fine-grained reporting across the Azure tenant and all hosted services.

Your Azure operations partner.

By your side providing consistent operations across the whole stack

We work with your IT operations team to enhance Azure platform operations for hybrid cloud services.

Embracing effective cloud management and on-premises operations is crucial. Our team rapidly implements Azure cloud native processes, enabling efficient Azure environment management.

We provide ongoing support, aligning operations across environments.

By establishing the robust processes, and considering organisational structure, we maximise the benefits of Azure and enable effective cloud management.

1 Support for Azure Landing Zones and Azure IaaS

2 Support for Containers, PaaS, data platforms

3 Maintained with code IaC & DevSecOps

4 Azure capacity so customers can drive digital transformations

5 Supporting internal IT teams with 24x7 Azure support

6 Providing rich, granular reporting across your Azure estate

7 SRE & ITIL disciplines for modern customers

8 Equipped with key industry certifications, relevant experience and expertise

9 Backed by "Microsoft Advanced Support for Partners"

SpecOps flexible service.

Delivering the modern service structure and scope our customers need

Experience a quality cloud-ready operational service with our SpecOps team, backed by a modern commercial contract tailored to meet your evolving needs.

Our contract not only provides day-to-day support but also accommodates additional capacity requirements during critical IT change periods, such as datacentre migrations and new service deployments.

With our modern flexible contract, you gain the agility and support necessary to navigate your Azure transition smoothly, ensuring your success. If your business requirements or dynamics change and you need to modify the scope of the core Azure support we provide, or the amount of days capacity per month, that can be adjusted immediately, starting the following full month.

✅ CORE & RUN AZURE SUPPORT

We agree the level of level of Azure operational support you require to compliment your existing operations team. This can include simple proactive maintenance through to 24x7 full operational cover.

✅ CAPACITY-ON-DEMAND

You decide how many days per month you prefer to budget for. This can be used for support, deployments or small engineering and migration assignments.

✅ SPRINT SQUADS

We agree named resources dedicated to working alongside your own teams, adding capacity and skilled/certified resources.

SpecOps operational services.

Service Component	Core	Run
Proactive agreed work (via priority backlog)	Y	Y
Evergreen management – Assuring minimum agreed version levels	Y	Y
Azure cost management reporting and advisories	Y	Y
Azure Service Advisories (i.e., outages, impacts and degradations)	Y	Y
Service gaps, risks, alerts – advisories to closing out new or emerging service risks	Y	Y
Disaster recovery and business continuity posture monitoring - advisories	Y	Y
Backup and recovery monitoring and periodic recovery testing	Y	Y
Compliance reporting to standards (e.g., Azure policies, conventions, best practice) – advisories	Y	Y
Reactive 24/7 support cover		Y
ITIL incident, ticket, problem management		Y
Azure service recovery management including MIHP		Y
Cost optimisation implementations		Y
Risk mitigation implementations		Y

SpecOps backlog services.

Capacity-on-demand

- Customers purchase a block of days to be used for a range of Azure engineering and operational activities. Unused days rollover each month (for a maximum of 3 months).

- Deployed for groups of backlog activities, planned upgrades, IaC coding and DevOps/SRE work, Azure deployment and migration activities.

- Work hand in hand with the customer to agree the activities that they will focus on in a given month.

Sprint Squad

- Skilled and named resources dedicated to customer to work alongside their own teams adding capacity and skilled/certified resources.

- All team members are fully certified with a minimum of AZ900, AZ104, AZ400 and Hashicorp Terraform and comply with BlakYaks strong standards in DevOps pipelines and IaC coding.

- Squad can be allocated in 100% FTE or in 50% FTE blocks. Some customers prefer full time resources dedicated whereas (e.g., Squad of 3 team members allocated full time for 6 months). Other customers prefer part time resources and a larger Squad to gain access to a wider range of skills and experience (e.g., Squad of 6 allocated at 50% for 6 months).

Note: for more information, consult Appendix.

Key service benefits.

Enhanced cybersecurity to protect your assets

Flexible contract you can change to meet evolving needs

Cost-optimised, controlled cloud infrastructure

Azure platforms managed proactively to protect your assets

Specialist Azure engineers to bolster your transition

Certified, specialist Azure engineers by your side

Round the clock support for your evolving needs

Support provided for 3rd party integrated tools and services

Modern cloud operations that businesses need

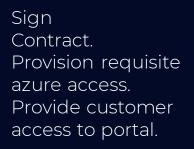UK leading Azure partner delivering high quality service

Code centric operational processes future proofing clients

Ready for cloud native and migrated IaaS services

SpecOps onboarding.

1
Sign Contract. Provision requisite azure access. Provide customer access to portal.

2
SpecOps team provided with relevant documentation. They also create their own run books.

3
Customer added to SpecOps support processes via ITSM tools.

4
Core support invoked along with monthly and quarterly reporting processes.

5
Kanban boards created for cap-on-demand tasks, priorities managed by SpecOps lead & customer lead.

Questions & Answers.

Common questions about the SpecOps service

1. **How do we get started?**

   We carry out an assessment of your Azure deployment then provide a SpecOps proposal within 48 hours of initial the discovery.

2. **What is the output of the assessment work?**

   We provide a supportability document with key observations, recommendations, any operational gaps, key remediations and relative priorities.

3. **How long does the assessment take?**

   Depending on the size of the environment it can range from a few days (small deployments) to several weeks (enterprise deployments).

4. **Is the assessment chargeable?**

   Yes, it's a detailed engagement that provides value output that is standalone and can be used by the customer for operational improvements. If BlakYaks are engaged subsequently to provide an ongoing service, the initial investment is returned as service credits.

5. **What Azure services can be supported under the scope of the SpecOps contract?**

   The entire Azure tenant and all deployed services can be supported after the assessment work is complete and any critical remediations made. The customer can choose to cover a subset of Azure platforms and services to suit their own specific requirements.

6. **How long does it take to get the SpecOps service up and running for a customer?**

   The typical onboarding process takes 2-4 weeks depending on the scale of the Azure deployment. We have recently onboarded a customer in just over a week to rapidly close immediate and pressing Azure support gaps.

WANT TO
KNOW MORE?

Book a meeting with us.

We would love to hear more about your Azure environment and discuss how we might help support your operations strategy moving forward.

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Get the Yaks in...

APPENDIX.

Commercial Model Overview

SpecOps commercial structure overview.

The BlakYaks SpecOps service comprises four key service components. Customers can subscribe to one or more of the service components.

Routine operations

SpecOps
Core
(Proactive Support)

›

SpecOps
Run
(Proactive & Reactive Support)

›

Notes

Provides skilled Azure operations and SRE team members focused on the ongoing health of your Azure platforms and hosted services. Customers can choose our proactive only support or full run service which provides 24x7 support including all proactive and reactive support and operational services for Azure.

Backlog activities

SpecOps
Capacity-On-Demand
(Monthly draw down)

›

SpecOps
Sprint
(Dedicated Squad)

›

Notes

Provides skilled Azure engineering resources focused on customers planned changes, implementations and migrations through an agreed monthly allocation of days to work through backlog items (cap-on-demand) or as dedicated named resources augmenting the customers cloud teams.

SpecOps Core.

Includes the proactive monitoring of our customer's Azure environment with a focus primarily on the following proactive monitoring activities:

- Azure service status changes – outages, degradations
- Azure cost reporting and optimisation and advisories
- Azure component level service upgrades (proactive planning advisory)
- Evergreen monitoring – Assuring an N-2 (minimum) version level for all production services
- Service gaps, risks, alerts – advisories to closing out new or emerging service risks
- Disaster recovery and business continuity posture monitoring - advisories
- Backup and recovery monitoring and periodic recovery testing
- Compliance reporting to standards (e.g., Azure policies, conventions, best practice) – advisories

SpecOps Run (Full support).

BlakYaks SpecOps team assume end-to-end operational and SRE responsibility for all or some of the customers Azure tenants/subscriptions or platforms covering all reactive support and SRE activities for agreed services:

- 24x7 Support for Azure environments, workloads, platforms and services

- Entire Azure tenant/s or agreed subset of services (e.g., Specific subscriptions or hosting platforms)

- Customers Azure DevSecOps and IaC processes, libraries and standards, protecting compliance and standards

- Customers can add Sprint and Cap-on-demand to provide additional design, build, coding capacity

- Service manager allocated and full monthly SLA reporting

SpecOps Capacity-On-Demand.

Providing skilled/certified resources on an agreed commitment level of days per month:

- ✓ Customers purchase a block of days to be used for a range of Azure engineering and operational activities

- ✓ Unused days rollover each month (within each quarter)

- ✓ SpecOps team can be deployed against a backlog of Azure activities (e.g., upgrades, IaC,, deployments, upgrades)

- ✓ The SpecOps Squad work closely with the customer to agree the activities they will focus on during a given month

Note

SpecOps Cap-on-demand has a pre-requisite dependency on customers also leveraging BlakYaks SpecOps Core service. The core element of the service provides the SpecOps team with intimate visibility of the customer Azure tenant, thus enabling the team to add value immediately.

SpecOps Sprint Squad.

Designed to augment the customers own cloud engineering and operations teams for an agreed period (e.g., 6 or 12 months):

- Named resources dedicated to collaborating with your own teams, adding skilled /certified capacity

- All team members are fully certified with a minimum of AZ104, AZ400 and Terraform

- Squad members compliant with BlakYaks standards and best practice in DevOps pipelines and IaC coding

- Squad can be allocated in blocks of 100% FTE or 50% FTE to suit workload demands

- Squads designed (allocation, skills, experience) to suit your project and workstream needs

Commercial examples.

The below are example monthly costs, based on existing BlakYaks customers and contracts that reflect the size of the customer Azure environment.

Azure deployment size	Core	Run	Cap On Demand	Sprint
Small	£1,500	£10,000	10 days - £8,000	20 days - £18,000
Medium	£3,000	£30,000	20 days - £16,000	40 days - £36,000
Large	£5,000	£60,000	40 days - £32,000	80 days - £72,000

Note

Customers can add BlakYaks project governance to cover Cap-On-Demand and Sprint activities if additional PMO or Scrum master capacity is required.

THANK YOU.

BlakYaks.