



Connectivity Guide

Kepware Server and Microsoft Azure IoT Hub

November 2025
Ref 1.06

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1. Overview

This Connectivity Guide discusses how to configure the Kepware Server IoT Gateway Plug-In to communicate with Microsoft® Azure IoT Hub using MQTT over TLS.

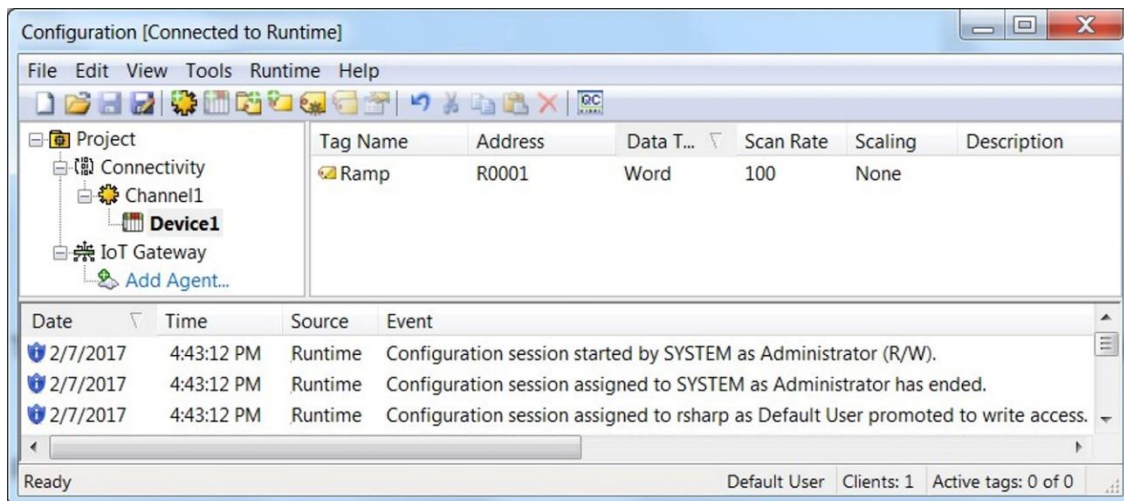
For information on how to connect the Kepware Server IoT Gateway Plug-In to Azure IoT Hub through Azure IoT Edge, see [Kepware Server and Microsoft Azure IoT Edge](#).

2. Create IoT Device and Get SAS Token

The Azure IoT Hub acts as a central message hub for bidirectional communication between IoT applications and devices. How “devices” are modeled depends on the specific application, but it’s important to understand that each IoT Device configured in the IoT Hub will be associated with the data stream/connection for an MQTT Client Agent in Kepware Server IoT Gateway Plug-In.

Notes:

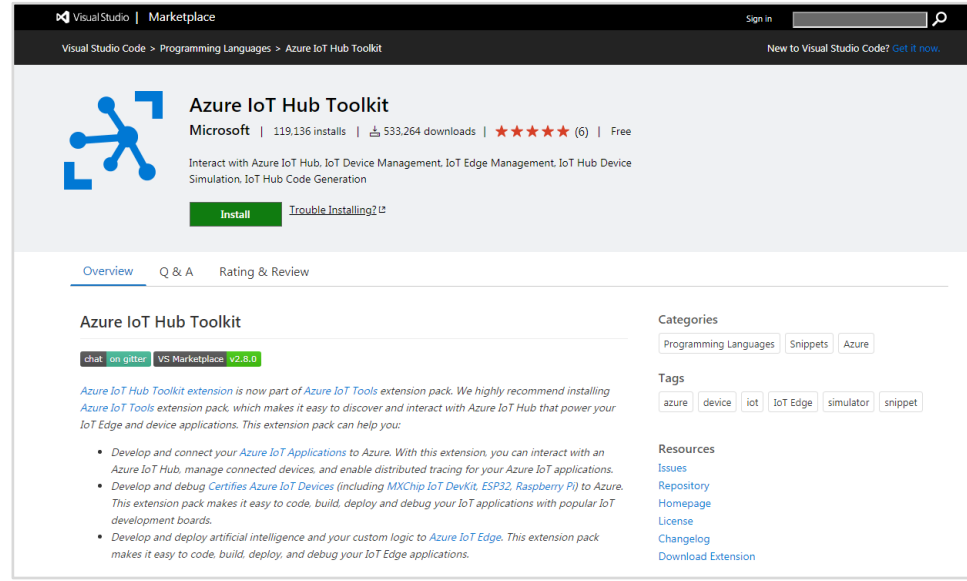
- These instructions use Visual Studio Code with an Azure IoT Hub extension to manage the hub, the devices and to monitor or send data to the IoT Devices. IoT Devices can also be managed through Azure CLI commands, through the Azure Portal, and other coded methods using the Azure IoT Hub SDKs.
 - Connection status for a “device” in the IoT Hub is based upon the overall connection state of the MQTT connection. A MQTT Client Agent in Kepware’s IoT Gateway will only connect if the server has data to publish. If an application is designed to monitor the connection status of a “device” in the IoT Hub, it is recommended that you enable the Subscriptions in the Kepware MQTT Client Agent as defined in [Section 5](#).
1. Open a Kepware Server instance with the IoT Gateway Advanced Plug-In. In this example, one channel and device are configured with the Simulator driver, and there is one tag that increases in value by one each time it is read (i.e. “ramp”).



2. Download and install Visual Studio Code: <https://code.visualstudio.com/download>.

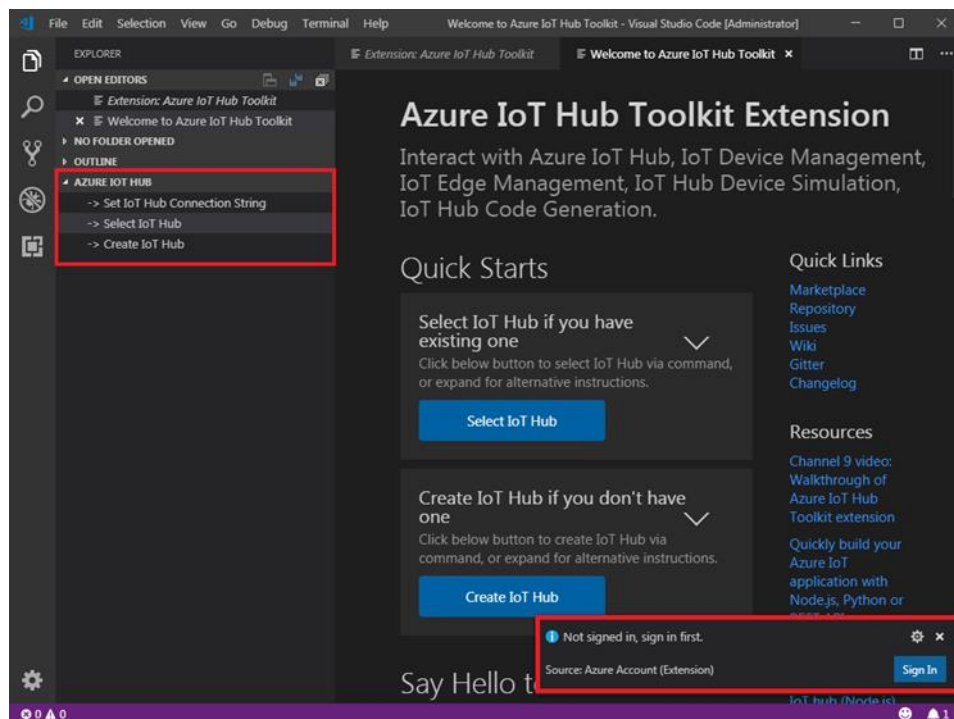
3. Install Azure IoT Hub Extension for Visual Studio Code:

<https://marketplace.visualstudio.com/items?itemName=vsciot-vscode.azure-iot-toolkit>

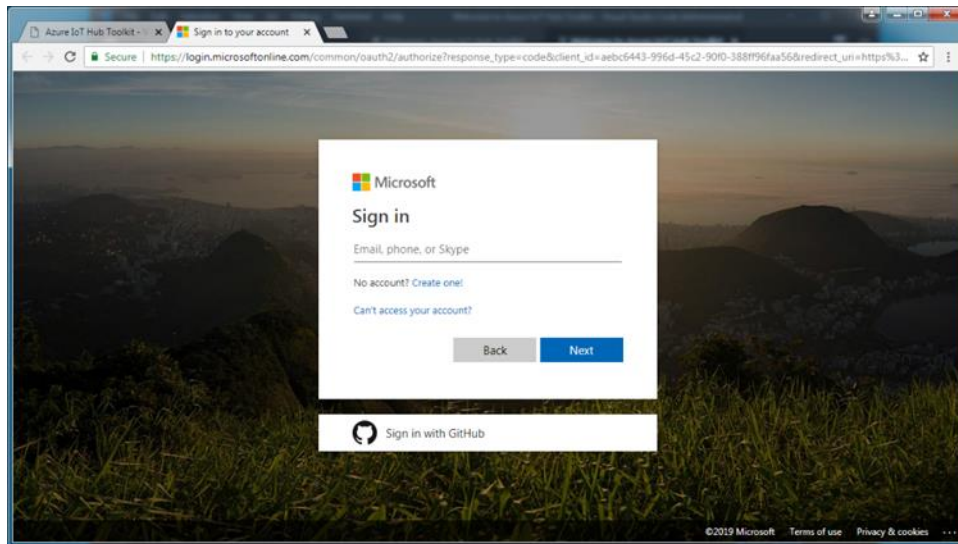


4. Once Azure IoT Hub Extension is installed, click **Select IoT Hub** and select **Sign in** when prompted by the pop-up noted below.

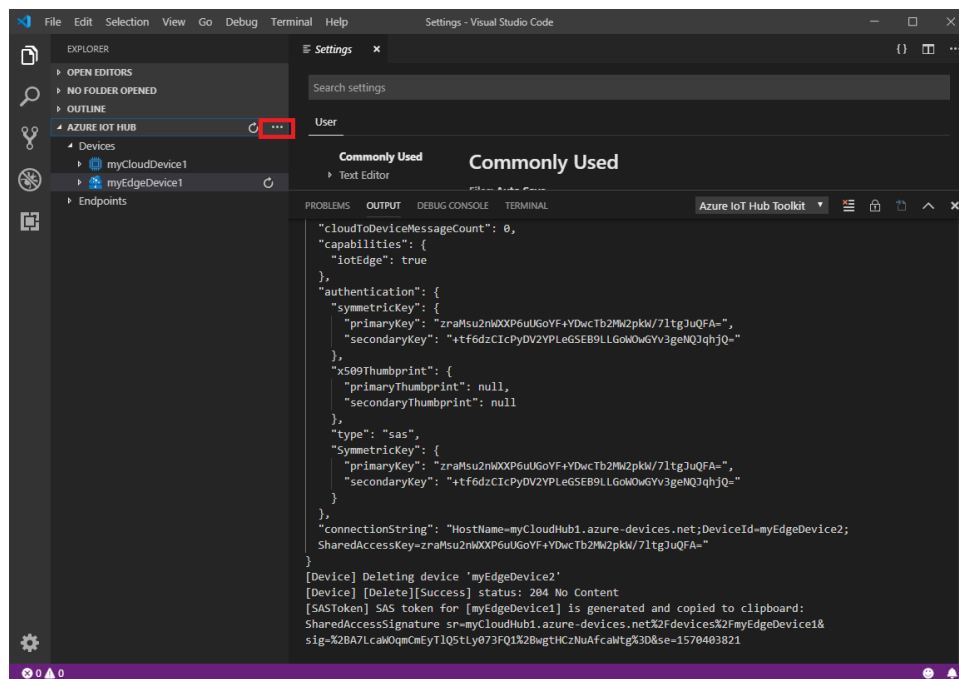
Note: The remainder of this guide assumes that an IoT Hub already exists within the Azure Portal account.



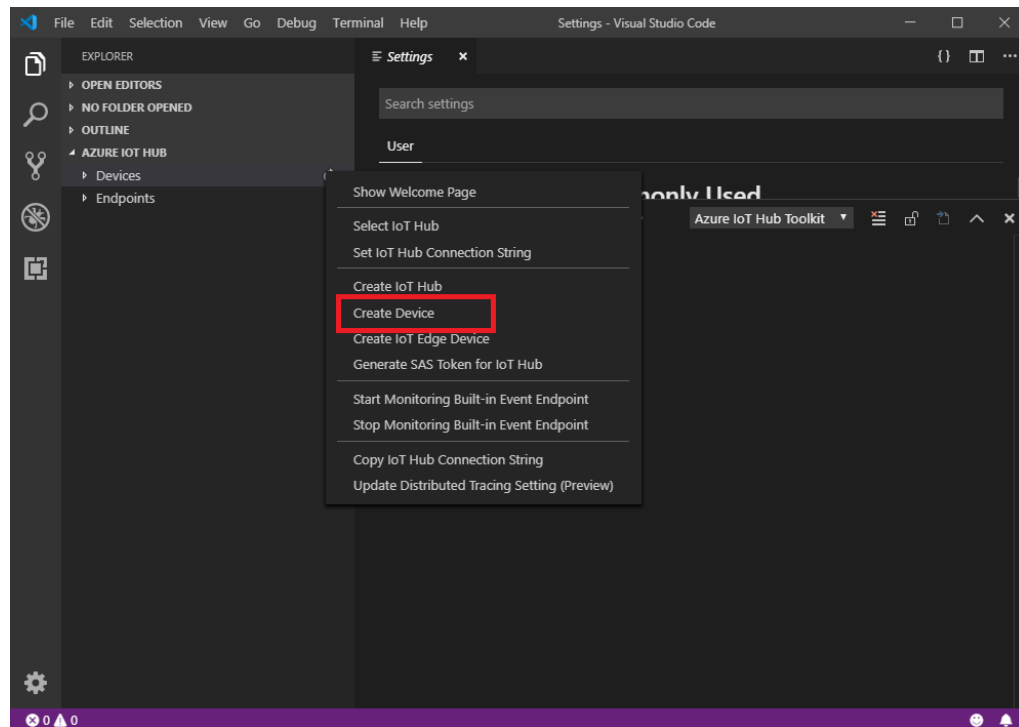
5. The default web browser launches a Microsoft Sign In page. Log into Microsoft using Azure Portal credentials.



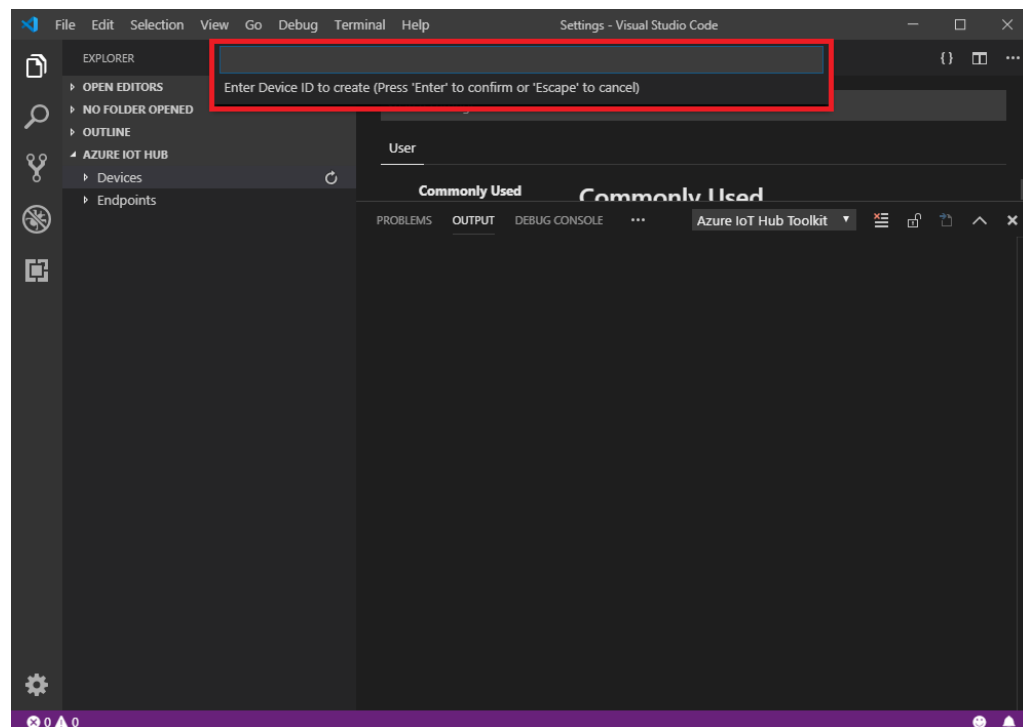
6. Once signed in, return to Visual Studio Code and expand the Azure IoT Hub extension in the Explorer tree view. Click the ellipses (noted below).



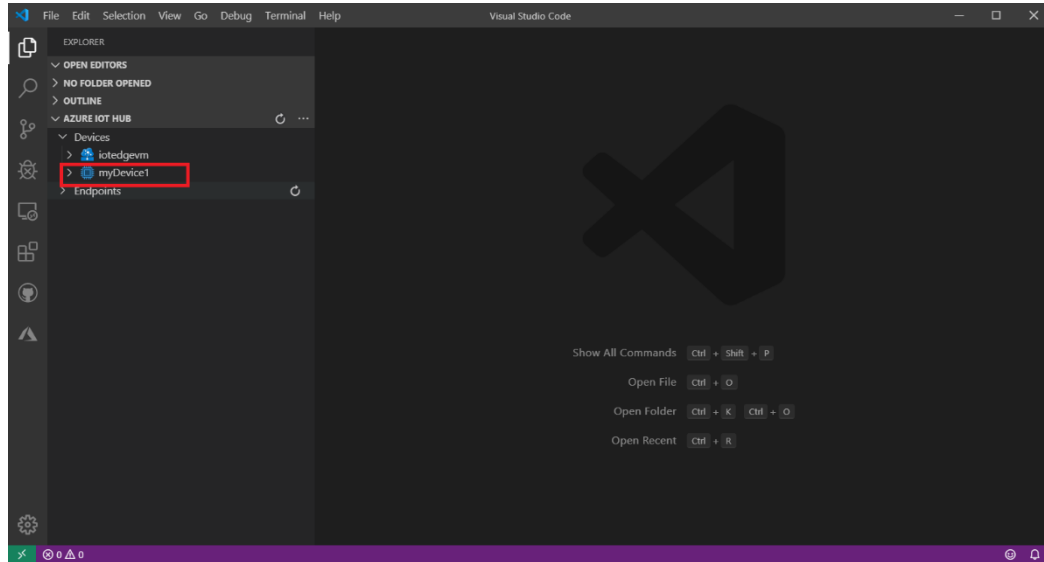
7. From the context menu, click **Create Device**.



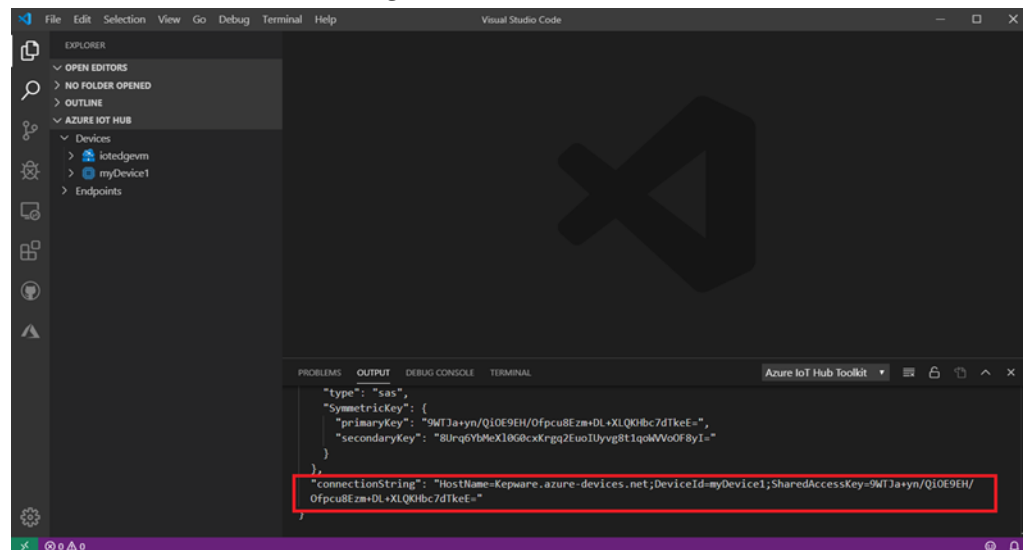
8. Enter a Device ID for the new IoT device.



9. To verify the IoT device has been successfully created, find it listed below the Azure IoT Hub extension in the Explorer tree view.

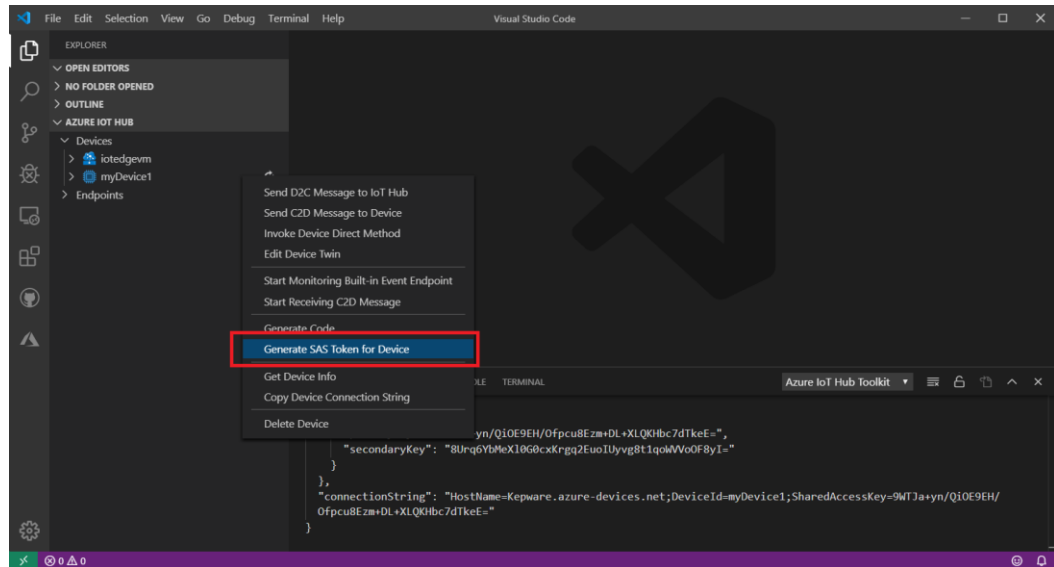


10. The Connection String is part of the Device Info displayed in the Output window in Visual Studio Code. Review the Connection String created for the device and record the following pieces of information from this string:

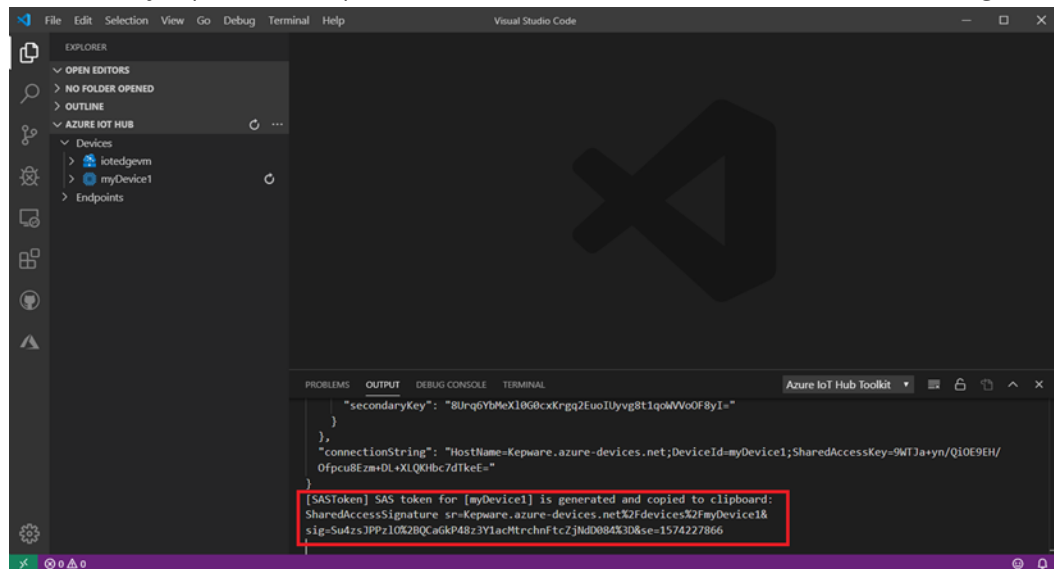


| Information | Example |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <IoT Hub Hostname> | myCloudHub1.azure-devices.net |
| <deviceId> | myDevice1 |

11. Right-click the new device and select **Generate SAS token for device**.



12. Enter a Time To Live (TTL) or expiration for the SAS token
13. The SAS token is created and displayed in the Output window in Visual Studio Code and automatically copied to the clipboard. Paste it into a text document for later use in this guide.

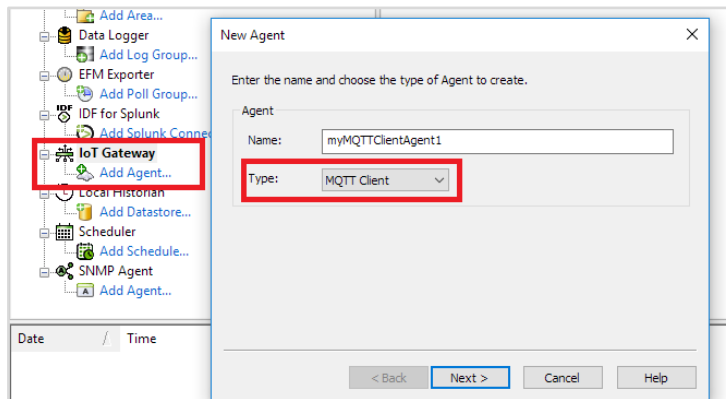


14. Review the SAS token string and record the following pieces of information:

| Information | Example |
|-------------|--|
| <SAS token> | SharedAccessSignature sr=myCloudHub1.azuredevices.net%2Fdevices%2FmyDevice1&sig=HS%2FfyE VuCFxem5JYZJ%2BzKKIQZyp1 SqfcSVQDzSlgtCg%3D&se=1562872697 |

3. Configure Kepware Server MQTT Client Agent to connect to Azure IoT Hub

1. In the Kepware Server IoT Gateway Plug-In, add an MQTT Client Agent.



2. In the MQTT Client Agent, access **Client** property group to edit the URL and Topic per the following formats:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Property Groups | MQTT Broker |
| General | URL ssl://myCloudHub1.azure-devices.net:8883 |
| Client | Topic devices/myCloudDevice1/messages/events/deviceData |
| Message | Publish |
| Security | QoS 1 (At least once) |
| Last Will | Rate (ms) 10000 |
| Subscriptions | Format Narrow Format |
| Licensing | Max Events per Publish 1000 |
| | Transaction timeout in (s) 5 |

- URL format: ssl://<IoT Hub Hostname>:8883

```
ssl://myCloudHub1.azure-devices.net:8883
```

- Topic format: devices/<deviceId>/messages/events/<property bag>

```
devices/myDevice1/messages/events/location=abcd&id=12345
```

<property bag> (optional) sends each message with additional properties in a url-encoded format. For example:

```
location=abcd&id=12345
```

- *Please* note that when using IoT Hub data with Azure Data Lake, the property bag must be configured with a specific string. This string defines a content type of 'application/json' and a text encoding format of UTF-8: devices/{device-id}/messages/events/\$.ct=application%2Fjson%3Bcharset%3Dutf-8
- For more information about the property bag, visit [Understand Azure IoT Hub message routing | Azure Storage as a routing endpoint](#)
- For more information about the property bag, visit <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/iot-hub/iot-hub-mqtt-support>.

- Important:** The topic format must include the forward slashes, including the ending forward slash if the **<property bag>** objects are not included. For example:

```
devices/myDevice1/messages/events/
```

- Enter security credentials in the following formats:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Property Groups | <div> <div> <div>Property Groups</div> <div>General</div> <div>Client</div> <div>Message</div> <div>Security</div> <div>Last Will</div> <div>Subscriptions</div> <div>Licensing</div> </div> <div> <div>Credentials</div> <div> <div>Client ID</div> <div>myCloudDevice1</div> </div> <div> <div>Username</div> <div>myCloudHub1.azure-devices.net/myCloudDevice1</div> </div> <div> <div>Password</div> <div>*****</div> </div> </div> </div> | |
| | <div> <div> <div>TLS Configuration</div> <div> <div>TLS Version</div> <div>Default</div> </div> <div> <div>Client Certificate</div> <div>Disable</div> </div> </div> </div> | |

| Property | Format |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Client ID | <deviceID> |
| Username | <IoT Hub Hostname>/<deviceID> |
| Password | <SAS token> |

- Access the MQTT Client Agent and select **Add IoT items...** to add an IoT item reference (i.e. a Kepware Server tag reference) to the Agent.

The screenshot shows the MQTT Client Agent interface. On the left, a tree view lists various components: Project, Connectivity, Aliases, Advanced Tags, Alarms & Events, Data Logger, EFM Exporter, and IDF for Splunk. On the right, the 'Server Tag' section is active, displaying a list of tags. The 'Add IoT items...' button is highlighted with a red rectangle. Below this, a dialog box is open for configuring the 'Server Tag'. The 'Server Tag' field contains 'Channel1.Device1.Ramp'. The 'Scan Rate (ms)' is set to 1000. Under the 'Publish' section, the 'Only on Data Changes' radio button is selected, and the 'Deadband (%)' is set to 0. The 'Every scan' radio button is also visible.

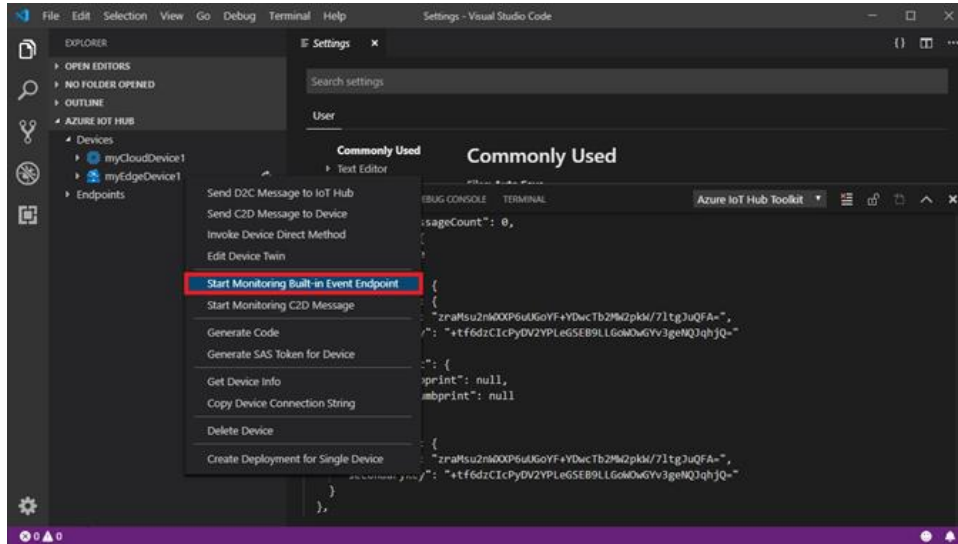
- To verify that the MQTT Client agent has connected to the Azure IoT Hub, find an event log entry similar to the following:

| Date | Time | Level | Event |
|-----------|------------|-------------|---|
| 2/10/2017 | 2:41:35 PM | Information | MQTT agent 'Ramp_2_Cloud' is connected to broker 'ssl://kepwaremqtt.azure-devices.net:8883' |

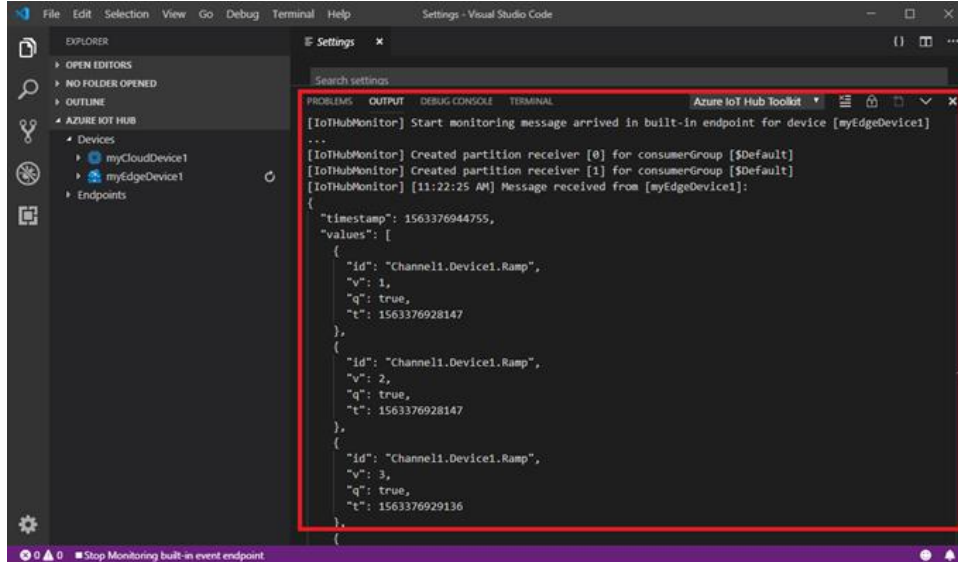
4. Verify Successful “Device-to-Cloud” Communications

Use Visual Studio Code to monitor the device's built-in event endpoint and verify that data starts flowing from Kepware's MQTT Client Agent to the cloud-based Azure IoT Hub within a few seconds.

1. In Visual Studio Code, right-click the edge device entry and select **Start Monitoring Built-In Event Endpoint**.



2. Kepware Server data payloads should display in the Output window of Visual Studio Code.



5. Configure MQTT Client Agent to receive “Cloud-to-Device” messages from Azure IoT Hub

Applications can send write or command messages to Kepware using “Cloud-to-Device” messages. When a “device” is created in the IoT Hub, an endpoint is created to allow this transaction to the “device” or MQTT Client Agent in Kepware. Functionally, to send a command to a PLC, a properly formatted JSON payload will need to be sent as documented in the [IoT Gateway Manual](#).

- **Note:** Connection status for a “device” in the IoT Hub is based upon the overall connection state of the MQTT connection. Setting up the Subscriptions will ensure that the MQTT Agent will always reconnect, even when there is no data from the server to publish.

1. In the MQTT Client Agent, access **Subscriptions** property group. Change the “Listen for Write Requests” to Yes and update Topic per the following formats:

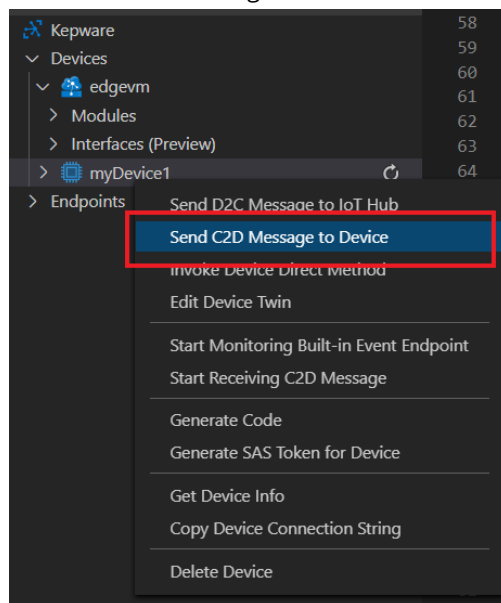
| | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Property Groups General Client Message Security Last Will Subscriptions Licensing | Subscriptions | |
| | Listen for Write Requests | Yes |
| | Topic | devices/myDevice1/messages/devicebound/# |
| | | |

- Topic format: devices/<deviceID>/messages/devicebound/#
For example:

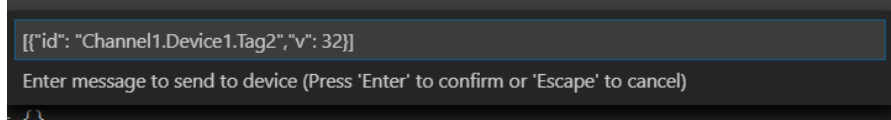
```
devices/myDevice1/messages/devicebound/#
```

● For more information about the cloud to device messages, visit <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/iot-hub/iot-hub-mqtt-support>.

2. To test, you can execute “Cloud-to-Device” messages from the Visual Studio Code IoT Hub extension. To do this, right click on the device you want to send the command to and select the “Send C2D Message to Device”.

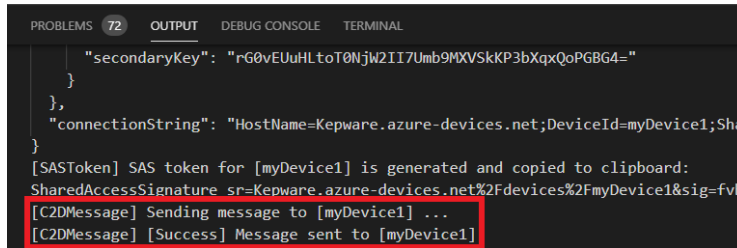


3. Enter the JSON payload to send, writing a value to a specific tag or collection of tags per the IoT Gateway manual.



A screenshot of a text input field with a dark background. The input field contains the JSON payload `[{"id": "Channel1.Device1.Tag2", "v": 32}]`. Below the input field, there is a prompt that reads "Enter message to send to device (Press 'Enter' to confirm or 'Escape' to cancel)".

4. If the command was properly received by the MQTT Client Agent, the Visual Studio Code output should indicate that the C2D message was sent successfully.



A screenshot of the Visual Studio Code output window. The window has tabs for PROBLEMS, OUTPUT, DEBUG CONSOLE, and TERMINAL. The OUTPUT tab is active, showing a log of events. The log includes a SAS token generation message, a connection string, and a message sending event. The message sending event is highlighted with a red box and contains the text: `[C2DMessage] Sending message to [myDevice1] ...` and `[C2DMessage] [Success] Message sent to [myDevice1]`.

Appendix A: Connecting with self-signed X.509 Certificates

Microsoft Azure IoT Hub also supports self-signed certificates for authorization, which keeps a certificate and private key on the local machine and stores only a certificate thumbprint on the hub.

Note: This guide uses legacy components (like the Device Manager) to manage the certificate assignment in Azure IoT Hub.

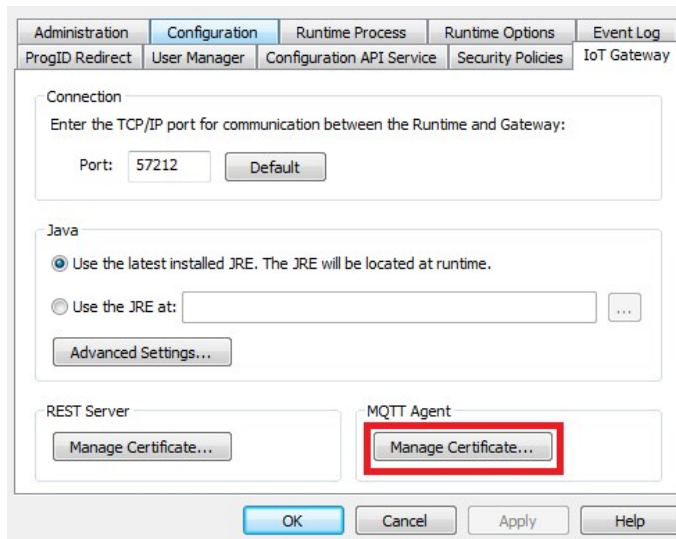
Note: For more information on how to connect with self-signed certificates refer to <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/iot-hub/iot-hub-devguidesecurity>.

The following information describes how to connect IoT Gateway to the hub:

1. Generate self-signed certificates. This command outputs a new generated certificate and private key:

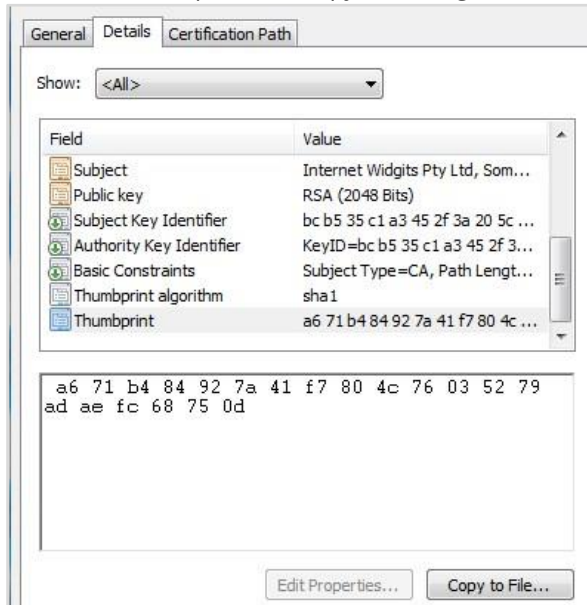
```
$ openssl req -x509 -sha256 -nodes -days 365 -newkey rsa:2048 -keyout privateKey.key -out certificate.crt
```

2. To import the certificate and private key to IoT Gateway, access the Administration Menu and select **Settings**. Access the IoT Gateway tab, then click **Manage Certificate...**
3. Click **Import New Certificate...** and browse to the certificate created (*certificate.crt*).
4. Once the certificate is imported, the Import dialogue box immediately reopens to import the private key (*privateKey.key*).

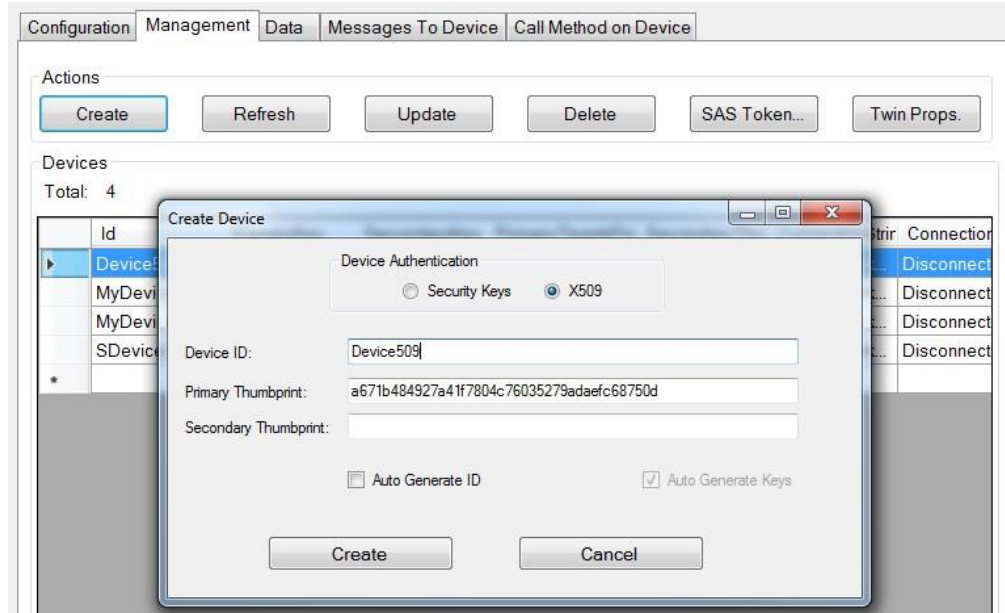


5. Once the private key is imported, a popup dialog will request a private key password.
Note: The files required for this depend on the format and contents of the file(s) being imported. For example, if a PFX file is selected, and it contains both the certificate and private key, no additional files are required. The OpenSSL creation process used in this example creates both a .crt and .key file, and both need to be imported independently (see steps 2-4 above).
6. Obtain the certificate thumbprint:
 - a. Click **View Certificate**.
 - b. Access the **Details** tab, and from the drop-down menu, select **<All>**.

- c. Select the thumbprint and copy the string.



7. Create device using Device Explorer.
 - a. Open Device Explorer, access the **Management** tab, and select **Create**.
 - b. Select the **X509** option.
 - c. Enter **Device ID** and paste the string into the **Primary Thumbprint** field.
 - d. Click **Create**.



8. Create a new MQTT Client Agent within the Kepware Server IoT Gateway Plug-In. The following property groups should be configured per the tables below:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Property Groups | MQTT Broker | |
| | URL | ssl://kepiot-azure-devices.net:8883 |
| | Topic | devices/Device509/messages/events |
| | Publish | |
| | QoS | 1 (At least once) |
| | Rate (ms) | 10000 |
| | Format | Narrow Format |
| | Max Events per Publish | 1000 |
| | Transaction timeout in (s) | 5 |
| | | |

| Client | |
|--------|---|
| URL | ssl:// Azure IoT Hub Host name :8883 |
| Topic | devices/ Device ID /messages/events/ |

| Security | |
|--------------------|---|
| Client ID | <deviceID> |
| Username | <IoT Hub Hostname>/<deviceID> |
| Password | HostName= <IoT Hub Hostname>; DeviceID = <deviceID>;x509=true |
| TLS Version | v1.2 |
| Client Certificate | Enabled |

9. Add tags to the MQTT agent. Event log messages should indicate if the agent was successfully connected to the broker.
10. To monitor messages from IoT Gateway:
 - a. Open Device Explorer and access the **Data** tab.
 - b. Select the device from the drop-down menu and click **Monitor**.

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Property Groups | Credentials | | |
| | Client ID | Device509 | |
| | Username | kepiot.azure-devices.net/Device509 | |
| | Password | ***** | |
| | TLS Configuration | | |
| | TLS Version | v1.2 | |
| | Client Certificate | Enable | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|------------|------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Configuration | Management | Data | Messages To Device | Call Method on Device |
| Monitoring | | | | |
| Event Hub: kepiot | | | | |
| Device ID: Device509 | | | | |
| Start Time: 02/27/2017 15:29:04 | | | | |
| Consumer Group: \$Default <input type="checkbox"/> Enable | | | | |
| <input type="button" value="Monitor"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/> | | | | |
| Event Hub Data | | | | |
| <pre>{ "id": "Channel1.Device1.R1", "v": 4084, "q": true, "t": 1488227377340, "p": 1 }, { "id": "Channel1.Device1.R1", "v": 4085, "q": true, "t": 1488227378361, "p": 1 }, { "id": "Channel1.Device1.R1", "v": 4086, "q": true, "t": 1488227379371, "p": 1 }</pre> | | | | |