



CIVICA

Case Study



"Johnnie" Johnson has implemented a thin client solution which centralises all applications on the Trust's servers, minimising the maintenance and support required at remote sites. They are also more secure, as all programs run inside the protected environment.

The communications run over broadband, and the system has the added benefit of making sure that access to the Internet is secure.

"Johnnie" Johnson Housing Trust improves service to tenants with a remote access solution

Managers in "Johnnie" Johnson Housing Trust's sheltered housing schemes now have the ability to serve their customers more efficiently thanks to a new connection network that puts them directly in touch with central systems.

"Johnnie" Johnson Housing

"Johnnie" Johnson is a general needs housing association with some 4,500 properties and 6,000 tenants - mostly in the North of England. It was founded by former Spitfire ace Johnnie Johnson, and still operates according to his goals of social responsibility and good service.

"Johnnie" Johnson Housing operates in 34 local authority areas, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Nottingham and Wales. Its stock includes around 60 sheltered housing schemes, each of which has a warden or scheme manager dealing with residents' needs and communicating with the Trust.

The Challenge

Lack of sufficient connectivity to support direct access to the Trust's central accounts and scheduling systems meant that managers were constantly on the phone to the Trust's headquarters.

The Trust's strategic projects manager Tricia Watters saw a way technology could radically improve the service the Trust gives - and make more effective use of the scheme managers' time.

"What we wanted to do was to provide a computer suite in each of our schemes for the managers, so they had access to our main systems," says Tricia. This would enable them to be more responsive to customers' needs.

But moving to a more connected world was not going to be simple, due to the broad spectrum of IT literacy amongst the staff. The Trust was going to

have to invest in improved, easy-to-use equipment, and provide managers with the necessary level of training.

Secure, reliable access

The trust required a fast, reliable and robust connection to each of the schemes, with a well-specified set of equipment sitting on the end of it. They also wanted a company that could provide, install, maintain and support it.

Working with Civica Connect, a service provider with a track record of supplying public sector organisations, the Trust created a solution based on a virtual private network (VPN) - a secure connection into the Trust's servers - and terminals at the Trust's schemes that use the well-established Citrix protocol.

"Because of the nature of the schemes, we wanted a thin-client solution," says Tricia. Thin clients centralise all applications on the Trust's servers, minimising the maintenance and support required at remote sites. They are also more secure, as all programs run inside the protected environment.

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Johnnie Johnson currently benefits from using the following Civica solutions



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Planning



Finance



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Pensions



Health & Social Care



Education & Skills



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Consulting



Software Licensing

Improved service for tenants

"If managers want to look for something on the network, they have to go out through our servers," says Tricia, "It's restricted and logged."

Direct access to the Trust's systems has already provided benefits, says Tricia: *"One local authority wanted to review housing benefit applications. They got all the rent statements they needed direct from the scheme managers office."*



Looking to the future

In the next phase, the Trust plans to run phone calls over the network links, by means of Voice-over IP (VoIP) handsets. This would cut the Trust's phone bill substantially, by turning the managers' phones into extensions on the central phone systems, making internal communications easier, and enabling calls to be recorded for training and audit purposes.

"Blend Civica's vast experience of converged intelligent networks with a customer who has a need and the vision to welcome a technology-based solution to solve a business issue – and you have an ideal opportunity to practice what we preach" says Philip Wright of Civica Connect.

"It is our goal to help our customers help their customers and staff to improve service and save money. This solution is a great example of doing just that."

Civica is one of the most experienced providers of consulting, software and managed services for the public sector. Supplying more than 1,200 organisations in the UK, Australia and the USA, including 89% of the UK's local authorities. Civica has a 20-year history of delivering software-based solutions that help customers in local government, criminal justice, housing, education and healthcare sectors to improve service delivery.

To learn more about how we can help you improve your service to customers please:

- Contact us on 0845 345 4282
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