



Case Study: Golding Homes

Large Kent-based social landlord takes advantage of ambitious office move to invest in new innovative connectivity solution.

“ *We're delighted with the service we've received from M-Tech Systems, and the Fortinet solution is a fantastic way to give us proper insight into our network. The performance of the products has been brilliant.* ”

Jay Visram, Senior IT Lead, Golding Homes



The Client

Golding Homes delivers high quality, affordable homes and services for over 20,000 people in Kent. Established in 2004, following the transfer of homes from Maidstone Borough Council, it has invested heavily in regenerating its neighbourhoods. Not only is it dedicated to building more affordable homes to help with the housing crisis, with a significant growth plan to build 400 homes in the next few years, it also invests in community work through a number of outreach programmes.

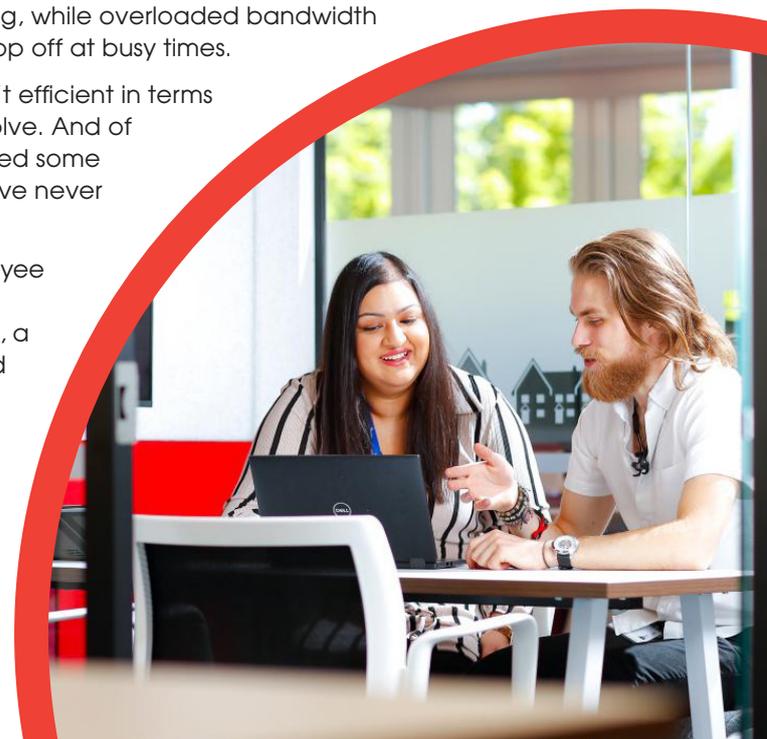
The Challenges

- For companies at the heart of their communities, connectivity is vital to ensure operations run smoothly. Despite its ambitious targets, Golding Homes was facing serious challenges. It hoped to deliver modern services – but was restrained by its network capabilities, and limited by the infrastructure of its workspace.
- Employees were restrained by ongoing network access issues. Infrastructure challenges meant users were often limited to working in particular areas of the building, while overloaded bandwidth meant it wasn't uncommon for the network to completely drop off at busy times.
- The original IT estate was a multi-vendor solution, which wasn't efficient in terms of cost or time resource. This led to issues taking longer to resolve. And of course, as with any legacy IT estate, the old network also posed some security issues, although Golding Homes were fortunate to have never experienced a breach.
- Golding Homes knew that digital experience is central to employee engagement and general staff satisfaction, so it was keen to empower their staff to work without disruption. At the same time, a key part of serving its communities effectively in the future would lie in enabling staff to work flexibly or from outside the office.

Moving to a New Solution

Golding Homes were undertaking an ambitious office move into a new building so saw this as the ideal opportunity to invest in an innovative solution. There were a number of objectives to achieve.

First, the new networking had to be robust, so staff could work





without interruption. It needed to cover every inch of the new office and be heavy-duty enough to support remote working, ensuring staff could work wherever and whenever they needed to. Golding Homes was also keen to invest in a solution which could provide a single pane of glass oversight of the network to monitor bandwidth and usage.

On the security layer, Golding Homes wanted clear visibility over both external and internal issues, as it was aware of the risk a lack of visibility poses. As it works with a number of third-party suppliers, it was keen to have better control over how those parties could work on its systems. Finally, Golding Homes also needed a solution that could support its needs in the future as – like most business in the modern world – it was experiencing a growing demand for data, meaning it required more bandwidth.

With these goals in mind, Golding Homes completed an open tender process in which M-Tech applied and recommended Fortinet. Impressed by both M-Tech Systems’ presentation and how the Fortinet Security Fabric could be managed under one interface, Golding Homes decided to proceed with a planned deployment to include a pair of FortiGate with enterprise protection, FortiManager and FortiAnalyzer, along with numerous FortiAPs, Edge switches and Fibre core switches. Combined, this would provide superior protection against threats and a robust, reliable network.

FortiGate

FortiManager

FortiAnalyzer

FortiAP

FortiSwitch

“ *Visibility was extremely important – as we work with so many external partners and suppliers, we need to see exactly what’s going on across our estate, and be prepared to react accordingly.* ”

Jay Visram, Senior IT Lead, Golding Homes

Reaping the Benefits of New Connectivity Capabilities

With a combined approach, this deployment has transformed Golding Homes’ connectivity capabilities. Having a single pane of glass view over the IT estate has made a huge difference, while from a resilience point of view, the access points will enable the network to keep running even if Ethernet access is lost. The FortiAnalyzer has been a particularly valuable product, improving Golding Homes’ ability to troubleshoot firewall issues with ease. Resource wise, Golding Homes are currently only using a small percentage of the CPU – so as they grow in the years to come, they’re confident that the solution will keep performing.

In terms of security, Golding Homes is in a much more confident position. A ‘built from scratch’ solution equates to a massive reduction in risk. Plus, as issues are discovered in the worldwide Fortinet community, problems can be patched instantly. Web Filtering is another valued feature, particularly on guest WiFi, as Golding Homes is currently paying for a standalone web filtering service. Since this is now covered in their Fortinet solution, it can look to end its paid contract.

With the assistance of M-Tech, the deployment process took just over a week and went exactly as expected. Office relocations can often be challenging at the best of times, but Golding Homes were at least able to feel confident that its new connectivity system would be implemented smoothly. The account management staff at Fortinet were also on hand to provide upfront and realistic advice and timelines. Now, with its new solution, Golding Homes finally has the resilience and performance it needs to continue to grow and serve its communities successfully.

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“Moving to a new office space created the ideal opportunity to update our connectivity infrastructure, and we were keen to capitalise on this with the support of M-Tech and Fortinet.”

Jay Visram, Senior IT Lead, Golding Homes

Business Impact

- Improved network resilience and coverage
- Enhances security and network management
- Confidence to grow ambitiously in the future

M-Tech Services

- Project Management
- Installation
- Strategic Consultancy