



## Case Study

### Background

**The Mossclare Housing Group** includes Mossclare Housing and Mossbank Homes, which are charitable housing associations formed for the benefit of the community. First established in 1968, the group now owns and manages over 4,500 properties across some of the most diverse communities in Greater Manchester. It aims to help people to find affordable housing and to provide high quality housing management and area regeneration services in partnership with councils and other agencies.

Mossclare operates across several sites with its head office in Moss Side, four sheltered schemes in south Manchester, a scheme for people with physical disabilities in Tameside and area offices at Carrbrook near Stalybridge, in Stockport and Openshaw in East Manchester.

Mossclare was built from community roots through voluntary efforts, and the ethos of true community integration still prevails through the company today. Mossclare prides itself on dealing directly with tenants on a 1:1 basis and in understanding the needs of the local area. It seeks to build a culture within the organization that embodies the slogan, 'Pride in our past, passion in our future.'

Marilyn Evans has been Mossclare's ICT Manager since 1998. Initially employed to deliver an ICT strategy for the year 2000, Marilyn has developed an IT network that is seamlessly integrated into the business. Her vision over the last decade has been to use ICT to help drive business efficiencies through effective use of applications and technologies such as a virtualisation combined with a new housing management system and support for flexible/remote working. It was however clear from the outset that one barrier to achieving

such vision was the poor performance of the fibre / ADSL based WAN infrastructure.

### The Challenge

In 2006, Mossclare were using a standard fibre leased line into head office and ADSL lines into the satellite offices and sheltered schemes. However, ADSL was proving to be unfeasibly expensive and Marilyn recognized that users at remote sites were struggling with bandwidth and were frustrated by the unreliable nature of the connectivity. This resulted in poor morale at remote sites and low levels of staff satisfaction with ICT services.

Mossclare's IT team chose to review the WAN with the key drivers for consideration being those of reduced cost, faster speeds at the remote sites and improvements in staff inclusion and satisfaction. When first introduced to Metronet's unique wireless leased line solution, Mossclare was initially sceptical. Wireless was after all a new technology to Mossclare and despite boasting some impressive references, Metronet's solution was relatively untried in the housing arena. However, such was Metronet's confidence in the quality of its wireless connectivity (backed up by a 99.95% SLA) that it agreed to submit to a test with Mossclare's Manchester based ICT partners, JMC IT. The connection had to be reliable, it had to be well supported and most importantly, it had to deliver improved performance at a reduced cost. Metronet's high quality offering and personal customer care shone through and this led to Metronet becoming the primary connectivity supplier for both Mossclare and JMC IT!



## Case Study

### The Solution

By 2011, Metronet was supplying Mosscares with an MPLS network incorporating 7 sites into a private cloud using connections operating at data rates between 1Mbps and 10Mbps with an Internet breakout of 4Mbps. In addition to data, the network also carries voice traffic, is used for replication and includes a backup link for the main site. Marilyn has been able to bring together a disjointed communications infrastructure into one simple WAN environment and also ensure business continuity through implementation of a seamless disaster recovery solution.

In Marilyn's words, implementation was 'painless'. She added, **"The whole infrastructure had to be simple and Metronet continues to be a big part of achieving that. I now have no headaches or hassle with my network and Metronet helps me to deliver my internal SLA to Mosscares staff, giving them confidence in their IT solution."**

Metronet has also been able to assist Mosscares with temporary bandwidth upgrades to support backup situations and accommodate changes in their business needs. Marilyn recognises this flexibility as one of the key benefits of using a wireless solution. **"From a support perspective, working with Metronet is a pure delight. It was always hell to get hold of BT but with Metronet, there are no call centres, you can speak to someone directly and make changes such as bandwidth upgrades immediately. Metronet notices if we have an issue and they call us before we have chance to call them - what more could I ask for?"**

### The Benefits

Mosscares has come a long way from its inception and is justifiably proud of all it has achieved. Its future ICT plans are based upon building on its roots and to continuing to deliver the simplest solutions it can for frontline staff. Metronet will continue to support Mosscares and their partners JMC IT along this journey with benefits such as:

- **Scalability** - Metronet can upgrade a customer to a higher bandwidth remotely at a moments' notice.
- **Guaranteed network uptime** - Metronet has a much better record of uptime than other larger companies providing data connectivity.
- **One point of responsibility** - Metronet owns and controls its own network from the switch installed at the customer site through to lay off to the Internet at Telecity. The company has 24x7 access to all parts of the network and does not depend on the infrastructure of any external companies, like BT. The Company's engineers all live locally and are never more than 20 minutes away from any part of the network. If a problem arises, Metronet has at its disposal the technical, personnel, and access resources to resolve issues.
- **Proactive fault management** - Metronet installs a managed switch or router for each connection. This switch allows the management software on the network to monitor each and every connection 24 hours per day.
- **Zero Contention** - All of Metronet's connections are un-contended symmetrical wireless lease lines offering a fully duplex service.