

# Social telecoms

be social, stay connected



Community  
**WiFi**  
best value  
connectivity

# INTRO TO SOCIAL TELECOMS.

At Social Telecoms, we're not just about providing telecommunications solutions; we're about empowering communities. Our expertise lies in designing and implementing **Community WiFi** networks that bring high-speed, reliable internet access to residents in social housing and local authorities.

This eGuide showcases our commitment to bridging the digital divide and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to benefit from the digital age.

Established as a dedicated telecommunications supplier to the public sector, Social Telecoms has been at the forefront of delivering exceptional service since 2012. Our focus on supplying leading telecommunications and data products is complemented by our deep understanding and commitment to the public sector, particularly social housing and local authorities.

We pride ourselves on our customer-oriented approach, blending top-tier products with unparalleled customer service and account management tailored to the unique needs of each client. Our journey, beginning in 2012, has been one of organic growth and deepening expertise. Today, we proudly serve over 200 housing associations and local authorities - a reflection of our understanding and capabilities in managing the diverse telecommunications needs of this sector.

This eGuide is a testament to our rich history of aligning technology with the demands of housing providers, ensuring that solutions not only fit but excel in real-world applications. Our focus on **Community WiFi** is built on this foundation of expertise and the shared vision of redefining the housing communication paradigm.

In every engagement, Social Telecoms brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success. Whether it's for your organisation or another valued partner, our goal remains the same: to provide outstanding service and tailored solutions that resonate with the unique challenges and opportunities of the social housing market.

## INTRO TO SOCIAL TELECOMS

# LIKE-MINDED VALUES.

As both a social enterprise and a Community Interest Company, Social Telecoms operates with a mission that resonates deeply with the ethos of social housing providers and local authorities.

Our structure as a CIC means that we reinvest our surplus into community projects, mirroring the community-focused objectives of the housing and local authority sectors we serve.

This alignment in values and goals enhances our partnership with our customers, as we share a common commitment to improving and enriching the lives of residents and communities.

At Social Telecoms, we are dedicated to building lasting relationships, working as an integral part of your team to foster community development and empowerment. Our focus extends beyond mere service provision; we strive to be a partner in achieving your social objectives, continuously innovating to keep you at the forefront of the ever-evolving digital landscape.



## EXCLUSIVITY TO THE HOUSING SECTOR.

At Social Telecoms, our exclusivity to the housing and local authority sectors is underpinned by a strategic focus on meeting the specific needs of these organisations.

Our Customer Experience services, including advanced contact centre solutions and digital assistants, are prime examples of this tailored approach. These services are designed to enhance the way housing providers interact with their residents, ensuring a seamless, responsive, and effective communication experience.

Shortly after incorporation, we quickly adapted to the evolving needs of the housing sector by diversifying into digital inclusion services. This strategic move reflects our dedication to meeting the wider needs of housing communities, particularly in ensuring digital accessibility. Our exclusive focus on the housing sector equips us with a deep understanding and a suite of solutions specifically designed to address its unique challenges and opportunities.

## PROCUREMENT FRAMEWORK HOLDER

Our number one ranking on the Procurement for Housing telecommunications framework is a significant accolade for Social Telecoms, reflecting our commitment to excellence and compliance.



**LOT  
5**  
**COMMUNITY  
WIFI & DIGITAL  
INCLUSION**

This top-ranked status brings substantial benefits to PfH members. Notably, it allows for a direct award of the framework, providing a streamlined procurement process. This facility saves time but also instils confidence in the quality and reliability of the telecommunications and digital inclusion services provided.

# TAILORED TELECOMS SOLUTIONS.



Social Telecoms offers a diverse array of tailored telecommunication solutions, ensuring that every aspect of your communication needs are covered:

## **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SOLUTIONS:**

Our comprehensive customer experience services include advanced contact centre solutions from leading providers such as 8x8, RingCentral, Vonage, and NFon. We also offer innovative digital assistants from Logicdialog and 8x8, seamlessly integrating into popular CRM platforms like Salesforce and MS Dynamics, as well as housing-specific systems like MRI Housing. These solutions are designed to elevate your customer service capabilities, ensuring a

smooth and efficient experience for your residents.

## **UNIFIED COMMS (UCAAS):**

Our Unified Communications offerings are enhanced by MS Teams integrations from top providers including 8x8, Ringcentral, Vonage, and NFON, facilitating seamless collaboration and communication within your organisation.

## INTRO TO SOCIAL TELECOMS

**MOBILE AIRTIME SOLUTIONS:**

As a network-agnostic provider, we offer a wide range of mobile airtime options from leading networks such as O2, EE, Vodafone, and Plan.com. This flexibility ensures that you can select the best mobile solutions to fit your unique operational needs.

**ADVANCED NETWORK MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS:**

We are leading the way with innovative Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) and Software-Defined Wide Area Network (SDWAN) technologies. These solutions are crucial for robust, secure, and efficient network management in the dynamic digital landscape, ensuring uninterrupted and secure connectivity for your operations.

Each of these solutions is crafted with the specific needs of housing providers and local authorities in mind, ensuring that your telecommunications infrastructure is not only advanced and reliable but also perfectly aligned with your service goals and objectives.

A FULLY MANAGED  
SERVICE

CASE STUDY:  
WIFI AS SOCIAL VALUE

CASE STUDY:  
ENHANCING CARE

DON'T STOP  
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BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

# BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

In today's digital age, internet access has become a necessity rather than a luxury. It plays a pivotal role in various aspects of modern society, including education, employment, healthcare, and social activities. However, a significant gap, known as the digital divide, exists between those who have easy, reliable internet access, and those who do not. This divide often affects the most vulnerable populations, including those in social housing communities.

Community WiFi projects, such as the one undertaken by Social Telecoms, aim to reduce this digital divide by providing free or low-cost internet access, thereby enabling these communities to participate fully in the digital world.

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**BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.****ECONOMIC ACCESSIBILITY.**

Economic barriers often prevent individuals and families from accessing the internet. Traditional home broadband can be prohibitively expensive, especially for lower-income households. Community WiFi networks offer a more affordable alternative. By reducing or eliminating these financial barriers, these networks enable more people to participate in the digital world.

This includes activities like online shopping, online banking, remote working, and online learning, which can significantly improve the quality of life for individuals in these communities.

**COST SAVINGS WITH ONLINE SHOPPING**

Online shopping, enabled by internet access, often leads to cost savings. Online stores frequently offer discounts and sales that may not be available in traditional stores. Additionally, the ability to easily compare prices from different stores helps residents find the best deals.

Digital inclusion also means having equitable access to these online services and opportunities. By providing residents with internet access, housing providers are not only helping them save money but also ensuring they have the same opportunities as those who are digitally included.



## **EDUCATION & DIGITAL LITERACY.**

In the era of online learning, internet access and digital literacy go hand in hand. Digital literacy refers to the skills needed to effectively navigate the internet, use digital devices, and engage in online activities. It's not just about having access to the internet, but also about knowing how to use it effectively.

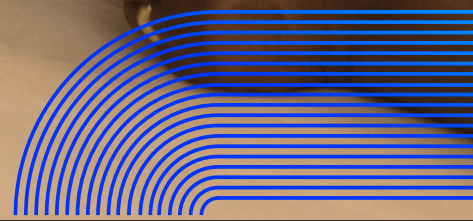
With online access, students of all ages can tap into a wealth of educational resources, complete homework assignments, and participate in online classes.

## **HEALTHCARE ACCESS.**

Being online plays a crucial role in enhancing healthcare access. It enables residents to leverage a range of NHS services online, transforming the way healthcare is accessed and delivered. From booking appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions to accessing health records and consulting with healthcare professionals, residents can manage their healthcare needs conveniently from home.



BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.





## **COMMUNITY BUILDING & EMPOWERMENT.**

Access to information, resources, and online tools provided by Community WiFi can spark innovation and entrepreneurship. Individuals can learn new skills, start online businesses, or engage in other entrepreneurial activities.

This can lead to local economic development, job creation, and a vibrant, thriving community.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY.**

In many areas, particularly rural or underserved regions, the cost of individual broadband services can be prohibitive. More affordable standard fibre broadband may not be readily available, and the only options might be financially out of reach for many residents.

This is where Community WiFi networks, can make a significant difference. By sharing a service across a community, the cost per individual or family becomes much more affordable. This shared approach to internet service provision not only broadens access but also makes it financially reachable for more people, without compromising speed.

Thus, Community WiFi plays a crucial role in bridging the digital divide and fostering digital inclusion.

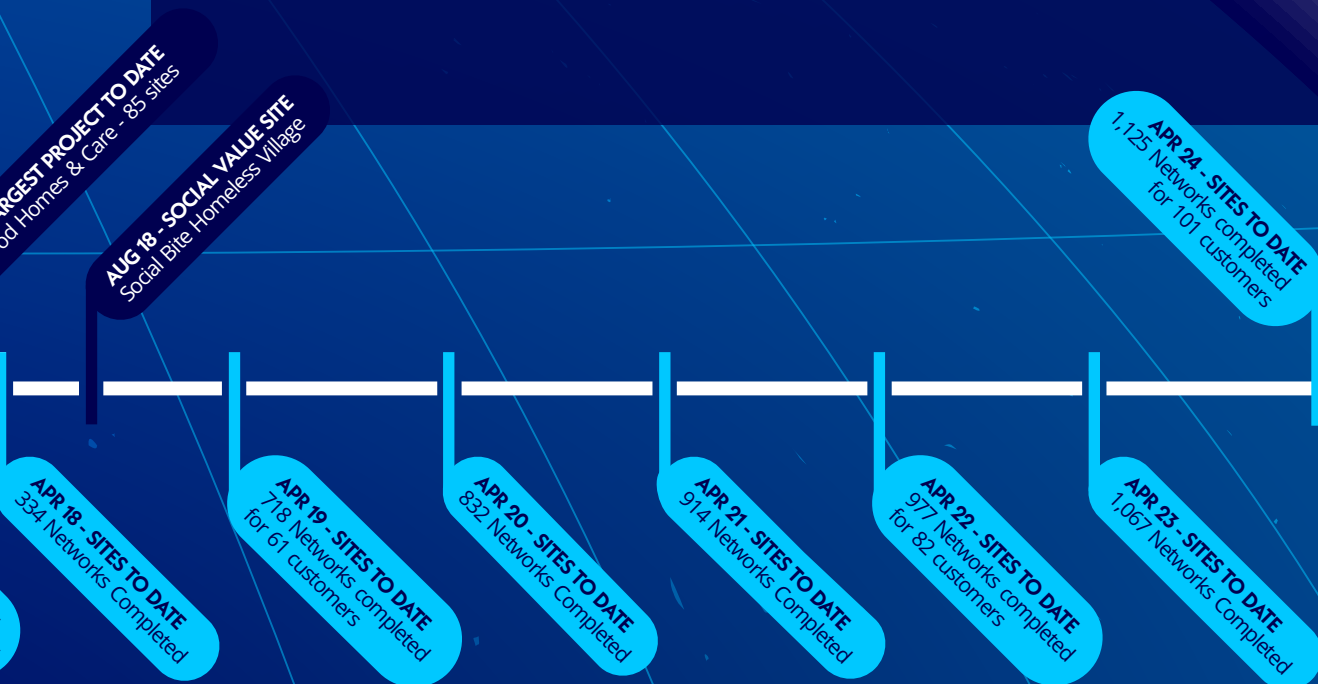
OUR WIFI JOURNEY.

# OUR WIFI JOURNEY.



Social Telecoms has supplied, installed and maintained WiFi networks at over 1,100 networks for over 100 social housing and local authorities across the UK, from the Outer Hebrides to Jersey and everywhere in between. The communities of over 100 housing providers and councils have benefited from access to speedy, reliable Community WiFi instead of pricier home broadband services.

Our engineers work for us - we do not use contractors and we have teams based in Scotland, the Midlands and the South. This means the engineers and project managers involved in the deployment of your project are also on hand to support and maintain the networks going forward.



I N S T A L L S

# THE INSTALLATION.

## HARDWARE BENEFITS

Our access points, ideal for Community WiFi in multi-dwelling units, deliver high-performance WiFi 6 coverage with speeds up to 1775 Mbps and support for 256 devices each. They feature advanced technologies like band steering for network efficiency, airtime fairness, and seamless roaming for optimal user experience. Residents can have their own SSIDs, ensuring privacy and easy connection of their devices. Managed with the Cloud Controller for centralised configuration and troubleshooting, our access points ensure reliable, fast, and secure wireless connectivity for all residents.

## SELECTED FEATURES EXPAINED

### 1 SEAMLESS ROAMING

Especially beneficial when moving around a network site, this allows devices to switch between different wireless access points without losing connection or experiencing significant data transmission interruptions.

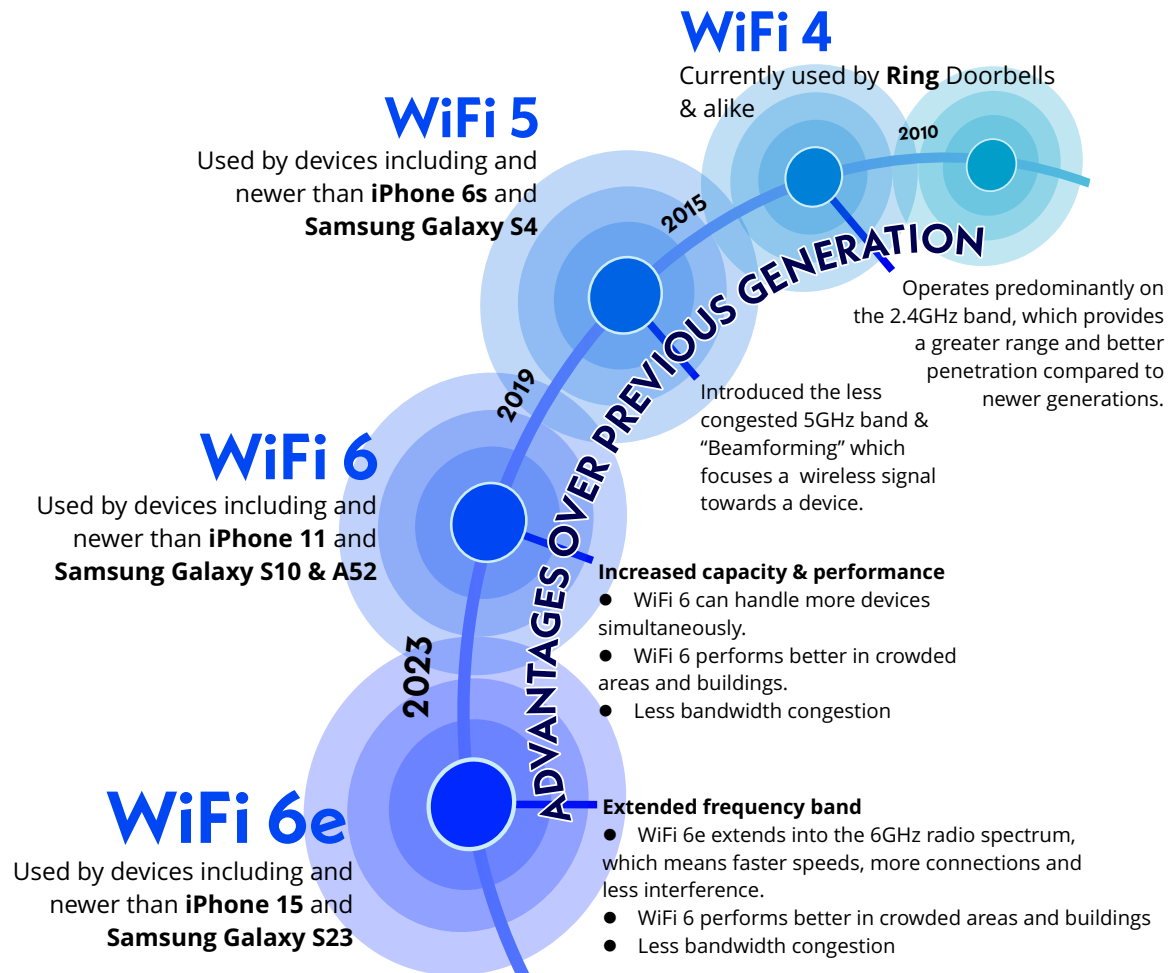
### 2 AIRTIME FAIRNESS

A feature that ensures equal allocation of capacity among devices. It prevents older, slower devices from slowing down the network by giving each device a specific time slot for data transfer.

### 3 BAND STEERING

A technology that automatically switches devices to the best available frequency band, typically between 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz. This improves network efficiency and reduces congestion, providing a smoother and faster internet experience.

## EVOLUTION OF WIFI OVER THE YEARS



## INSTALLS

### **PROJECT OBJECTIVE: EVERYONE CAN STREAM.**

Our Community WiFi networks are meticulously engineered with a singular, critical objective: to facilitate Full High Definition (FHD) video streaming for every resident.

This focus on FHD streaming isn't arbitrary; it's a decision based on current digital trends and user demands. In today's digital age, high-definition video is more of a necessity than a luxury, and it's also one of the most data-intensive online activities. By meeting the bandwidth requirements for FHD streaming, we're not just catering to the needs of avid streamers, but also ensuring that all other online activities — whether it's browsing, gaming, or video conferencing — can be conducted smoothly. In essence, by aiming for the peak, we ensure all bases are covered. But we don't stop at FHD, if broadband services which provide enough capacity are available, we'll aim for 4K streaming. We'll let you know what is available.

This commitment to high levels of broadband capacity underscores our dedication to digital inclusivity and our pursuit of delivering the best possible online experience for your community. To meet this demand, we require one or more incoming Internet connections to the network. These connections can be established using various broadband services such as Full-Fibre from BT Openreach, Virgin Media, CityFibre and alike; SOGEA from BT Openreach as well as Fibre Leased Line connections, or even satellite-based services like Starlink, if necessary.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS AND SELECTION PROCESS.**

Our approach to selecting the appropriate broadband service is rooted in understanding the specific demographic and internet usage patterns of each community. A sheltered scheme for the over-55s would likely have moderate capacity demands compared to a young persons foyer. By leveraging our extensive experience in installing and maintaining Community WiFi networks, we tailor our services to meet the minimum capacity requirements and align with the specific usage patterns of each demographic. This ensures reliable, fast, and high-quality internet connectivity for all residents, regardless of their online activities.

# BROADBAND CAPACITY & SELECTION.

Starlink installation, Housing Solutions in  
Maidenhead. February 2024

## BANDWIDTH REQUIREMENTS

### VIDEO-CALLING:

Min: 30Kpbs  
HQ: 400Kbps  
HD: 1.2Mbps

### SPOTIFY MUSIC:

Min: 96Kbps  
HQ: 160Kbps  
Extreme: 512Kbps

### BROWSING:

0.5Mbps

### EMAIL:

0.5Mbps

### GAMING

Xbox Live: 3Mbps  
PSN: 3Mbps

### ON-DEMAND VIDEO

YouTube SD: 0.7Mbps  
YouTube HD: 2.5Mbps  
YouTube FHD: 5Mbps

BBC iPlayer SD: 1.5Mbps  
BBC iPlayer FHD: 5Mbps

ITV X SD: 3Mbps

Disney Plus SD: 1.5Mbps  
Disney Plus FHD: 5Mbps  
Disney Plus 4K: 25Mbps

Netflix SD: 3Mbps  
Netflix FHD: 5Mbps  
Netflix 4K: 15Mbps

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook Posts: 1Mbps  
Facebook Live: 4Mbps  
Instagram Posts: 1Mbps  
Instagram Video: 3Mbps  
TikTok Video: 1.5Mbps

## A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE.

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From start to finish and beyond, we are committed to delivering a comprehensive service that not only helps you quantify the costs and impact of **Community WiFi** for your residents but also guides you through the entire process. This includes open days with your residents and managing and maintaining the networks on your behalf. Our goal is to ensure a seamless experience, providing a reliable, high-speed internet service tailored to the unique needs of each community. Here are the steps to a typical project:

1. Desktop Surveys and Indicative Costs
2. Onsite Surveys
3. Proposal and Project Plan
4. Project Deployment
5. Project Handover and Open Days
6. Ongoing Management and Support

A FULLY MANAGED  
SERVICE

CASE STUDY:  
WIFI AS SOCIAL VALUE

CASE STUDY:  
ENHANCING CARE

DON'T STOP  
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## A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE.

## 1. DESKTOP SURVEYS AND INDICATIVE COSTS.

The first step in our process is the pre-sales desktop survey.

Upon receiving a list of sites from the customer, our team conducts a thorough analysis to estimate indicative pricing and completion timescales for each site. We also evaluate the broadband options available at each site to determine how many services are needed to ensure a fast connection for all users. Our extensive experience in installing and maintaining Community WiFi networks across the UK allows us to accurately estimate the hardware requirements and installation time for each site. The results of the desktop survey, including CAPEX, OPEX, and estimated speeds per device, are presented in a detailed spreadsheet for the customer's consideration.

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## 2. ONSITE SURVEYS.

Upon completion of the desktop survey, you will have a clear understanding of which sites are viable, which should be prioritised, and which are best to avoid.

Our team of friendly engineers then proceed to visit identified sites. Assisted by your onsite resources for access to key areas of the buildings, they collect the necessary information to design robust and reliable networks. The goal is to ensure strong, stable WiFi coverage in every area of the building.

During these visits, our engineers identify suitable locations for comms cabinets, determine the route needed for ethernet infrastructure, and pinpoint the optimal locations for WiFi access points. They take into account the building's structure and the materials used in its construction, as these factors can significantly impact WiFi signal strength.

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## A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE.

### 3. PROPOSAL AND PROJECT PLAN.

If the survey has resulted in multiple viable options, we present these to you in a clear and understandable manner. For instance, we'll highlight and explain the reasoning behind more expensive solutions, and we may well recommend the lower-cost option for the project.

Remember, every building is unique and can impact the way WiFi signals reach your users' devices from the Access Points we install. Factors such as the building's general layout, including the quantity and proximity of corners to the WiFi Access Points and the size of the building; to the make-up of the materials used in the construction of the building, all play a role in determining the best network solution.

The best value networks are those which are easiest to install into, using the least amount of hardware. Our proposal will reflect this, ensuring you get the most cost-effective and efficient solution for your Community WiFi service.

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A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE.

## 4. PROJECT DEPLOYMENT.

Once the contracts are signed, the project is officially created. Our dedicated project management team takes ownership from here. We work closely with you to ensure that the project is delivered on time.

We have teams of engineers based across the whole country. This wide coverage ensures that we can provide timely and efficient service regardless of your location.

Following a project kick-off meeting, your assigned project manager will work with you to identify available dates to begin on-site work. This collaborative approach ensures that we are working in tandem with your schedule and needs.

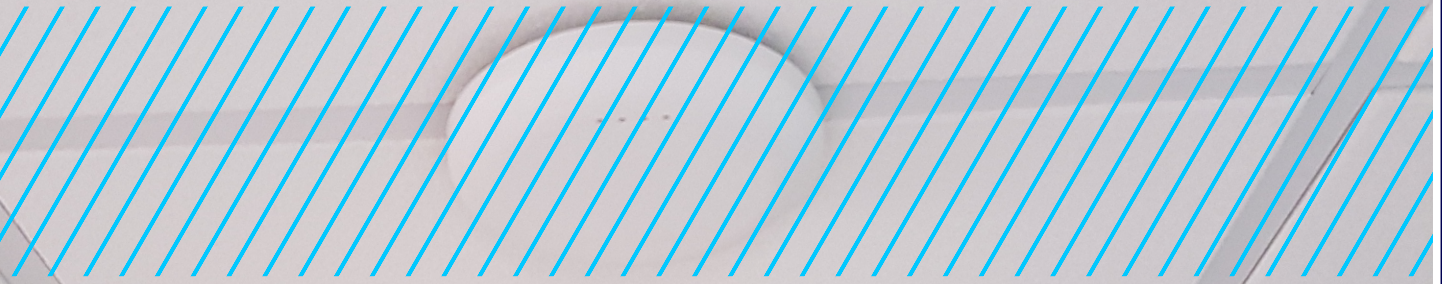
Our team will manage the installation of the network. This includes broadband provision, installation of Access Points, cabling, and other hardware. Our engineers are experienced and trained to carry out these tasks with minimal disruption to your daily operations.

**A FULLY MANAGED  
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**CASE STUDY:  
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## 5. PROJECT HANDOVER AND OPEN DAYS.

Upon completion of the network installation, we conduct comprehensive speed tests to demonstrate the WiFi speeds attainable around the site. This ensures that the network meets the expected performance standards and provides a satisfying online experience for all users.

To help residents understand how to use the service, we provide user guides in the form of leaflets and posters. These guides include step-by-step instructions on how to connect to the WiFi network, tips for troubleshooting common issues, and contact information for technical support.

In collaboration with the housing provider, we offer optional Open Days. During these events, we visit the site to socialise with residents and help them understand how to use and get the best out of the network we have installed. These Open Days provide an excellent opportunity for residents to ask questions and for us to receive direct feedback on the service.

A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE

CASE STUDY: WIFI AS SOCIAL VALUE

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## 6. ONGOING MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.

We maintain the WiFi system remotely, addressing any Access Point failures, usage or software issues. Our network design ensures robust coverage, with multiple Access Points providing floodfill coverage. If an Access Point loses its data connectivity, residents' device will utilise the coverage of the next nearest AP whilst we work to rectify the problem.

We are alerted to any Access Point failures via our cloud-controller and initially undertake measures to resolve the problem remotely by our fully staffed customer support desk



during business hours.

Our IT and Support teams actively monitor the services provided, including WiFi network status, broadband connectivity, leased lines and the scheduling of upgrades or planned changes. In many instances, we or the ISP will be aware of the problem and initiate corrective measures.



CASE STUDY



havebury.com



**Region:** East of England



**Products/Services:** Community WiFi; Social Value; PfH



**Primary Reason for Choice:**

- Enhancing Living Conditions for Residents
- Boosting Operational Efficiencies for Staff
- Social Value

# DIGITAL INCLUSION & SOCIAL VALUE

## A CASE STUDY ON THE COMMUNITY WIFI PROJECT AT TAYFEN HOUSE

The **Havebury Housing Partnership** (HHP) is a leading provider of affordable housing in the East of England, with a strong presence in Suffolk. With a portfolio of over 7,500 properties, HHP's operations extend beyond traditional housing management, encompassing a variety of sheltered accommodation schemes and a local homeless accommodation unit, Tayfen House, based in Bury St Edmunds.

## CASE STUDY

Tayfen House is a remarkable institution that has been providing emergency and long-term accommodation for single homeless people aged between 18 and 65 since September 1998. The facility offers six emergency bed spaces, 19 longer-term ensuite rooms, and 26 ancillary units for homeless people. Tayfen House also provides training and employment opportunities for residents to prepare them for community resettlement and equip them with life skills to break the 'no home/no job' cycle.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Recently, HHP implemented a Contact Centre and Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) across the organisation. This service was supplied via **Social Telecoms** and the **Procurement for Housing** telecommunications framework agreement. A unique aspect of this project was the inclusion of social value initiatives. One such initiative was the installation of a Community WiFi network for the residents of Tayfen House, demonstrating HHP's commitment to improving the quality of life for their residents.



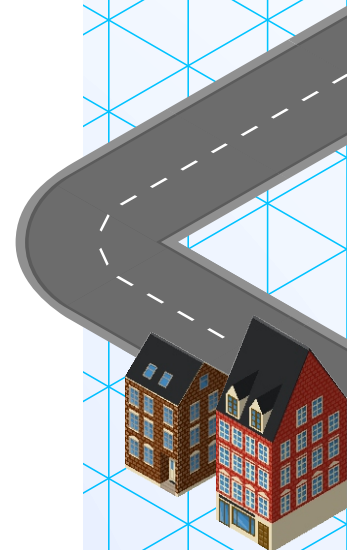
*“Our experience with the Community WiFi service has been overwhelmingly positive. The residents have given lots of thumbs-ups and have praised the installation team for their accommodating nature and understanding of our complexities.*

**REBECCA LEE, THE HAVEBURY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

## CASE STUDY

The decision to install a Community WiFi service at Tayfen House was driven by a deep understanding of the needs of the residents and the numerous benefits that internet access can provide. For the demographic supported by Tayfen House's services, many of whom are in a period of transition and rebuilding their lives, having access to the internet is not just a convenience, but a necessity.

Incorporating social value into procurement contracts is a strategic approach that goes beyond the traditional cost-based considerations. It allows organisations like HHP to leverage their purchasing power to achieve wider social, economic, and environmental objectives. This not only enhances the value of the contract but also contributes to the long-term sustainability and resilience of the communities they serve. By seeking social value in this contract, HHP were able to create a positive impact that extended beyond the immediate scope of the project for their contact centre and wider telecommunications requirements, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.



*"As a Community Interest Company and registered social enterprise, Social Telecoms were in a strong position to meet HHP's requirements for social value. Like HHP, Social Telecoms is a business with primarily social objectives, and its surplus is principally reinvested for that purpose in the community."*

**ROB MOTTRAM, SOCIAL TELECOMS**

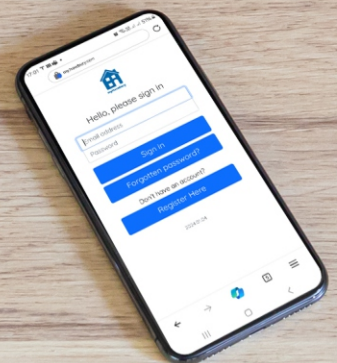
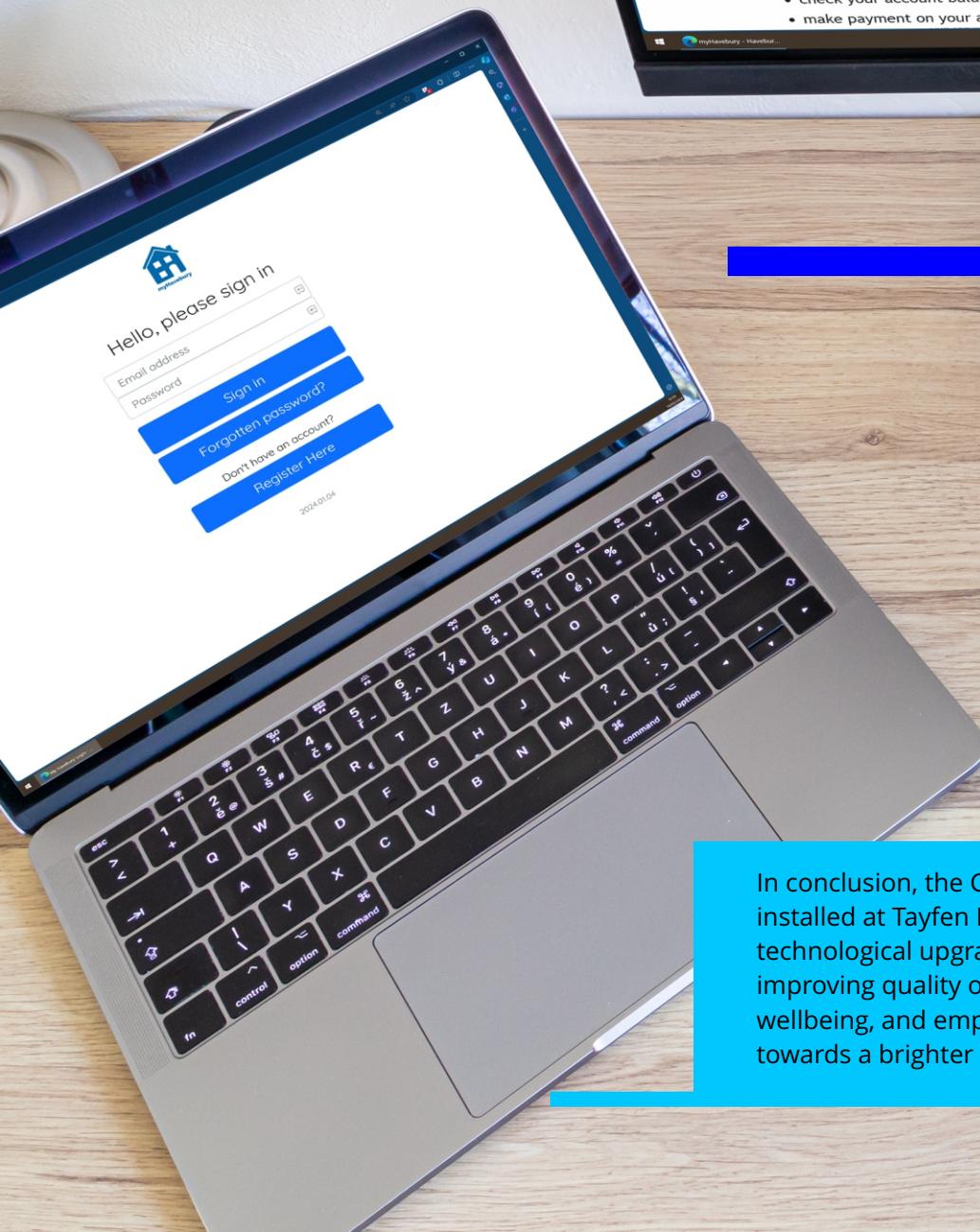
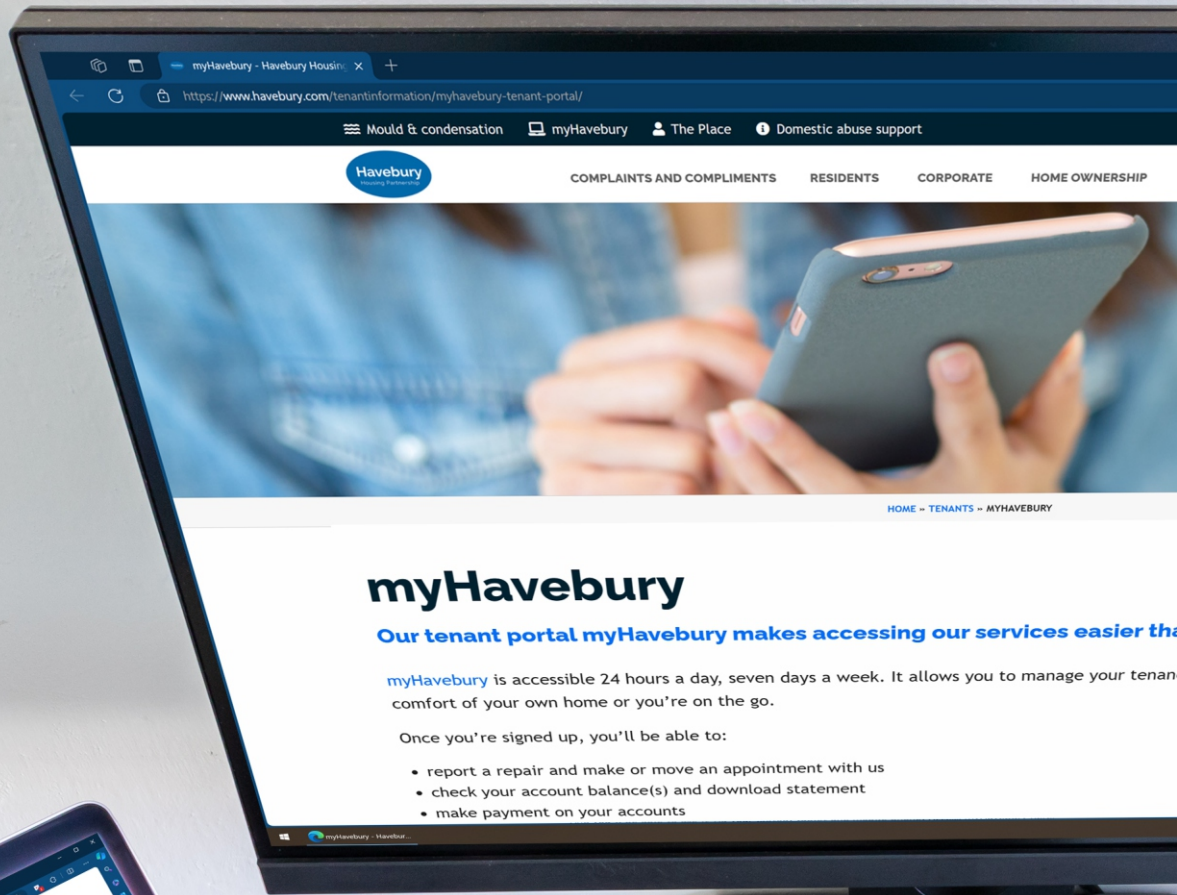


## CASE STUDY

For HHP's residents, being online has significant wellbeing benefits. It provides a vital connection to the outside world, allowing residents to stay in touch with family and friends, which is crucial for emotional support and maintaining relationships. It also opens up a wealth of information and resources for education, job searching, and skills development, empowering residents to improve their circumstances and prospects for the future. Furthermore, it provides access to online entertainment and social media, offering a source of relaxation and a way to engage with a wider community.

From HHP's perspective, the WiFi service is not just about caring for their residents' wellbeing, but also about encouraging the adoption of their **myHavebury** portal.

This online platform is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and allows residents to manage their tenancy at the click of a button. This digital platform streamlines many processes, including reporting a repair and making a payment, making them more efficient and accessible for residents.



In conclusion, the Community WiFi service installed at Tayfen House is more than just a technological upgrade; it's a tool for improving quality of life, enhancing wellbeing, and empowering residents towards a brighter future.

## CASE STUDY

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL TELECOMS

The implementation of the Contact Centre and UCaaS by HHP was not just a technological upgrade, but also a project with significant social value.

Since its inception in 2012, Social Telecoms CIC has been driven by a social mission to help landlords bridge the digital divide. Over the years, they have become specialists in designing, installing, and maintaining WiFi networks in communities across the UK. Their reach is extensive, with over 1100 networks designed, installed, and supported across the country. These networks span from Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides to the Jersey, covering everywhere in between. These sites are owned by a diverse group of over 100 housing providers and local authorities.

## COMMUNITY WIFI AT TAYFEN HOUSE

Prior to the installation of the Community WiFi service, Tayfen House had a different WiFi network in place. However, this network did not meet the needs of the residents. They regularly expressed frustration with the slow speeds and poor coverage it provided. Recognising the importance of reliable internet access for their residents, HHP felt the need to make improvements.

In line with this, HHP chose to have Social Telecoms' Community WiFi service installed at Tayfen House. This decision not only provided a valuable service to the residents of Tayfen House but also demonstrated HHP's commitment to improving the quality of life for their residents and contributing to the wider community.

The network went live on December 6th, 2023. Since then, there have been 3.02TB of data transferred, across 80 devices. 87% of the usage is by the residents (54 devices), 12% by guests (20 devices) and 1% by the staff (7 devices).

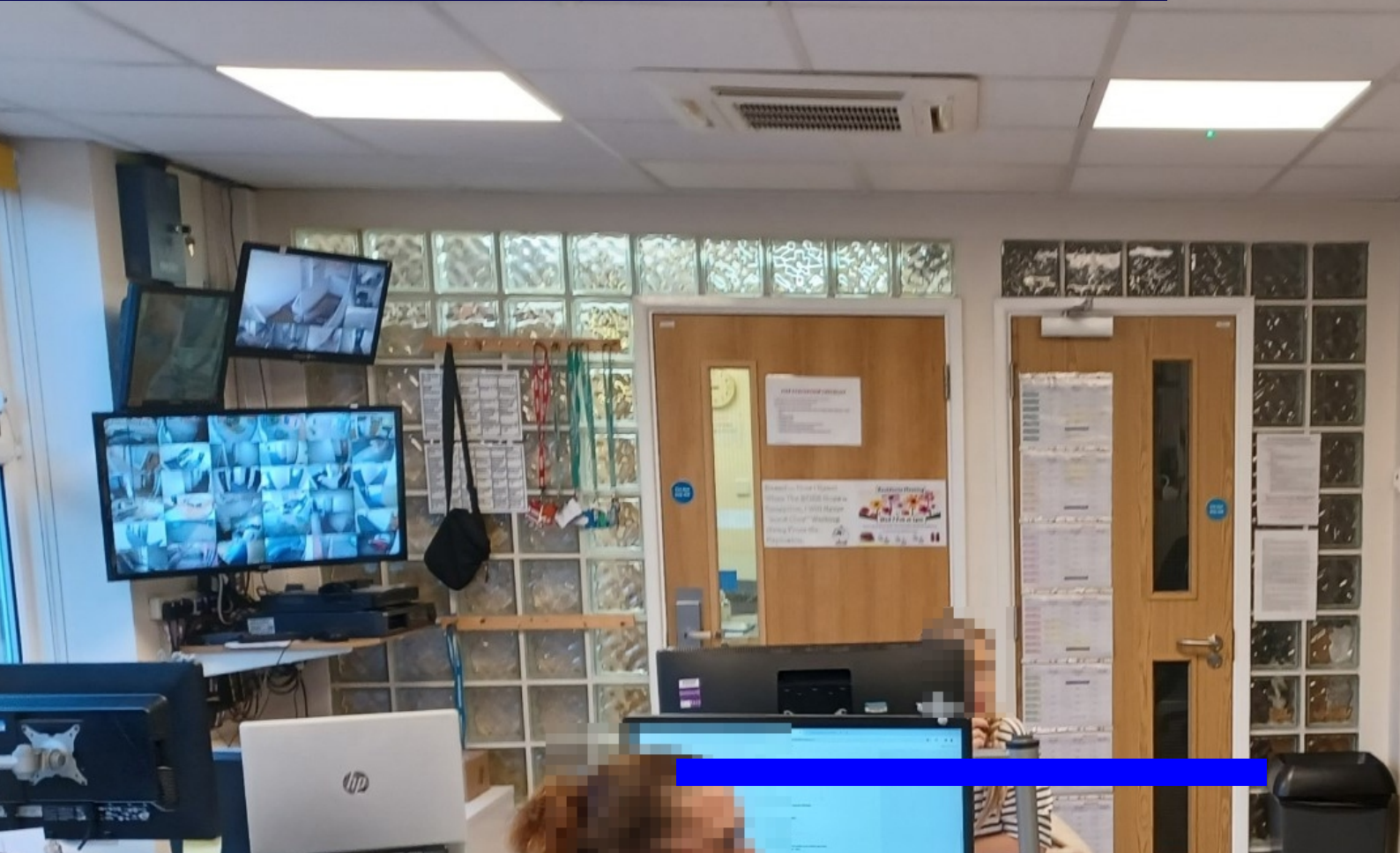
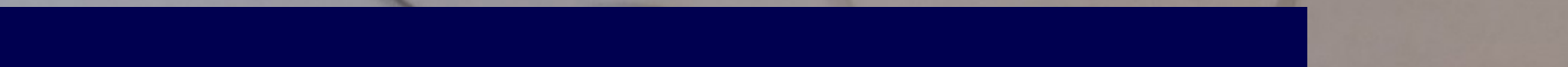
Our engineers, always neat, tidy, and professional, worked across the whole site. They concealed network cables into trunking, above suspended ceilings, and used riser cupboards. To maximise signal strength, many WiFi access points were installed inside properties as well as in communal areas. This meticulous work resulted in a total of 21 ceiling-mounted WiFi access points installed across the building.

## CASE STUDY

A friendly rapport was created between our engineers and the residents and staff, which contributed to the smooth implementation of the project. The network has been set up with three WLANs - One for residents, one for guests, and one for staff.

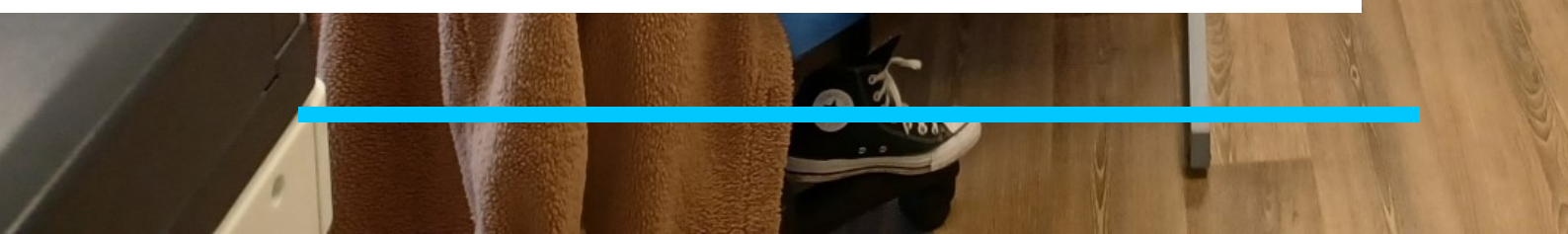
The residents' network uses Private Pre-Shared Key (PPSK) security, offering several benefits such as enhanced security, user/group segmentation, and ease of management. The guest network has additional security measures to prevent devices using it from accessing other devices at the site.

For broadband capacity, the site shares multiple Single Order Generic Ethernet Access (SOGEA) services. This makes it a more streamlined and cost-effective solution and future-proofs the site for the forthcoming Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) switch off happening in 2025. To ensure a pleasant Full-HD video-streaming experience for all users, all devices have their download and upload bandwidth limited. Roughly 30% of usage on the residents' WiFi network is attributed to online video streaming.



*"The residents have given lots of thumbs-ups and have praised the installation team for their accommodating nature and understanding of our complexities. The transition of passcodes during occupancy changes continues to go very smoothly, and we were impressed by the speed and response of the team. Their service has truly been commendable."*

**REBECCA LEE, THE HAVEBURY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**



CASE STUDY



*“Working on the project at Tayfen House was an incredibly rewarding experience. The staff and residents made the job enjoyable and meaningful. I took the time to explain to the residents the benefits they could get from the internet, and their enthusiasm was infectious.”*

**ANDREW CHALK, DEPLOYMENT MANAGER, SOCIAL TELECOMS**

## IMPACTS AND BENEFITS

The impact of the Community WiFi service at Tayfen House has been transformative. The residents now have access to a reliable and high-speed internet connection, which has opened up a world of opportunities for them. They can now search for jobs, access online learning resources, stay connected with their loved ones, and much more. This has significantly improved their quality of life and has empowered them to take steps towards a brighter future.

The Community WiFi service has also enhanced the operations at Tayfen House. The staff can now conduct support meetings that require internet access in all support rooms. They can also hold team meetings and meetings with other agencies in private rooms, which was a challenge before. This has streamlined their workflow and made their operations more efficient.

## FUTURE PLANS

Looking ahead, HHP and Social Telecoms plan to continue their partnership and explore other ways to use technology to improve the lives of the residents. They are committed to their mission of creating a more inclusive and connected community.

## CASE STUDY

**Blackwood**  
homes | care | support



**Region:** Scotland



**Products/Services:** Community WiFi; PfH



**Primary Reason for Choice:**

- Enhancing Care Conditions for Residents
- Supporting Innovative Clevercogs™ App

# ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY WITH WIFI

## A CASE STUDY ON THE COMMUNITY WIFI PROJECT FOR BLACKWOOD HOMES & CARE

The Community WiFi project by Social Telecoms for Blackwood Homes and Care aimed to bridge the digital divide for vulnerable populations in Scotland. Starting as a pilot at Raeden Court in Aberdeen, it expanded to 95 sites, including all Blackwood's care homes. The project, which later included door entry systems, was crucial for the successful implementation of Blackwood's CleverCogs system, a digital care system enhancing residents' independence and quality of life.

The project's success highlights the transformative power of digital inclusion and serves as a model for future initiatives providing community-wide WiFi in social housing.

## CASE STUDY

### INTRODUCTION TO BLACKWOOD HOMES AND CARE.

Blackwood Homes and Care is a pioneering organization based in Scotland, dedicated to providing accessible, modern, and bespoke housing and care services. Their mission is to help people with disabilities live as independently as possible, and they serve a wide range of clients, including social housing tenants, care-at-home customers, residential care home residents, and night support service customers.

Blackwood operates across 29 out of 32 local authorities in Scotland, reaching over 1,500 social housing tenants, more than 400 care-at-home customers, 60 residential care home residents, and 17-night support service customers. Their commitment to improving the lives of their clients is evident in their innovative approach to care.



## IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM.

Blackwood serves a diverse range of clients. Many of these clients, due to disabilities, age, or complex care needs, face significant barriers to digital inclusion. Internet access, which can greatly improve the quality of life and cognitive performance, is unfortunately not a given for many of Blackwood's clients. In fact, a survey carried out with 174 of their properties found that only 30% already had a home broadband service, a stark contrast to the 84% figure for the general population of Scotland.

Blackwood began to develop its CleverCogs system. This touchscreen home hub, installed in customers' properties, is designed to keep people independent, in control, and in their homes. Its features span care, safety, housing, home automation, information, digital inclusion, and health and wellbeing. A carefully designed system with IT training could increase the levels of digitally included residents in their communities.

## CASE STUDY

However, for CleverCogs to be effective, it requires a WiFi service to be designed, installed, and maintained to a high level. All internal and external areas within the respective location are to have no black spots and a network strength required to support video and voice calls at all times. The project would comprise of over 1,500 properties across 118 sites inside a 2-year timeframe, although COVID-19 made an impact on the duration of the project.

### **PROPOSED SOLUTION:**

The solution to the problem of digital exclusion faced by residents was a Community WiFi project, implemented in partnership with Social Telecoms. The project began as a pilot at Raeden Court, a widespread care home and general needs community in Aberdeen. Social Telecoms, which had been successfully deploying WiFi networks into social housing communities across the country, had recently expanded into Scotland and set up a new Glasgow-based team of engineers.

The housing complex included homes developed for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, as well as flats for non-disabled people, all within an integrated community setting.

The Community WiFi service, in conjunction with CleverCogs, would ensure constant connectivity between residents and their relatives and carers, fostering a sense of community and enabling customers to live as independently as possible.

Following the successful delivery of the pilot and the monitored uptake of the CleverCogs system, Social Telecoms was awarded the contract to deliver Community WiFi to the rest of the specified locations. The project ultimately encompassed 95 sites across Scotland, including all three of Blackwood's care homes and the rest of their general needs community. At the time, Blackwood had also allocated network projects to another WiFi provider, but these sites were later taken over and incorporated into Social Telecoms' contract.

Social Telecoms exceeded procurement requirements and compliance by their status as the no.1 ranked supplier to Procurement for Housing's (PfH) telecommunications framework. This led to a direct award to Social Telecoms using lot 1 – Network Communications. PfH is a buying consortium for housing associations that ensures its members not only get the benefits of combined purchasing power but also that suppliers pass stringent quality and service standards. By overseeing the whole process, PfH also ensures that any agreements are fully compliant with EU procurement standards.

## CASE STUDY

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.

The Community WiFi project rapidly expanded to 95 sites, including Blackwood's care homes Raeden Court in Aberdeen, Belses Gardens in Glasgow, and Broom Court in Stirling. The goal was to ensure all areas of every property had strong WiFi coverage and suitable broadband capacity to allow all users to stream video. In the care homes, residents' properties were equipped with many innovative sensors, alarms, and devices to improve the care service provided by Blackwood. Blackwood set a minimum requirement of 7Mb/s upload per device.

Based out of Social Telecoms' Glasgow office, seven teams of two engineers were deployed to work on the projects around Scotland, with Blackwood's project playing a major part of this. Blackwood defined the order of priority of the sites based on the need and demand for online access amongst their housing stock. Onsite surveys of each site were carried out by the Head of Deployment in Scotland from Social Telecoms. During these visits, they'd identify suitable locations for comms cabinets, determined the route needed for ethernet infrastructure, and pinpointed the optimal locations for WiFi access points, taking into account the building's structure and the materials used in its construction.

Pricing for the sites had been mutually agreed at the start of the project and was based on a set price per WiFi Access Point installed. To ensure coverage was widespread throughout every property, an Access Point was installed into every apartment. The project also included working on new-build sites. For these, collaboration with the building contractors was necessary to have the ethernet infrastructure and power outlets installed to our specification. These new-build projects also included IP Touchscreen door entry intercoms to every property, which Social Telecoms supplied and maintained.

Following completion of the installation, tests were conducted to contribute to the handover documents presented to Blackwood. These tests included a heatmap of the entire site and the download and upload speeds attained in each property. A WiFi heatmap is a visual representation of wireless signal distribution, typically showing signal strength using a colour-coded approach, with the colour green representing areas with a strong signal and the color red representing areas with a weak signal. A complete inventory of the equipment installed and its respective location was also provided.

## CASE STUDY

### RESULTS AND IMPACT.

The Community WiFi project had a significant impact not only in terms of digital inclusion but also in the actual usage of the network. On average, each Blackwood property had 9 client devices in use, averaging around 157 devices per site. This demonstrates the high level of engagement and utilisation of the WiFi service provided.

In the care homes, the usage was even higher, with an average of 18 client devices per property, totalling 832 devices per site. Raeden Court, in particular, had the highest usage with 24 devices per property and a total of 1500 devices. This high usage underscores the critical role of the WiFi service in supporting the care services provided by Blackwood.

Across all sites, on-demand streaming video accounted for roughly 50% of data used. This indicates that the residents were actively using the service for entertainment purposes, further enhancing their quality of life.

These figures highlight the success of the Community WiFi project in achieving its goal of digital inclusion. By providing a reliable WiFi service, the project has enabled Blackwood's clients to stay connected, access a range of online services, and enjoy digital entertainment options.



## LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Anne Jenkins, Head of Digital Services at Blackwood:**

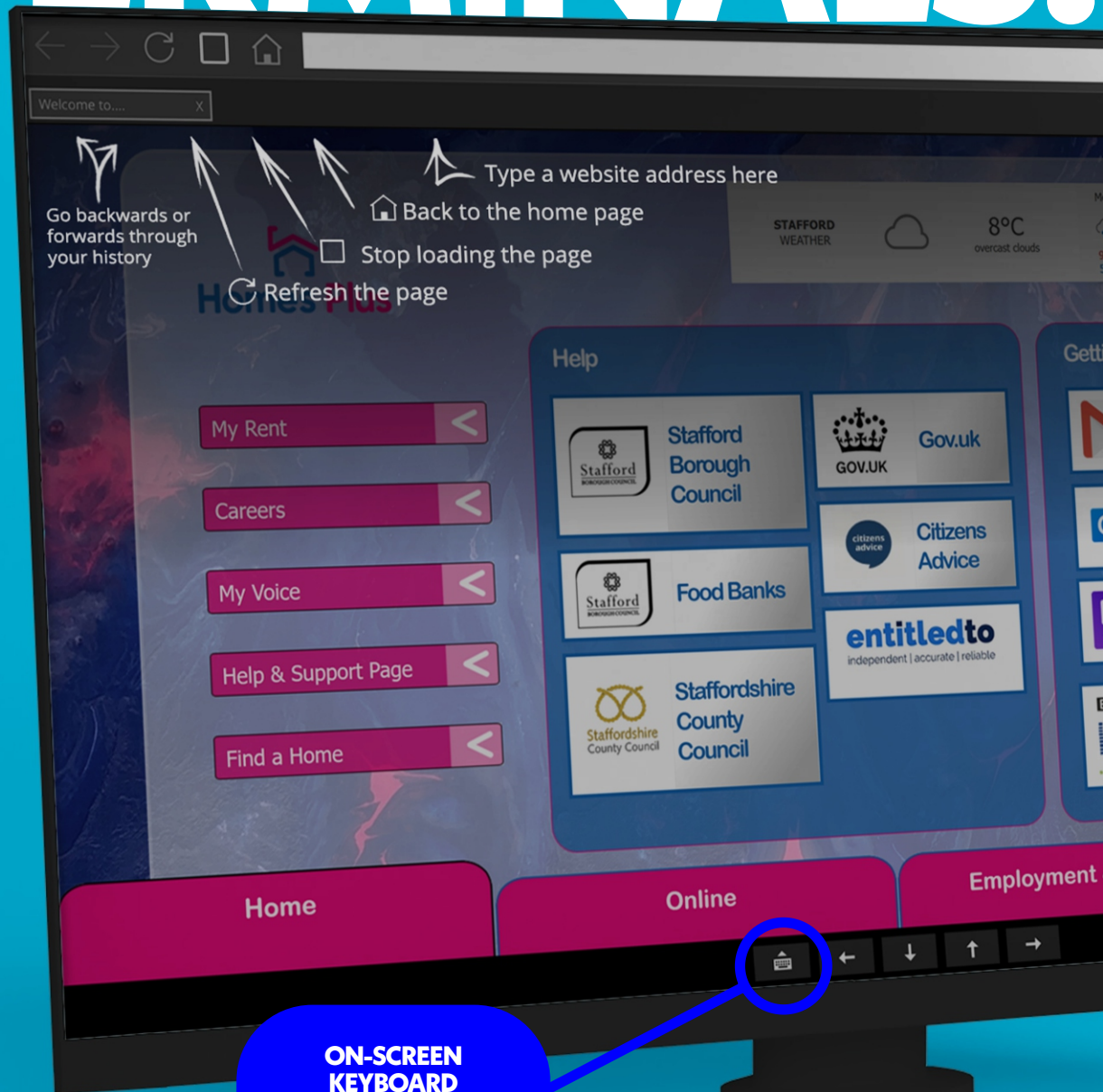
*"Our journey began with understanding the potential of technology and how it could transform lives. We saw how a robot, connected to the internet, could respond to an emergency in minutes, drastically reducing response times. On the other end of the spectrum, we saw how something as simple as being able to open the blinds in the morning without waiting for care staff could significantly enhance a resident's sense of independence. These scenarios might not seem like they actively use the internet, but they do. They operate in the background, enabled by the foundation of internet access provided by the Community WiFi project. This project has truly been life-changing for our residents."*

## WATCH THE VIDEO.



KIOSK TERMINAL MANAGED SERVICE

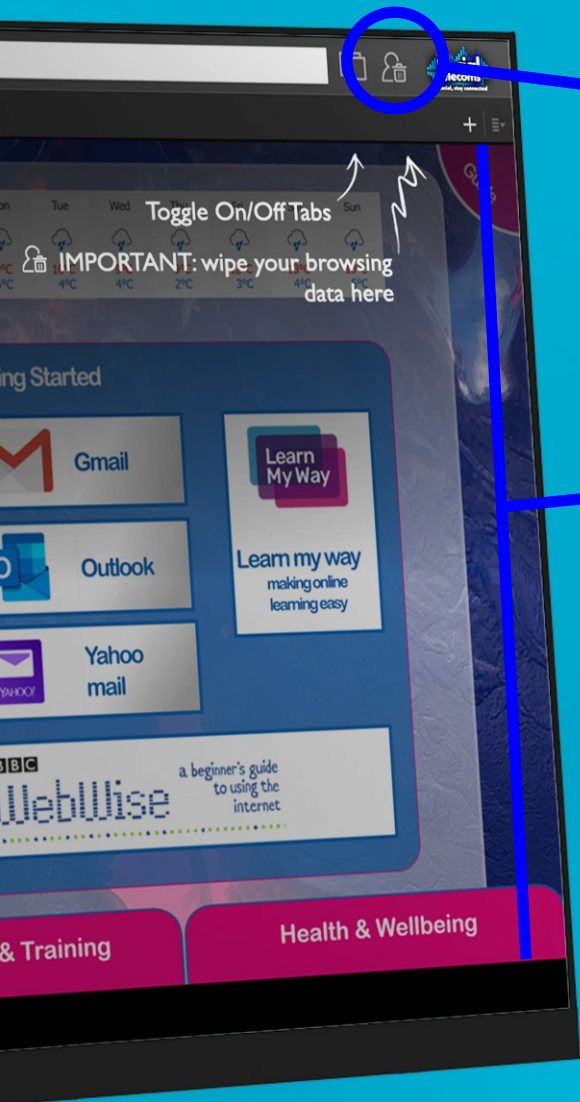
# KIOSK TERMINALS.



**ON-SCREEN  
KEYBOARD**

Full QWERTY on screen keyboard which is configurable to different languages.

Social Telecoms' fully managed KiOSK solution is a simple to use computer for your residents to use in communal areas. They do not burden your internal IT departments with support responsibilities, they maximise internet availability for tenants and costs a fraction of equally comprehensive in-house solutions.



**PERSONAL SECURITY**

Users are completely in control of their information. History, passwords and form data is permanently wiped with the tap or click of a button; or automatically after a specified idle

**BESPOKE HOME-SCREEN**

Designed to provide a simple, clear and useful portal to crucial online information and services. Includes bi-lingual support and on-screen guides.



**PRIVACY BOOTHS**

Many designs and sizes available. Coloured to match your brand.

## DIGITAL SIGNAGE MANAGED SERVICE

# DIGITAL SIGNAGE.

In the era of digital transformation, social housing providers are looking for more efficient and effective ways to communicate with their residents. One such solution is **Digital Signage**. This technology offers several advantages over traditional pushpin noticeboards:

- **Easy to update from anywhere**
- **Large, Bright 4K Screens**
- **Emergency Announcements**
- **Latest News and Weather**

By embracing digital signage, social housing providers can ensure effective communication, improve resident experience, and foster a stronger sense of community. It's a forward-thinking solution that aligns with the digital age.





**VISIBILITY & ENGAGEMENT**

Large, bright 4K screens with attractive presentations can capture attention more effectively than traditional noticeboards, leading to better engagement with the displayed content.

**DYNAMIC CONTENT UPDATES**

Digital signage allows for real-time updates from any location. Multiple staff members can make changes digitally, ensuring that residents have access to the most current and relevant information. Plus, minimal training is required.

## DOOR ENTRY SECURITY SYSTEMS



### DUAL CAMERAS

Complete with AI-powered offline facial recognition for door access. Face liveness detection fends off facial authentication spoofing attacks.

### DISPLAY

7" Touchscreen LCD display.

### CARD READER

Secure Access for Card Holders.

# DOOR ENTRY.

In an ever-evolving digital world, it's important to stay ahead of the curve. This is especially true when it comes to the security of your residents' homes. Upgrading to a modern door entry system can offer numerous benefits:

## **ENHANCED SECURITY**

Our modern door entry systems use advanced technologies like facial recognition to provide secure access control. This means only authorised individuals can gain entry, enhancing the safety of your sites.

## **IMPROVED CONVENIENCE**

With features like video communication, residents can see and speak with visitors before granting access. This not only adds an extra layer of security but also enhances convenience.

## **INTEGRATION**

Modern door entry systems support open standards for integration with other IP systems and devices. This means they can be effectively integrated with your existing security systems, providing a comprehensive security solution.

CLOUD-BASED CCTV SYSTEMS



**IP65 WEATHERPROOF**  
Offers excellent waterproof and dustproof performance for outdoor scenarios.

**360° VISUAL COVERAGE**  
With Smart Motion Tracking.

**FULL-COLOUR NIGHT VISION**  
Reveals full colour images with built-in spotlights even at night.

# CCTV.

CCTV systems are an essential component in safeguarding social housing, offering residents peace of mind and acting as a significant deterrent against unlawful activities.

These advanced systems boast high-resolution imaging, ensuring that every detail is captured with clarity. The integration of cloud-based technology facilitates seamless access and management of footage, empowering you with control over your security from anywhere in the world.

Additionally, the strategic installation alongside community WiFi infrastructure not only streamlines the process but also enhances the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the security network. This dual installation approach not only saves time but also reduces costs, making it an intelligent choice for bolstering the safety of social housing environments.

# Social telecoms

be social, stay connected



Community  
**WiFi**  
best value  
connectivity