

South  
Yorkshire  
Housing  
Association



Node4 helped South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA) **fully embrace a modern, cloud-first strategy** and **continue services for customers** throughout the pandemic.

Customer

Industry

Size

SYHA

Housing

600 employees | 6,000 homes | 10,000 residents

**The solution** Managed service wrap, including hybrid cloud, colocation, SD-WAN, backup and disaster recovery solutions.



100% successful  
backup rate



0% downtime during  
migration



450 workers easily  
transitioned to  
homeworking



1st successful DR test  
as a business

“It’s vital that our organisation stays online and available at all times, and Node4 meets our standards.”

### The Customer

South Yorkshire Housing Association is a not-for-profit organisation formed in 1972 to help address the homelessness crisis in the UK by providing homes and support for the people who need them. At present, it is the largest housing association based in the Sheffield City region, with over 600 people working to provide nearly 6,000 homes to over 10,000 individuals. The organisation currently manages homes across South, West and North Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

The housing association also provides wellbeing services for its community, including help and assistance for mental health, learning disabilities and social prescribing, as well as support for over 50s and those who are homeless. 60% of its work revolves around providing care and support, and helping vulnerable people to remain independent.

### The Challenge

To coincide with its growth, South Yorkshire Housing Association chose to relocate its head office, creating an opportunity to relocate IT workloads with a modern, cloud-first approach. Having recently deployed a replacement core housing software package within the business there was a need to embrace more cloud-based services.

The organisation offers a large range of services, from supportive housing, to drug rehabilitation, to elderly care schemes – but all require around-the-clock access and support. It needed to modernise its infrastructure by swapping traditional on-premises systems, all while ensuring the organisation’s critical services continue to provide help to those who need it, when they need it, and without wasting valuable funds.

### The Solution

South Yorkshire Housing Association decided to accelerate its digital transformation process by replacing multiple legacy providers with a range of solutions from one managed solutions provider – Node4. By utilising Node4’s hybrid cloud, colocation, SD-WAN, backup, and disaster recovery (DR) solutions, they have fully embraced a modern and cloud-first strategy.

“As our organisation grows, we needed a provider that could grow with us and ensure our digital transformation continued

on an upward trajectory,” commented Claire Sockett, Head of IT at South Yorkshire Housing Association. “Node4 stood out as an obvious choice for the upgrade due to its flexibility and breadth of capability to drive our digitalisation forward and benefit our users, as well as the reassurance of a future-proof IT infrastructure that we can scale as we go.”

#### The Results

After making the decision a year ago, South Yorkshire Housing Association has now fully implemented Node4’s hybrid cloud solution, using colocation and cloud services, and has seen positive results. After a two-hour migration process, they were able to migrate all of its data nearly 60 miles from Sheffield to Node4’s Wakefield data centre with zero downtime. Since the migration, there has been a dramatic 100% decrease in network outages, going from a notable three P1 network outages (rated “critical importance – a major incident resulting in total loss of service”) in the previous year, to zero P1 outages with Node4. Additionally, the organisation has had a 90% reduction in P2 outages (rated “high importance – major incident resulting in sever service degradation or loss of service to significant percentage of users’, dropping from a huge 11 P2s to just one in the past year.

“Since implementing Node4, we have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of network outages we’ve experienced,” said Adam Collin, Interim Head of IT at South Yorkshire Housing Association. “The reliance on the previous physical office in Sheffield meant the network was unreliable – the power wasn’t great and we had a lot of cuts and outages. It’s vital that our organisation stays online and available at all times, and Node4 meets our standards.”

Another success has been Node4’s backup rate. With Node4, South Yorkshire Housing Association has had a 100% successful backup rate, and found that it could easily add or take out systems. Previously, the organisation had a contract in place that didn’t cover 100% of its systems, meaning it had at best only one to seven days of backups. Additionally, it was able to perform its first successful DR test as a business. Before Node4, the test was treated more as a box-ticking exercise, and was sub-par to the organisation’s standards. Now, Node4’s DR solution has meant that South Yorkshire Housing Association has successfully tested its DR ability and, in the case of a disaster, has the confidence that it will be able to recover quickly, easily and thoroughly.

Adam Collin commented: “Node4 went above and beyond when it came to the DR testing. They gave us a cloud solutions specialist, provided a comprehensive report and also assigned another account specialist to look into how we could improve and ensure it met business standards. For the first time in business history we are in a position of full confidence.”

Providing a bespoke solution meant that Node4 was able to tailor its services to meet South Yorkshire Housing Association’s exact needs.

“We wanted a partnership relationship, not a transactional one,” said Adam Collin. “The design concept was about right sizing it to our business with a partner that understood what we needed. Node4 was flexible enough to put a truant point in at the end of our first year, meaning that we are able to assess the size of things a year in and see if we need to make any changes. They took the time to listen to what we needed and tailor our specific plan in the proposal. There are no nasty surprises with Node4.”

#### The Impact of Covid

Node4 has also helped keep South Yorkshire Housing Association online and available throughout Covid-19. Node4’s Fortinet Virtual Private Network (VPN) meant that even before Covid, the company was able to scale it to the amount of people it expected to be using it. Node4 worked to address any scalability and licensing issues before Covid hit, meaning that once working from home became mandatory by the Government, the housing association was able to transition around 450 workers with ease.

“We had to keep our key services running throughout Covid so the stability and the switch from no one working from home, to everyone working from home, without any customer impact, was hugely important for us,” said Adam Collin. “Node4 enabled us to make the switch without anyone even noticing. Thanks to Node4, we were able to offer our range of critical services to our customers throughout the pandemic.”