



CASE STUDY

Croydon College

A virtualised network that is better suited to today's technology demands, easier to manage and more flexible – but that costs 50% less to operate. All backed by a partner the college trusts to deliver outstanding support.

At a glance

The issue

With the PSTN switch-off approaching, Croydon College needed to move to a future-proof solution for its voice communication while continuing to use the Mitel technology staff were familiar with. It also wanted to consolidate with a single partner across both sites.

The project

Long-term voice partner Maintel helped the college transition seamlessly to a SIP-based network, covering both campuses, ensuring its readiness and resilience ahead of the PSTN switch-off.

The outcome

A virtualised network that is better suited to today's technology demands, easier to manage and more flexible – but that costs 50% less to operate. All backed by a partner the college trusts to deliver outstanding support.

Their Background

With roots stretching back to 1868, Croydon College is one of South London's largest further educational institutions and home to Croydon University Centre. Its main campus is in the centre of Croydon. In 2019, the College merged with Coulsdon Sixth Form College, in the south of the borough. Together, the two sites offer a comprehensive offer from age 14 to degree level, focused on meeting the education and skills needs of Croydon and the surrounding area. As well as 5,500 students, there are around 500 staff.

For over 15 years, Croydon College has worked with Maintel as its main voice communications partner. Maintel supplies and supports a Mitel platform and around 600 handsets. By good fortune, it transpired that Coulsdon Sixth Form College used similar technology (with around 100 handsets) and also had a supplier relationship with Maintel. That facilitated the merger from a communications perspective, with the networks being swiftly linked. A SIP solution was put in place soon after the merger to increase capacity and explore the technology, but the reliable core networks remained the same.

However, the forthcoming PSTN switch-off necessitated a rethink. The college IT team recognised a new solution would be needed before long and decided to ensure everything was in place well ahead of the switch-off date itself. With SIP having proven stable and robust, it was ready to move all its voice traffic onto this future-proof unified communications service.

The Challenge

While the priority was a seamless transition that ensured no disruption to staff and students, Croydon College recognised there was an opportunity to rationalise its communications infrastructure.

Over the years, numerous lines had been put in place, often on a short-term basis to connect temporary premises or increase capacity at certain times of the year, such as enrolment. Some old buildings were still connected. While the costs of retaining these lines were minimal, it resulted in unnecessary complexity.

In addition, some voice services were supported by other partners, meaning additional supplier management duties for the IT team. There were also small but significant differences between the generations of Mitel technology in use at the two sites.

Why Maintel?

After exploring the market, the team was confident that Maintel was still best placed to support its needs.

That trust has been earned through consistent service and support for the Mitel technology, and the fact that the Maintel team has proved so easy to work with. At the Coulsdon site, the decision was made to move all support to Maintel too, simplifying billing and change requests with a single supplier.

The Solution

The project upgrading the Mitel 3300 controllers at both sites to the MiVoice Business solution, as part of a virtualised network running on SIP. This offered continuity from the user perspective: they could carry on using the same handsets and notice no difference. However, behind the scenes, there was substantial change.

Maintel worked closely with the college to complete a full inventory of all the existing lines around the sites, confirming which connections were still needed (for example, for lift controls) and which could be safely removed. With this established, the carefully planned migration could take place, removing the legacy hardware. It was as smooth as expected and the user experience was unaffected.

What are the benefits?

The rationalisation of the infrastructure delivered some cost savings, but these paled into comparison with the bigger efficiency gain, from switching to a fixed monthly cost rather than dealing with multiple usage-based bills.

This has resulted in a cost reduction in excess of 50% each month – a significant benefit for any organisation, but invaluable in the pressured education sector. The savings are exactly as promised; Paul Marsden, the college's Director of IT and Estates, recalled his reaction when he first saw the Maintel proposal. "We were truly impressed by the remarkable cost-saving impact of the solution!"

But the solution isn't just more cost-effective. It also provides a dependable platform for the future and offers greater flexibility than the legacy network. "We can dynamically adjust our usage and add more end points to manage key events, like enrolment and clearing," Paul explains.

The future

With the virtual SIP network running smoothly, Croydon College is considering its next changes. Already, it's upgrading its connection to the JANET network for education providers from 1GB to 10GB, to support unified communications which staff are increasingly comfortable with. It is also looking at reducing reliance on handsets and instead using the SIP network to support softphones and mobiles – continuing the direction of travel towards a simpler, lower cost operation.



Having a single supplier is one of the biggest benefits for us. Now we only have to deal with Maintel, that takes a lot of hassle away from my team. The Maintel team are very quick, very easy to deal with and they've delivered a solution that is much more efficient for us. Across both IT and Estates, we have more than 120 supplier contracts. There are only a handful that we've retained over the long term. Maintel is one of them.

Paul Marsden, Director of IT and Estates, Croydon College Group



Solid Solutions for a Dynamic World

Maintel is a communications managed services provider. We empower our clients across the public and private sector to deliver mission critical services and achieve their workplace, service and customer experience goals.

We consult on the design, deploy and manage network infrastructures, platforms and software, including our own, that keep ongoing operations running smoothly and dependably, protecting business as usual, at the same time being flexible enough to adapt.

When customer, employee, the general public and regulatory expectations are ever-changing, choose Maintel. We provide progressive, solid solutions that help you succeed in a demanding, dynamic world.

Our Services

We provide solutions that are not only robust but also adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing nature of the world around us.

Security & Connectivity

Securely connecting your people, partners and guests to your cloud platforms, applications and data.

[Click here to find out more ►](#)

Unified Comms & Collaborations

Making your people more effective, collaborative and efficient.

[Click here to find out more ►](#)

Customer Experience

Helping you acquire, delight and retain your customers.

[Click here to find out more ►](#)



Contact us

0344 871 1122
info@maintel.co.uk

maintel.co.uk