Maintel



CASE STUDY

Sanctuary

The SD-WAN network and enhanced Wi-Fi that Maintel implemented across Sanctuary's 700+ sites has ensured consistent performance, transformed manageability and "made all the difference in the world" to colleagues and residents.

Solid solutions for a Dynamic World

Sanctuary is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of affordable housing and care in the country, managing 125,000 homes including social and affordable housing; 110 care homes; and more than 750 supported housing services.



At a **glance**

The issue

Having grown through iteration and acquisition, Sanctuary's MPLS-based network was no longer ideally suited to day-to-day operations and the way the group wanted its teams to work. Further, it meant that Sanctuary could not offer a consistent digital customer experience to residents in all its locations.

The project

Maintel was appointed to deliver a "Next Generation Network" (NGN) for Sanctuary, moving to an SD-WAN model based on Cisco technology and introducing new, higher performance Wi-Fi in all its sites. Following the carefully phased implementation, Maintel is now providing 24x7 support as a trusted extension to the Sanctuary ICT team and overseeing updates network-wide.

The outcome

The new SD-WAN network and enhanced wireless provision deliver the reliability, capacity and security that Sanctuary needed. They have enabled it to change the way IT services are delivered, giving colleagues greater flexibility, reducing support calls and enabling the business to scale and add sites with minimal complexity. The biggest difference has been felt by end users – such as colleagues and residents in the group's care homes, who are now able to make and receive video calls, stream films and enjoy online gaming, even on the most remote sites.

The Maintel advantage

Having provided Sanctuary with unified communications services for several years, Maintel already had a sound understanding of the group's operations. Plus, Maintel holds the highest levels of accreditation with Cisco, including Diamond Partner status and Master level as a Cloud and Managed Service Provider.

Their **Background**

Sanctuary's network, built up over many years, was struggling to keep pace with its business needs. The MPLS infrastructure had grown through acquisition and been updated and iterated at different times.

Sanctuary was in the process of moving away from its Citrix-based IT to a cloud environment where it could provide consistent capacity and quality. This highlighted the need for a similar transformation of its network, to enable services such as effective video calling across every site, rather than just the larger, better-equipped ones. It was also determined to improve connectivity for tenants and residents, giving them the high-speed Wi-Fi access they increasingly expected.

Recognising the scale of the task to transform the network provision across more than 700 sites, it sought a partner with the resource and experience to support a successful implementation and offer an ongoing managed service.

> "SD-WAN was the preferred approach internally, and there was confidence from the start that Maintel could deliver."
>
> **Mark Cooper,** Head of Technology Infrastructure, Sanctuary

The **Challenge**

The move from Citrix had resulted in surging demand on the group network, with particular spikes around new releases being downloaded onto every laptop. This had sparked the decision to enhance the network too.

The initial business case had focused on improving the core network, to give greater capacity, security and flexibility for the group's core operations. But it quickly became apparent that improving the quality of coverage for residents was equally vital: Wi-Fi demand was growing at speed, but the experience in Sanctuary locations varied.

A significant process of site surveys and equipment audits was carried out to underpin the transformation, meaning the schedule had to expand to accommodate these foundational steps while still providing controlled delivery at pace. Maintel was asked to assist, undertaking more than 250 site surveys as part of a major review of wireless provision across the estate.

There was a further challenge around this: the need for security and effective separation of colleague communication from residents and vice versa, as well as protection for sensitive data. This meant that access controls were essential, with Sanctuary wanting to adopt Zero Trust principles.

Why Sanctuary chose Maintel?

Maintel was chosen thanks to its deep understanding of Sanctuary's business – built up over several years as the preferred UC provider – and its strong relationship with Cisco, whose technology Sanctuary wanted to adopt. Mark Cooper, Sanctuary's Head of Technology Infrastructure, was keen to standardise the switching and routing equipment across sites, which would simplify management and scalability, making it easier to add new sites using the same technology.

However, he also wanted to ensure Sanctuary could stay ahead of the equipment lifecycle, so that they would avoid the cost burden of mass replacement in a single year. Practically, this meant a standardised design built around the agreed Cisco product families, with different generations planned into the lifecycle to avoid large-scale replacement peaks in future. Maintel's Cisco partnership would help with this.

> "I see Maintel as a trusted partner helping us look after our estate, keeping on top of updates and managing the lifecycle."
>
> **Mark Cooper,** Head of Technology Infrastructure, Sanctuary

The Solution

The project, including all site surveys, took around 18 months to deliver. In that time, Maintel teams upgraded the core switches and installed more than 3,500 wireless access points – more than double the previous number – as well as advising on the implementation of security policies and procedures.

This long-term work offered ample time to build extremely strong relationships between Maintel and Sanctuary, something that Mark really values. "The entire team has come together, with trust and honesty. Maintel hasn't just focused on delivering a good technical solution; when we run into issues, we solve them collaboratively."

The final site went live in the first quarter of 2026; since then the Maintel team has already completed a full update of the switching technology. Mark notes that because of its 24x7 operations, Maintel can deliver that kind of upgrade without disrupting Sanctuary's day-to-day activities.

> "The Maintel team listens to what we say and works with us."
>
> **Mark Cooper,** Head of Technology Infrastructure, Sanctuary

What are the **benefits and outcomes?**

For Mark, the SD-WAN solution has hit all his key objectives. “The network is now manageable and scalable; the technology is more uniform, which means performance is more consistent.” The bottlenecks associated with MPLS are removed and the much higher wireless capacity has transformed user experiences. Colleagues across the business have commented on how much easier the new network has made their day-to-day jobs, with one in Sanctuary Supported Living noting: “The difference it has made to our WiFi speed is fantastic! We are now able to do so much more for residents and our own work.”

The number of tickets raised has nearly halved, and when issues do occur, they can be resolved faster. Managers across Sanctuary sites have commented on the professionalism of the Maintel engineers and how well they communicate what they are doing.

The standardised approach has also been fully documented, so as soon as a call comes in from any site to the ICT helpdesk, Mark’s team can instantly confirm what technology has been deployed there, a key factor in accelerating remediation. “Maintel also supports this proactively,” he adds, “letting us know of potential problems so they can be addressed before users are affected.”

A further aspect that Mark values is the significantly improved reporting, which supports his management of the estate

Making a difference for **residents**

Residents and colleagues alike are extremely happy with the solution: one care home manager fed back that “The introduction of the Next Generation Network (NGN) has made all the difference in the world to our care home.”

The manager continued:
“It’s been wonderful to see the difference NGN has made. Our residents can now see and speak to their families whenever they want and it’s lovely to see our bed-bound residents enjoying their favourite films, which we can now stream to their TVs quickly and without any issues.”

Colleagues working at the care home also benefit. The manager summed up: “The new network connection is fast and reliable, and the Wi-Fi coverage around our building is good.”

The enhanced experience is not just at one care home: it’s readily visible in every Sanctuary site, from individual homes to large offices. This is then a key enabler of Sanctuary’s strategic goals to provide customer-centred services and create high-performing teams supported by technology-enabled innovation.

The future

"For me, uniformity is key to managing a large estate," Mark reflects, "and the NGN project has given us this." He and his team are enjoying the ability to resolve issues faster, as this means they can spend more of their time supporting colleagues and residents and developing new services. The fully digital infrastructure also ensures Sanctuary's readiness for the ADSL switch-off.

Further, as Sanctuary adds new sites, the processes and products are all in place to enable rapid and consistent provisioning. Maintel is an integral part of that, with its 24x7 support, deep understanding of the business and close relationship with Cisco to help maintain the high performance and excellent customer satisfaction levels that the NGN implementation has achieved.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Maintel teams for the professionalism they have consistently demonstrated while working collaboratively with Sanctuary on this complex project, requiring careful coordination around our 24/7 operational environment. Throughout this process, the execution, commitment, and partnership shown by the Maintel team have made them a pleasure to work with and have been greatly welcomed by Sanctuary. By working together as a single team, Sanctuary and Maintel have built a strong collaborative relationship founded on trust, open communication, and a shared determination to overcome challenges and deliver lasting results."

Bryan Clark, Network Team Lead, Sanctuary



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 ▶

Maintel

Contact us

0344 871 1122
info@maintel.co.uk

maintel.co.uk