



Secure Housing with Network Box and QXHA

[Queens Cross Housing Association](#) (QXHA) provides housing and support services to tenants in the Queens Cross, Woodside and Westercommon areas of Glasgow. It is a not-for-profit organisation and a recognised Scottish Charity (no03634). It is run by a voluntary management committee and five voluntary area committees. It was founded in 1976 to tackle the deterioration in tenement properties in the area, and since then has focused on: renovating and developing properties for rent, owner occupation and shared ownership; community care to support the elderly and homeless; transferring homes to community ownership; developing workspaces and shop units; and providing training and development initiatives.

Value-driven, unified security

As a registered charity, QXHA has a clear duty to partner with service providers who offer value for money and a strong return on investment. But it also recognises the importance of buying effective internet security, to protect both its network and the 120 staff working for the Association. Of these, around 20 regularly work from home, connecting to QXHA's network via a virtual private network (VPN).

Prior to using Network Box, QXHA had used separate anti-virus, anti-spam and firewall systems, and had been buying separate VPN licenses for each employee working from home. Network Box's Unified Threat Management service allows the Association to consolidate security – including firewall, IDP, VPN, content filtering and protection against spam, viruses, phishing attacks and other malware - under a single license, which provides a far lower total cost of ownership than buying the products separately. Network Box's unified approach to security means that its services are designed to work together across a single delivery platform (rather than bolting separate products together), increasing effectiveness. It then manages the whole service, automatically rolling out upgrades to each Network Box as they become available.

Network Box's managed service uses PUSH technology that pushes security updates to all its appliances as soon as they are available, so there is no need for the IT team to update security manually. Having a managed service also provides QXHA with a scalable and resilient security solution – both in terms of the hardware and software, and personnel to run it. A managed service takes on all aspects of the security service, such as configuring applications to ensure they are secured, remote back up, extensive monitoring and best practice procedures (for example change control).



QXHA case study

Craig Clarke, IT technician for QXHA says: “We decided when we were looking for a new security system that we wanted to go for a managed service. That way, we don’t have to worry about upgrading to the latest system, or relying on individuals to download security updates, as this is all done for us automatically. And we can employ specialist experts rather than having to dedicate valuable in-house resource to managing security day to day.”

Securing home workers

For any organisation with employees that work from home, security is paramount. QXHA provides company computers to these employees, only allowing them access to the internet or QXHA’s systems via a secure VPN. This minimises the risk to the Association’s network that could be caused by other users of a home PC (for example, employees’ children), accidentally downloading malware to that computer, that could then be passed on to the Association.

Acceptable use policies

Another area in which Network Box supports QXHA is in setting acceptable internet use policies for users. It blocks sites that QXHA does not wish its users to access, or that compromise QXHA’s security. These include the usual blacklisted sites – such as adult content, gambling or known malware hosting sites – but also more commonly-used sites such as Facebook and eBay. All other sites are scanned for viruses, Trojans and other malware using a number of different technologies ensuring that QXHA employees don’t download malware from legitimate sites that have been infected. Clarke says: “If a user has a genuine business reason for needing to access a social network, for example, then the Network Box system is flexible enough for us to be able to change access rights accordingly. These policies apply to home workers as well – as they connect via work computers through the VPN, we can limit their work-related internet access to ensure the network is kept secure.”

The Network Box service works well for QXHA. “We’re really pleased with the service,” says Clarke. “Top level security is an absolute necessity these days. The decision to work with Network Box means we’re working with experts, at a cost that makes sense.”