

Digital Transformation for Housing Communities

Modernising 300+ Sites

Templated Routers | Engineer WiFi | Centralised Telecare Monitoring



Client:
Places for People

Partner:
Ocean Telecom, Suffolk

About the company:
Places for People, a social enterprise specialising in providing and managing housing for communities.

- **Size:** ~6,000 employees | ~£1 billion turnover
- **Sites:** Managing 600–700 residential housing sites across the UK
- **Focus:** Supported living communities, including vulnerable and elderly residents

Products:



DrayTek Vigor 2763ac



The Overview

The case study shows how Places for People modernised connectivity across its supported living sites by replacing ageing analogue systems with centrally managed DrayTek broadband routers.

Working with Ocean Telecom, the solution enabled reliable digital connectivity for critical services such as telecare and VoIP, while allowing remote monitoring and easier management.

This improved reliability, reduced maintenance effort, and ensured the housing communities were future-ready for the UK's move to digital networks.

The Requirement

Places for People in their supported living housing portfolio needed to transition their residential and telecare-enabled sites from legacy analogue (PSTN/ISDN) services to digital broadband, ahead of the UK-wide WLR (Wholesale Line Rental) switch-off by Openreach.

This transformation needed:

- Reliable broadband connectivity for telecare systems, CCTV, and VoIP in residential sites.
- Remote management and monitoring capabilities.
- Future-proof hardware compatible with both FTTC / SoGEA and full-fibre networks.
- Minimal disruption to vulnerable residents.

"You stick to what you know. And with DrayTek, we know we can rely on it. The kit works, it's manageable, and it's efficient."



Steven Murfitt, Ocean Telecom

The Requirement (Continued)

Challenges Faced

- **Legacy Infrastructure:** Most sites were reliant on dated analogue lines.
- **Unmanaged Service:** No proactive management around connectivity and monitoring meaning that any lines faults or site issues were slower to be identified and rectified.
- **Openreach Delays:** New FTTP installations were often delayed or logically complex - particularly in locations without prior internet access.
- **Digital Readiness:** The client had previously received reactive, limited support with no remote diagnostics or visibility.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Many residents in these properties rely on telecare systems that are life-critical, requiring absolute reliability and monitoring.

The Solution

Ocean Telecom won a competitive tender to modernise these sites using DrayTek Vigor 2763ac routers, supported by DrayTek's VigorACS (Auto-Configuration System) platform.

Key Implementation Steps:

- **Device Rollout:** Initially 350 sites, potentially scaling to 500 due to organisational growth. As of early 2025, approximately 200 routers have been deployed.
- **Wi-Fi Fallback:** Wi-Fi was included for engineer access where Ethernet wasn't available, not intended for end-user internet use.
- **Template-Driven Configurations:** A predefined template setup ensures consistent deployment and rapid provisioning.
- **Proactive Monitoring via ACS:** Centralised firmware updates, diagnostics, and uptime monitoring via DrayTek ACS drastically improved operational visibility.

The Conclusion

This project represents a textbook example of digital transformation driven by reliability, proactive service, and future-proof technology.

With DrayTek's solutions at the core, Places for People is well-positioned to maintain secure, monitored, and modern telecare-ready infrastructure across its national housing estate.

Looking Ahead

As the WLR switch-off deadline approaches, the project will continue through 2025 with the remaining 300+ sites. The infrastructure deployed ensures:

- Seamless transition to FTTP without future hardware replacement.
- Support for additional services such as CCTV, VoIP, and smart building systems.
- Long-term cost savings through centralised remote management.

Results and Benefits

Operational Efficiency

- Over 200 routers deployed in ~1 year
- Rapid provisioning with templated configurations.
- Centralised update management across hundreds of routers.

Improved Client Support

- Near-instant diagnostics and proactive issue detection.
- Reports and performance insights easily shared with the client.
- Reduced reliance on on-site engineer visits.

End-User Impact

- Noticeable improvement in broadband reliability across converted sites.
- Enables remote monitoring and firmware management of telecare systems.
- Provides assurance for mission-critical infrastructure supporting elderly residents.

Future-Proof Infrastructure

- Routers support SoGEA / FTTC and full-fibre connections without hardware change.
- Ready for mass FTTP migration as PSTN switch-off progresses.
- Designed to scale with upcoming site upgrades and new service deployments.

Why DrayTek?

Ocean Telecom has trusted DrayTek for over a decade after experiencing unreliable equipment with other vendors. Their technical staff are trained on the products and are confident with managing DrayTek devices. The decision is grounded in:

- Cost-effectiveness
- Ease of use and deployment
- Team familiarity and training
- Proven reliability over thousands of deployed units

DrayTek Corp. was established in 1997 with a mission to design and build premium networking products to help business make the most of the online connectivity. DrayTek's product lines range from enterprise-level firewall Security, VPN facilities for teleworking and branch-linking, versatile xDSL CPE, Switching, Voice-over-IP and wireless solutions:

- Complete range of WAN Security/Routing products
- Headquarters, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC
- Specialising in innovative networking products Worldwide Distribution and offices
- Listed on Taiwanese Stock Exchange 2004
- 180 employees worldwide, 45% R&D
- ISO 9001 Certified



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