

Calico appoints M247 for digital transformation

Calico Group has appointed connectivity and cloud provider M247 to redesign its network, optimise operations and enhance security.

M247 worked with Calico's ICT team to assess the housing provider's current operations, resulting in Calico's move from a traditional MPLS network to SD-WAN; this allows Calico's staff to access information direct from their cloud applications instead of via the corporate network. It also means security is incorporated into the SD-WAN fabric itself via virtual firewalls.

David Palmer, product manager for network and security, M247, said, "It is common for public-facing organisations that work closely with their communities to operate from multiple sites through remote and/or mobile workforces, even more so since the pandemic. However, companies haven't always ensured that their IT operations are optimised for this way of working; this can affect areas such as ease and speed of access, data security, back-up and disaster recovery.

"The introduction of SD-WAN not only helps to solve these problems but also means that Calico is better equipped

for future growth because it can now easily add new users and new sites. Zero-touch provisioning and segmentation also mean that policies can be added, amended and automatically distributed to all devices, reducing the risk of human error."

Rob Hayes, ICT project manager, Calico Group, said, "Given that we have a distributed and hybrid workforce, we wanted to deliver secure access to our business-critical applications in the cloud and on-premise. The solution needed to handle connectivity across over 50 sites as well as the increased demands of homeworking.

"M247 provided the insight and technical skills for Calico's transition from MPLS to Cisco SD-WAN. M247 has given us the confidence to grow the business by delivering an agile SD-WAN solution that offers the performance, security and visibility needed to provide our staff and customers with the best real-time, connected experiences."

Ateb Group outsources IT help desks to Central Networks

Ateb Group has appointed Central Networks to support its in-house IT department, comprising an outsourced help desk function and strategic consultancy.

Central Networks is now managing Ateb's IT help desk for its 130-strong workforce, receiving around 1,200 IT requests per year, leaving the housing provider's in-house digital team to focus on the future of its technology infrastructure.

Alex Jenkins, executive director for finance, Ateb Group, said, "Against a backdrop of IT resourcing challenges and economic uncertainty following the pandemic, we needed to bolster the support offered by our IT department.

"Working with Central Networks gives us complete peace of mind that the daily tickets are being resolved, affording our digital team the time and scope to focus on our more strategic activities."

The contract covers first-, second-, and third-line support services, encompassing everything from general help desk support, such as troubleshooting and solving users' technology issues, through to device management and tactical decision-making.

John Blackburn, operations director and social housing specialist, Central Networks, said, "Many of our housing clients are asking for outsourced help desk support to reduce their overheads and maximise their internal resources. We know flexibility is vital, so it's available as short-term cover or as a permanent part of each contract."

Jenkins said, "The Central Networks team is a great sounding board and critical friend for us. From penetration testing to cloud migration, the team advises our in-house digital team on key technology decisions and also supports our IT recruitment process with interview participation."