

EBOOK

# Boosting housing sector network security

With

CATO  
NETWORKS



# Boosting housing sector network security

## Contents

Introduction	3
Introducing CATO	4
Challenges to Overcome	5
The solution	7
CATO's services	8
Cloud-based network security and connectivity	8
SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Networking)	8
Firewall as a Service (FWaaS)	9
Secure Web Gateway (SWG)	9
Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA)	10
Mobile and remote access	10
Network analytics and reporting	10
Multi Factor Authentication (MFA)	11
Network segmentation and policy management	11
The real-world impact of SASE	12
The future of SASE in housing	13
Who we work with	14
Who are Wavenet	15

# Introduction

25% of the country's housing associations have suffered from a cyber-attack in the last 12 months.

With dispersed locations, remote workforces and a wealth of sensitive tenant data, navigating complex network infrastructures while maintaining security standards is no easy feat, and housing associations need a comprehensive solution that covers their entire operation. By combining security and networking functions into a unified cloud platform, housing associations can streamline operations, enhance connectivity and strengthen their defences against sophisticated cyber threats.

## A single pane of glass

With a unified cloud solution, housing associations can connect all data centres, branches, mobile users and cloud resources into an agile and secure global network that protects employees and tenants alike.



Cloud-based network security



Wide area networking (SD-WAN)



Firewall as a Service (FWaaS)



Secure web gateway (SWG)



Zero trust network access (ZTNA)



Mobile and remote access



Network analytics and reporting



Multi Factor Authentication (MFA)



Network segmentation

In this eBook, we look at how housing associations can optimise their network security – and how CATO's SASE solutions are enabling them to react to changing requirements effectively.



# Introducing CATO

We work in partnership with CATO Networks, a leading Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) provider that supplies businesses with network connectivity, cloud security, and remote access.

By integrating multiple services into a single cloud-based platform, Cato Networks has created a solution that is flexible, scalable, and secure, providing businesses with the tools they need to manage their networks effectively.

## Across the housing sector, CATO's services offer

- Scalability to meet growing demand
- A user-friendly interface for tenants
- Intuitive management tools
- Cloud-based solutions, with no need to invest in expensive hardware or specialist IT staff





# Challenges to Overcome

## Managing multiple locations

Housing associations are often spread across wide areas and multiple locations, which adds a thick layer of complexity when it comes to network security. Each site operates independently, with its own infrastructure and security measures, which can cause fragmented protection and heightened vulnerability. What's more, the growing trend for remote work expands the network perimeter and raises the risk of breaches – putting sensitive tenant data in harm's way.

By consolidating networking and security functions into a unified platform, cloud-based SASE solutions enable centralised management and consistent enforcement of security policies across all locations. With features like secure connectivity and threat prevention, SASE empowers housing associations to mitigate risks, protect data and ensure compliance efficiently.

## Ensuring reliable connectivity for staff and tenants

Remote working and demand for digital services has taken off in a big way. With employees relying on seamless access to resources and tenants expecting uninterrupted communication and service delivery, any network downtime or disruption can cause major discontent. And, as housing associations rely more and more on digital platforms for managing property portfolios and engaging with tenants, a stable and resilient network infrastructure is essential.

The answer? High-performance connectivity, plus redundancy features that guarantee continuous access to critical applications and services. By optimising network performance and uptime, housing associations can effectively meet staff and tenant needs, enhancing productivity and satisfaction across the board.

## Protecting sensitive data

Threats are everywhere, and it's vital to keep private information safe from cyber criminals. Yet housing associations face significant hurdles when it comes to safeguarding data. Personal information is often dispersed across multiple locations, which makes it hard to implement unified protection measures or consistent security protocols – leaving vulnerabilities unchecked and sensitive data ripe for the picking.

By consolidating networking and security functions into a unified cloud-native platform, SASE solutions empower housing associations to establish a robust security framework. Through advanced threat prevention measures, zero-trust architecture and centralised policy enforcement, these solutions ensure comprehensive protection for sensitive data across all locations, strengthening housing associations' defences and safeguarding them against emerging cyber threats.





## The limitations of traditional networking and security approaches

Cyber threats are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and housing associations need networking security to match.

Traditional networking security often fails to address modern connectivity needs, which means that housing associations are struggling to manage large numbers of properties, especially when they're spread far and wide. Independent network infrastructures make it harder to implement consistent security measures and efficient connectivity, and conventional security models often can't keep pace with evolving threats.

With intelligent routing, advanced threat prevention and centralised management, SASE enables housing associations to streamline network operations, ensuring seamless connectivity and protection across all locations and keeping their entire infrastructure safe from hackers.



# The solution

## Cutting-edge SASE from CATO Networks

CATO's SASE solutions help housing associations consolidate and control their security and networking across the cloud and the network edge. With a fully cloud-native suite of threat prevention and data protection capabilities, CATO's next-generation network architecture provides a unified solution that enhances tenant privacy while reducing the complexity, costs and risks associated with legacy IT.

Whatever your requirements, we can provide tailored support that aligns with your individual goals and budget, ensuring a seamless and resilient experience across every aspect of your network.

## Game-changing network security



**Unified cloud-native platform** that consolidates networking and security, providing housing associations with a single solution for managing their entire network infrastructure.



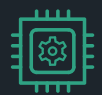
**Zero-trust security architecture** which verifies every device, user and application attempting to access the network, helping to protect sensitive tenant data and stop cybersecurity threats in their tracks.



**SD-WAN solutions** that optimise connectivity across multiple locations, ensuring reliable access for staff and tenants while reducing the costs and complexity associated with traditional WAN solutions.



**Centralised management portal** which provides housing associations with a single pane of glass view into their entire network infrastructure – enabling easier configuration, monitoring and troubleshooting.



**Application-aware routing** that intelligently routes traffic based on priorities, improving user experience and boosting performance of critical systems, tenant portals and communication platforms.



**Tailored security policies** that protect sensitive tenant data while enabling seamless access to essential applications and services.



**Integrated threat prevention** including next-generation firewall, intrusion prevention and malware protection, helping to safeguard housing associations against malware, ransomware and phishing attacks.

# CATO's services

## Cloud-based network security and connectivity

CATO's cloud-based network security and connectivity solution centralises control and visibility, enhancing protection and reliability for housing associations.

### Features and benefits

- Simplifies network security management by centralising control and visibility across all locations.
- Enhances protection against cyber threats through real-time monitoring and threat intelligence updates.
- Improves network performance and reliability with cloud-based infrastructure, ensuring seamless connectivity for tenants and staff.
- Enables scalability and flexibility to adapt to the evolving needs of housing associations, supporting growth and expansion.

## SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Networking)

CATO's SD-WAN optimises network performance and dynamically routes traffic based on network conditions.

### Features and benefits

- Reduces costs associated with traditional WAN infrastructure through cost-effective internet links.
- Enhances performance of critical systems and services, such as online tenant portals and communication platforms.
- Simplifies network management through centralised policy control and automation, reducing the admin burden for IT teams.







## Firewall as a Service (FWaaS)

CATO's FWaaS provides firewall protection and centralised security policy management, ensuring consistent security across all housing association locations.

### Features and benefits

- Provides robust firewall protection for housing association networks, preventing unauthorised access and cyber threats.
- Ensures consistent security policies across all locations, including remote sites and mobile users.
- Enables housing associations to keep control over network traffic, allowing IT teams to implement security protocols based on user roles and application requirements.
- Improves visibility over network traffic and security for proactive threat detection and response.

## Secure Web Gateway (SWG)

CATO's SWG protects against web-based threats, ensuring secure and productive internet access for housing associations.

### Features and benefits

- Protects housing associations from malware, phishing and malicious websites, safeguarding sensitive data and user privacy.
- Improves network performance by caching and optimising web content, reducing bandwidth consumption and latency.
- Provides visibility into web usage patterns and threats, enabling housing associations to monitor and analyse internet traffic effectively.

## Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA)

CATO's ZTNA boosts security by verifying user identity before granting access to housing association networks, mitigating the risk of unauthorised access.

### Features and benefits

- Enables staff and residents to gain secure remote access, ensuring seamless connectivity while maintaining strict security controls.
- Enhances compliance with data protection regulations by enforcing access policies and monitoring user activity.
- Simplifies network access management through centralised policy enforcement and authentication, reducing the risk of data breaches and insider threats.

## Mobile and remote access

CATO's mobile and remote access solution enables secure access to network resources from any location, enhancing on-the-go flexibility for housing association staff and residents.

### Features and benefits

- Facilitates remote and mobile working for maximum productivity.
- Supports a variety of devices and operating systems, ensuring compatibility for staff and tenants.
- Protects sensitive data transmitted over public networks through encryption and secure tunnelling protocols.
- Improves user experience by providing seamless and reliable connectivity.



## Network analytics and reporting

CATO's network analytics and reporting solution provides actionable insights into network performance and security, empowering housing associations to make proactive, informed decisions.

### Features and benefits

- Provides actionable insights into network performance, usage patterns and security for improved troubleshooting.
- Identifies potential bottlenecks and optimisation opportunities, improving network efficiency and reliability.
- Enhances compliance with regulatory requirements with detailed reports on network activity and security incidents.
- Supports proactive monitoring and management of network infrastructure, reducing downtime and enhancing user experience.



## Multi Factor Authentication (MFA)

CATO's MFA solution strengthens security by requiring multiple forms of authentication, minimising unauthorised access.

### Features and benefits

- Requires a combination of passwords, biometrics or security tokens to verify user identity, rather than just one form of authentication.
- Mitigates the risk of unauthorised access and data theft.
- Provides flexibility for housing association staff and tenants to choose authentication methods that best suit their preferences and security needs.
- Improves compliance with security standards by adding extra layers of protection against identity-related threats.

## Network segmentation and policy management

CATO's network segmentation and policy management solution enhances security by dividing housing association networks into distinct segments and enforcing detailed access controls.

### Features and benefits

- Divides the network based on user roles, applications or security requirements, keeping sensitive resources away from threats.
- Allows housing associations to enforce access controls and security policies tailored to specific network segments, reducing the risk of data breaches.
- Simplifies network management by centralising policy management and configuration tools, streamlining admin tasks and ensuring consistency across the network.



# The real-world impact of SASE

## Southern Housing Group (SHG)

### The challenge

As one of the UK's largest housing associations, SHG was up against a major challenge. Covid-19 had caused untold changes in their digital requirements, and they needed to enhance their technology infrastructure to support both current operations and future business objectives. In line with the rapid growth in demand for digital services, SHG's main focus was to improve online services for residents, enhance cyber security and enable remote working so their staff could stay connected.

### How CATO helped

To address SHG's rapidly changing requirements, CATO stepped in to assist with a game-changing SASE solution. At the core of the solution was comprehensive cloud-based network security and WAN integration, providing robust protection and reliable connectivity that was essential for SHG to maintain their operations. The platform offered layered security architecture, real-time traffic monitoring and cost-effective scalability, ensuring SHG could adapt and grow while keeping their network stable and secure.

### The outcome

- CATO's SASE platform seamlessly integrated into SHG's existing infrastructure, ensuring minimal disruption to operations and enabling a smooth transition to enhanced network security and connectivity.
- The implementation of the new platform enhanced cyber security across SHG's network, providing top-level protection against evolving threats. This ensured the safety and integrity of sensitive data, boosting tenant trust.
- CATO's solution improved connectivity and flexibility for remote working, empowering SHG's employees to work effectively from anywhere. This was invaluable during the pandemic, enabling operational continuity and ensuring staff could continue to provide essential services to residents.
- The CATO platform streamlined network management processes for SHG, providing increased visibility into IT infrastructure and streamlining administration tasks. By freeing up their time, SHG's IT team could focus instead on strategic initiatives and improving overall network performance.
- SHG's internal survey yielded hugely positive results, reflecting the successful delivery of their technology transformation goals and the value provided by CATO's SASE solution.





# The future of SASE in housing

## IoT integration

As IoT adoption continues to rise in housing, SASE solutions will play a vital role when it comes to securely managing and controlling these devices. From internet-based thermostats and lighting systems to security cameras and door locks, SASE ensures that IoT devices are seamlessly integrated into the network while maintaining robust security protocols.

By providing centralised management and detailed access controls, SASE empowers housing associations to harness the full potential of IoT technologies while safeguarding against potential cyber threats.

## Smart home technologies

With SASE solutions, smart home devices can communicate securely over the network, enabling seamless automation and remote management. From energy-efficient appliances to voice-controlled assistants, SASE ensures that smart home technologies operate seamlessly and securely. And, by leveraging cloud-native architecture and advanced encryption techniques, SASE enables housing associations to deploy and manage smart home ecosystems with confidence, enhancing tenant experiences and optimising operational efficiencies.

## Community-wide connectivity

In the future, SASE will drive community-wide connectivity initiatives, fostering collaboration, communication and innovation within housing associations. By providing robust networking infrastructure and secure access, SASE empowers seamless connectivity across community centres, residential units and other shared facilities.

Whether it's enabling remote learning or enhancing public safety measures, SASE ensures that tenants have access to reliable and high-speed connectivity – building interconnected communities that encourage socialisation and enhance quality of life.



## Who we work with

### Enterprises: Large corporations in sectors such as finance, technology, manufacturing and retail

Providing large organisations with comprehensive SASE solutions to keep networks secure, particularly when it comes to remote working.



### Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs)

Assisting businesses in implementing robust, secure and streamlined network solutions.

### Healthcare providers: Hospitals, clinics and healthcare organisations

Enabling seamless, secure communication between facilities and employees within the healthcare sector.



### Housing sector: Working in partnership with Housing Associations

Helping housing associations improve their network security to safeguard data and boost tenant confidence.

### Educational Institutions: Schools, universities and educational institutions

Keeping schools connected and facilitating the secure delivery of critical information to parents and staff at scale.



## GET STARTED

# Work with a provider who can transform your organisation's network security.

Wavenet is a trusted managed services provider, working in partnership with public sector bodies and businesses nationwide.

We utilise our experience and expertise to learn each customer's needs, offering industry-leading telecommunications and technology solutions that empower you to truly optimise your operations.

Our partnerships are long-standing and hand-picked to only offer the best technology to our customers, giving you the peace of mind that a Wavenet solution will support and grow with you, no matter what the future holds.

Talk to us





[WAVENET.CO.UK/PUBLIC-SECTOR](http://WAVENET.CO.UK/PUBLIC-SECTOR)

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