

Connected Falkirk

Enabling anytime, anywhere connectivity
for all the region's schools



Falkirk Council needed an online solution to bring all of its schools together

Falkirk Council identified a potential skills gap between what pupils in its schools could do at present, and what they would need to be able to do in the future. This led to the Connected Falkirk initiative.



The challenge

The council has a wide range of schools and pupils with different needs when it comes to learning:

- More than 60 schools spread across urban and rural environments
- Lack of reliable internet connectivity within schools
- Difficulties in managing individual wireless networks across the school estate

“

The best part about the solution is the reliability. We can now cope with large-scale deployment of devices, including the second largest secondary school in Scotland with 2,500 devices used on a daily basis. In the past, that just wasn't possible.

”

Stuart Lennie

Connected Falkirk Manager, Falkirk Council



The wide area network and device solution

Working closely with the council, we developed solutions that included a wide area network (WAN) deployment across the council's 60+ schools in both urban and rural environments, greatly enhancing internet speed, accessibility and reliability across the region.

To ensure consistent access, the council has now deployed an iPad tablet for every pupil aged 10-18 and every member of teaching staff which can be used to support every aspect of learning and work communication. They can also take the iPads home and children are sharing their learning and educating their parents in digital skills.

Under the previous WiFi infrastructure, the council struggled to adequately support the needs of 2,500 wireless devices across the school estate. With the new cloud-managed infrastructure and the ability to monitor and shape the WiFi provision, they are now confidently supporting more than 25,000 devices.

The use of SD-WAN has enabled a move from expensive point-to-point leased lines to lower-cost broadband lines, with significant cost reduction. Savings have also been enhanced by reduced travel costs, as meetings and teaching can be confidently carried out online when

necessary, removing the need to ferry pupils to different schools for subjects which their own school doesn't offer.

The benefits of this education-focused project have now spread to other parts of the council, with the SD-WAN and wifi solution now in place in all council buildings. This allows users to roam between establishments and automatically connect to secure, reliable, and fast internet connectivity.

“

We've now expanded the technology used in schools across all Falkirk Council offices, unifying management and delivering fast reliable WiFi with an anytime anywhere approach to our colleagues wherever they are, from office to school to library.

”

Murat Dilek

Network Infrastructure Team Leader, Falkirk Council



“

We wanted to make sure that every child, no matter which school they went to in Falkirk, got the best experience they could in terms of digital skills. Virgin Media O2 Business helped us to do that with their reliable network and our connected devices.

”

Stuart Lennie | Connected Falkirk Manager, Falkirk Council

Results

We're now helping schools across Falkirk engage, inspire and achieve – while delivering significant savings. Achievements include:

- Greatly improved internet access for pupils and teachers means less downtime and greater flexibility for learning
- Network configuration is now much quicker for new schools and other buildings, saving time and expense – what used to take up to four hours now takes about 30 minutes and an online dashboard means it's easier to be proactive too
- Savings from reduced need for expensive leased lines and travel – £150,000 saved in transport costs per year; online staff meetings save £80,000 per year
- 75% reduction in calls to Connected Falkirk helpdesk related to WiFi issues

To learn more about the Connected Falkirk programme, go to:

www.falkirk.gov.uk/connectedfalkirk

www.twitter.com/connectedfalk

