

CASE STUDY

Preparing for Digital Switchover

Churchill Estate Management (formally Millstream)



How our Red, Amber, Green (RAG) Condition Reports help estate managers prepare for the digital switchover

Preparing for the digital switchover can seem like a daunting task, especially when managing a number of multi occupancy residences which may require a Section 20 Notice to be issued. The planned digital switchover is due to take place in 2025 and will see systems that currently use ISDN and PSTN, such as some CCTV systems, telecoms systems, warden call, security alarms or payment terminals become obsolete. In this case, any organisation that has not put measures in place for the switchover will be unable to use essential technology to assist their residents or employees.

We can assist buildings and estates managers prepare for the switchover by carrying out a RAG Condition Report of your existing systems to give you a tailored solution to become digital ready in the most cost effective way as possible.

■ THE CLIENT:

Churchill Estates Management (CEM) is the property management arm of Churchill Retirement Living, a family run company that develops and operates purpose-built retirement apartments. With over 200 independent retirement buildings spread across the UK CEM, like many other retirement property management companies are aware that they may need to carry out upgrade works to their warden call systems and fire alarm auto diallers so that they continue to work past the 2025 digital upgrade (the NOWIP Switchover) – but also have to obtain good value for money for their leaseholders.

■ THE CHALLENGE:

The project would most likely require a Section 20 Notice to be implemented at each of the affected sites, therefore CEM needed to quickly identify which sites required upgrading and in what order, based on the technical aspects and condition of the current systems.

CEM had set an ambitious deadline to achieve full digital compliance by the end of 2023 and Sentinel was engaged to carry out detailed multi point audits at each of their sites and report back with recommendations and a clear plan of action to help them realise this ambition.

RAG Condition Reporting: The Facts

Time taken:

Between 2-3 hours per site depending on the size of the site and number of technologies that need assessing

Who is required on site?:

A member of the estates team or the site manager will need to be in attendance to enable the engineer access to relevant parts of the installed technology.

What technologies have been assessed?:

Warden Call and Fire alarm diallers

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■ THE SOLUTION:

We worked with CEM to understand what they hoped to achieve from the surveys and developed our audit templates in collaboration with them so that they suited their specifications, and the specifications of each site.

As CEM are responsible for sites across the UK, the logistics of planning site audits and arranging access with various site managers was a challenge that we were able to overcome.

We put in place a dedicated project team which was headed by a project manager and supported by our service desk. Through the careful coordination of our engineering teams we were able to arrange with each of CEM's site managers a convenient time for the 3 hour survey to take place. This meant that that all 208 sites would have had their detailed inspection carried out within a 3 month time frame.



Given the potential scope of upgrades required and the potential sensitivities of a Section 20 consultation it was recognised that the detailed report had to be issued to CEM as quickly as possible. Each engineer was able to utilise our live job management system to capture their findings and the service desk then collated the information to produce the final report. This integrated approach meant that all reports and our recommendations could be delivered to CEM within 48 hours of the visit.

The reports detailed the current condition of the systems across the various sites, their quantities, cable architecture and how they have been set up so that CEM could more easily build their tender documents to get the upgrade project in motion. We also created an upgrade matrix which CEM stakeholders could access. This matrix gave a quick overview of each site, and how each element scored in the RAG report so the property teams could more easily identify properties in need of urgent upgrade by system type along with our recommendations for suitable replacement.

■ HOW THIS HELPED CEM

Carrying out these works for CEM allowed them to have a more hands off approach whilst still obtaining vital information at a granular level. This has saved the property team months of work and has given them a complete oversight of the real condition of the system as it stands, on which they can base solid decisions for their upgrade programme.

“The site-specific surveys and reports provide valuable, accurate and robust data, which have enabled CEM to develop and prioritise its digital upgrade programme to achieve digital compliance by end 2025. The survey detail is also used to populate CEM tender specifications by informing the contractors of the existing system, age, condition, wiring configurations, compatibility and plant locations, to assist with the accurate pricing of the required works for each site. The associated benefits include accurately priced tender returns, reduced risk of unforeseen works and therefore improved value for money for the leaseholders. Sentinel Fire and Security have consistently provided a reliable and professional service. I am therefore happy to recommend Sentinel Fire and Security for their services.”

Richard Townley, Head of Property Services, Churchill Estates Management Ltd

Sentinel can assist with any aspect of your digital upgrade requirements. In addition to condition reporting and installation we are well versed in migrating services to alternative providers and can work on your behalf to ensure a smooth transition so that all of your security and care systems become digital ready with the least amount of disruption of service or inconvenience to your clients or estates managers.

For more details about our RAG Condition Reports contact us on 0333 012 4302

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