

CASE STUDY

## UK Housing Association Avoids Disaster and Ransom

Covenco and Veeam proactively prevents a major disaster and debilitating downtime



## VEEAM

### Background

Housing associations provide affordable homes for millions of people in need throughout the United Kingdom. One particular housing association located in the south of England manages nearly 5,000 properties, giving low income individuals, older adults and people with disabilities the opportunity to live in quality homes they can afford.

### The Business Challenges

Cyberattacks on non-profit organizations — and housing associations in particular — are increasing in sophistication and scale. However, 80% of non-profits don't have a policy in place to address cyberattacks, and 24% of housing associations suffered at least one attack between 2020 and 2021.

Housing associations are targets for several reasons. They hold residents' personal data, they're connected to public-sector organizations that maintain financial data, and they operate within limited budgets that often can't fund business continuity and disaster recovery (BCDR) strategies.

A housing association in the south of England didn't let a limited budget get in the way. When the IT team grew concerned that legacy backup might not protect against a cyberattack,

the team contacted Covenco, an established IT company that provides Backup as a Service (BaaS) and Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) to UK companies and non-profit organizations.

"We told them when it comes to a cyberattack, you should always plan for the worst," said Gurdip Sohal, Sales Director at Covenco. "We also explained that attackers will have less to leverage if you've been backing up to our cloud and supplement that by using our Tape-out Service to provide a completely air-gapped offline copy of your data."

Covenco recommended Veeam® Backup & Replication™ for proactive data protection. A feature called Veeam Cloud Connect provides a fast, easy and secure way to back up to Covenco's cloud.

"When ransomware hit, the housing association wasn't crippled like they might have been if they hadn't been backing up to our cloud. Their business didn't stop, their residents weren't impacted, and they didn't pay ransom. They had complete visibility and control of their data

**Gurdip Sohal,**  
Sales Director, Covenco

### The Solutions

Veeam and Covenco proactively prevented the housing association from suffering a major disaster and debilitating downtime following the

cyberattack. In addition, Veeam and Covenco enable air-gapped backups for mastery of the 3-2-1-1-0 Rule, and they offer additional ransomware protection through immutable backups.



The cyberattack took place on the first day of the UK's first Coronavirus lockdown. Covenco discovered the housing association's cloud backup repository had been deleted and immediately contacted the association, which quickly determined an unknown external entity had been systematically deleting backup jobs. The association shut down its network straightaway to prevent additional deletions.

Fortunately, Veeam Insider Protection places deleted backups in a recycle bin for redundancy. Covenco returned the deleted backups to the cloud repository so the housing association could restore lost data.

"Veeam helped us proactively prevent a major disaster by protecting backups stored in our cloud from deletion,"

Sohal said. "The housing association recovered their data without paying a ransom."

As a result of the incident, the housing association opted for additional protection. Veeam copies backups to tapes, and Covenco stores them on-premises and off-premises. Covenco's tape service not only provides offsite backups but also provides an offline copy to ensure backups are fully air-gapped.

Since air-gapped backups are offline and inaccessible, the housing association masters the 3-2-1-1-0 Rule (3 different copies of data on 2 different media where 1 copy is offsite, 1 copy is air-gapped, immutable, or offline and there are 0 recovery errors). Next, the housing association is considering immutable backups to boost ransomware protection. Veeam creates a hardened

Linux repository that protects against malicious intent or deletion of data on the local backup repository.

In the meantime, Veeam backs up 10 TB across 50 VMware vSphere virtual machines to Covenco's cloud. Sohal said Veeam may eventually back up the housing association's 220 Exchange Online mailboxes to Covenco's cloud as well. Veeam Backup for Microsoft Office 365 provides comprehensive data protection to ensure complete access and control of data.

“ A big misconception is that Microsoft 365 already resides in the cloud, so there's no reason for a backup, but that's not true.

Veeam backs up M365 data on-premises for our customers or directly to our cloud, and a self-service portal makes recovery fast and easy.

Veeam provides the best comprehensive backup technology, and we provide the best BCDR services. Together we provide complete data protection, security, and peace of mind.

**Gurdip Sohal,**  
Sales Director, Covenco



# VEEAM

## About Veeam

Veeam is the leader in backup, recovery and data management solutions that deliver Modern Data Protection. Providing a single platform for cloud, virtual, physical, SaaS and Kubernetes environments. Their customers are confident their apps and data are protected and always available with the most simple, flexible, reliable and powerful platform in the industry.

## About Covenco

With more than 30 years of experience in the IT industry across a range of technologies, [Covenco](#) specializes in purchasing, selling and renting new and refurbished IBM, HP, Dell and NetApp computing hardware, storage and supporting software. Today, Covenco provides cloud and hosting solutions, disaster recovery, maintenance, virtualization, backup and high-availability services.

## Solution components

[Veeam Backup and Replication](#)

Covenco started way back in 1989, selling IBM's System 36 and AS/400 servers. Over 30 years later, we still have IBM at the core of our business, but we do so much more now. Covenco have always strived to provide value without compromise, and this remains our primary goal today.

We work across a variety of industry sectors - as Business Partners for new IT infrastructure solutions and as Business Continuity specialists. Covenco is today a modern data management company providing its clients with data protection, data availability and data security 24x7 365 days a year.

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