

Peabody improves data protection and collaboration with Egress Secure Workspace



"Honestly, the product has been a victim of its own success! Members of the initial Repairs Team who were given access use it on a daily basis and have spoken to other colleagues about it. Our IT business partners are constantly getting other teams within the business asking them when they can use Secure Workspace too."

MARK NICHOLLS
HEAD OF TECHNICAL
SOLUTIONS AND SECURITY
PEABODY

Working to provide social housing since 1862, Peabody has grown into one of the oldest and largest housing associations in London, currently owning and managing more than 55,000 homes with over 111,000 residents. These services, as well as extensive community outreach, are delivered through a network of Peabody employees, subcontractors and other approved third parties, such as employment and training providers.

Facilitating secure communication within this network has previously proved challenging for the charity, which struggled to both protect sensitive information and control third party access. Initially, Peabody tackled this by providing third parties with internal user credentials and email accounts, however this proved both costly and complex.

"As an organisation, we risked losing control of our sensitive data," explains Mark Nicholls, Head of Technical Solutions and Security, at Peabody. "We couldn't keep track of what was going on with the data because we didn't have audit capability. Added to this, users found the previous system cumbersome to use and had decided to start taking matters into their own hands, using solutions such as Dropbox, personal email and USBs to share information. We risked a real growth of 'shadow IT' for solutions we as an organisation didn't provide and didn't support."

In mid-2015, Peabody started speaking with Egress Software Technologies, a leading provider of data security solutions to charities, about its secure online collaboration solution, Egress Secure Workspace. The solution provides an

encrypted online environment for both internal and external users to work together, and importantly is also free for those external users to access.

“Internally we have a number of teams who focus solely on supporting our residents,” Nicholls continues. “The first use of Secure Workspace was in our Repairs Team, who work closely with a third-party construction subcontractor that provides the maintenance and repairs to our properties. Not only did the Peabody teams need to send information to the subcontractor, but their employees needed to also work collaboratively and send information back to us. “The types of information we share with this subcontractor can be very sensitive, such as residents’ medical information, as a lot of our properties are set up to facilitate disabled access. We also share commercially sensitive information as well, detailing some of our regeneration projects in London.”

Secure Workspace provides a complete collaborative environment for teams needing to share and work on information together. This includes the ability to upload documents and images from both desktop and mobile devices, as well as set permissions about what users can do with the information shared with them, for example restricting download or copy and paste. In addition, from within the online environment, users can also edit MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents, as well as annotate PDFs.

“A real benefit for Peabody is Secure Workspace’s full audit capabilities, which enable us to see exactly what our partners are doing – from the documents they’ve accessed, when they accessed them, whether they were downloaded, and any edits made,” states Nicholls. “This is very useful to us as an organisation. For example, we had a previous partner that claimed they had done work but we didn’t think it had been completed – however we had no way to prove this. With Secure Workspace, however, we can access this information in an easy-to-understand format in real-time.

“Honestly, the product has been a victim of its own success! Members of the initial Repairs Team who were given access use it on a daily basis and have spoken to other colleagues about it. Our IT business partners are constantly getting other teams within the business asking them when they can use Secure Workspace too. Peabody are currently on a large IT transformation project over the next three years, with security at the top of the table for areas of improvement. The suite of products Egress offers can definitely help us with this transformation and we look forward to continuing to work closely with them in future.”

About Egress

Egress takes a people-centric approach to data security – helping users receive, manage and share sensitive data securely to meet compliance requirements and drive business productivity. Using machine learning, Egress ensures information is protected relative to the risk of a data breach and reduces user friction to ensure smooth adoption.

Trusted by enterprise organisations and governments around the globe, Egress’ award-winning platform provides email encryption, secure file transfer and online collaboration services, as well as risk management, accidental send prevention, and compliance auditing and reporting. Egress is headquartered in London, with regional offices in the UK, the US, Canada and the Netherlands.

Real time audit capabilities

“A real benefit for Peabody is Secure Workspace’s full audit capabilities, which enable us to see exactly what our partners are doing – from the documents they’ve accessed, when they accessed them, whether they were downloaded, and any edits made. With Secure Workspace, we can access this information in an easy-to-understand format in real-time.”

Collaborative environment for teams

“Secure Workspace provides a complete collaborative environment for teams needing to share and work on information together. This includes the ability to upload documents and images from both desktop and mobile devices, as well as set permissions about what users can do with the information shared with them, for example restricting download or copy and paste.

Portfolio of integrated products

“The suite of products Egress offers can definitely help us with this transformation and we look forward to continuing to work closely with them in future.”