



Convene client case study: SYHA

Danielle Moore, Director's Secretary at South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA) explains why they chose Convene.

When I started working here, everything for the board meetings was done using paper. We had to do 20 board packs in total. It took a whole day to prepare, photocopy and post them to everyone.

Then we tried using Google Drive and Dropbox but that wasn't really good enough. We knew there were board meeting apps on the market so we decided to look into it. I did some research and Convene came out on top.

“Decently priced”

We looked at various other board meeting software applications but they seemed more complicated. Convene was very decently price compared to others, which was important. Our IT department looked into security and were very satisfied with that too.

Convene came and gave us a demo and we found the app was really simple to use – very straightforward indeed. That's important because not all the NEDs are completely confident with technology. We'd just introduced iPads for everyone and the last thing we wanted was to find people using the tablets to rest their board papers on.

“Everyone took to it”

We initially said we'd do two training sessions with each NED but it took me no longer than 30 minutes with each one to get them confident using it. Everyone took to it. Since then, none of them has ever come back to me, except if they have forgotten their password, which they can easily reset.

We introduced Convene in June 2014 and my aim was to get all NEDs trained over the summer so they could all be using it by September. Almost everyone was using the app by July.

“The features we want”

Convene has the features we want. NEDs used to come to meetings with notepads and pens but now they can make notes on actual papers within the app, so when they get to that part of meeting the notes are there waiting for them.

We like using the Review Room feature a lot too. We upload news articles, presentations and weekly/monthly updates to the Review Room so everyone can then read them at their convenience. It's much better than clogging up people's inboxes, especially as the files can be quite big.

South Yorkshire Housing Association has around 4,000 homes across North, South and West Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

They have 12 board members and hold ten meetings a year. They started using Convene in June 2014, because they wanted a way to streamline the way they produce board packs.



“It took me no longer than 30 minutes with each board member to get them confident using Convene. Since then, none of them has ever come back to me, except if they have forgotten their password, which they can reset themselves or I can easily reset”.

Danielle Moore
Director's Secretary



Features

Security

User authentication	✓
Document encryption (server-side)	✓**
Document encryption (mobile device)	✓**
Network encryption	✓**
Disable account after <i>n</i> login attempts	✓
Wipe data after <i>n</i> login attempts	✓

Pre Meeting Management

Attach documents to an agenda	✓
Drag and drop documents to an agenda	✓
Support agenda items with no attachments	✓
Distribute meetings and docs to participants	✓

Meeting Presentation

Start remote meeting	✓
Real-time interactive presentation	✓*
Force participants to follow presenter	✓
Navigate via page thumbnails	✓
Laser pointer tool	✓
Voting	✓

Post Meeting Management

Send meeting summary email	✓
Review past meetings	✓

- ✓* Synchronised page navigation, shared annotations
- ✓** Wireless network transmissions between Convene and its web portal are encrypted via 2048-bit Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)

“Easy to upload”

As the administrator, it's easy for me to upload the papers to Convene. There is also a directory (Document Library) where we can store all the organisations policies and standard documents. People used to contact me and say 'Can we have a copy of this, can we have a copy of that?', but now everything is loaded up to Convene so all they have to do is look in the directory and there it is. We have all the board papers for the past 12 months in the directory, and they can be accessed offline too. Everything is at people's fingertips, so its saves us time having to locate documents.

“Other apps couldn't compare”

It used to be a full day's work to prepare and mail out the board papers. Now I just open up Convene and drag everything over.

Our subsidiary boards, Committees and Directors also use Convene for their meetings now.

If anyone else is thinking of using board meeting software I'd say definitely have a look at Convene. We looked at other apps but they were more expensive and couldn't compare with Convene in terms of ease of use or features.

*Danielle Moore, Director's Secretary,
South Yorkshire Housing Association.
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