

# How Govroam simplifies multi-site working in Kent

From libraries to fire stations and from council offices to community centres, Kent public sector staff can connect effortlessly across multiple sites. Here's how govroam makes it possible:

## **The challenge: making it simpler to work across sites**

In Kent – as in other parts of the country – it's common practice for public sector staff to work across multiple sites as part of their jobs. For example, NHS staff might work at Borough Council offices; fire officers might work at County Council sites; or social workers might visit educational sites.

But until a few years ago, there was no consistent way for users to access the internet when working across different public sector locations.

Recognising this, Kent Public Service Network (KPSN) – the regional high-performance network which supports public sector organisations in the region – decided to address the challenge.

## **The solution: govroam, a national roaming standard**

KPSN was one of the founding members, with Jisc, of the PSNroam pilot, and deployed it county-wide. Unfortunately, that project didn't come into service, but Kent kept the infrastructure they had developed for it as a local solution, and by 2016 had coverage at 200 sites. When Jisc revived a similar concept as 'govroam' in 2017, KPSN recognised the benefits of joining the renewed national initiative, and made the changes to their PSNroam service to convert it to the govroam design.

After years of positive growth, govroam is now enabled at more than 500 public sector sites in Kent and Medway, including 400 Kent County

Council sites (including about 100 libraries), plus more than 60 fire stations and a range of other locations – even a castle.

By autumn 2019, KPSN was using govroam to make more than 50,000 successful authentications a week – from users based both inside and outside Kent organisations. This compares to about 15,000 successful authentications a week only six months previously.

## **Benefits: flexibility, auditability and business continuity planning**

Using govroam, public sector workers in Kent have flexibility as they roam from site to site. It means that, if they work at another govroam-enabled location, they don't have to ask for wireless access codes; instead, their device will connect automatically as soon as they arrive on site.

"It takes away the need for users who walk in to reception at a site to say: 'I'm here for a meeting or for the day – can I have your SSID and password?'"

**Stuart Cockett, technical service delivery manager at KPSN.**



Govroam helps with collaboration between Health and Social Care; in Kent and Medway, it is accessible at six hospitals, alongside healthy living centres and Local Authority Social Care sites.

“There are NHS staff who work in hospitals, at Borough and District Council sites, in doctors’ surgeries, and Kent County Council sites,” adds Stuart. “They would have to have multiple logins for all those different organisations – but this takes away that requirement.”

In normal use, govroam preserves the privacy of its users’ identities from the sites they visit. However, in extraordinary circumstances such as a police investigation, the home and visited organisations can cooperate and reconcile their logs to create an audit trail of whose account was accessing the internet at a given time. This solution protects privacy, minimises GDPR responsibilities, but ultimately offers the possibility of positive identification if a serious incident justifies it

And govroam helped, too, with business continuity planning. In Kent, for example, the council had been preparing for what would happen if roads become gridlocked in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Govroam means that, in this scenario, public sector workers would not need to travel to their usual workplace; instead they could still work effectively at govroam-enabled sites that are nearer their home.

### Future benefits: more efficient ways to network

Govroam also offers potential benefits for the future. For example, organisations in Kent have added capabilities to the service, allowing staff to access their own local, secure networks at govroam-enabled sites. This capability is already being offered as a live service at Medway Unitary Council.

“If a Medway member of staff goes to another office and logs in via govroam, the system knows they’re using a Medway device and drops them on to their local network,” says Stuart.

And because govroam is deployed alongside eduroam at educational sites, it can also offer benefits when public sector workers are deployed at participating universities and colleges.

“They don’t need to use special VPNs or complex tokens to access resources, so it simplifies working practice,” says Natalie Hancock, technical projects officer at KPSN.

Govroam could, in future, be used to allow Kent staff from different organisations to work permanently together, wirelessly, in the same public sector building, with logical separation of different organisations’ networks. “It would save a lot of money on physical infrastructure,” Stuart adds.



To find out more about Jisc’s govroam, please:



Contact the govroam team  
Email: [govroam@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:govroam@jisc.ac.uk)



or visit  
[jisc.ac.uk/govroam](https://jisc.ac.uk/govroam)