

Sandy Park Stadium, Conference Centre, and the Women's Rugby World Cup



Focus Group scores big, delivering a strategic upgrade for Sandy Park's network infrastructure across the worldwide Women's Rugby World Cup.

Location: Exeter | **Number of users:** 10000+

The project

Sandy Park is the home of Exeter Chiefs and a premier conference and events venue in the South West. Ahead of hosting fixtures for the Women's Rugby World Cup, Sandy Park needed robust connectivity that could stand up to the tournament's global broadcast demands, intense press activity, and hospitality needs, including:

- Guaranteed bandwidth and resilience for live TV broadcasting to multiple territories
- High-capacity Wi-Fi for press operations with hundreds of concurrent devices
- Secure connectivity for tournament control rooms, TMO operations, and the central review bunker
- Dependable access for team analytics
- Consistent connectivity for hospitality, digital signage, and behind-the-scenes operations
- Rapid on-site support and real-time monitoring across match days
- Mobile signal and network had to shoulder critical connectivity, with a focus on event-critical areas

The solution

Core network and Wi-Fi

- Replacement of core switching with dual-stacked HP Aruba switching to provide a highly available and fully redundant backbone for connectivity
- Capacity for 1,500 wired connections for stadium and event operations
- Targeted high-density Wi-Fi across the conference centre, press suite, broadcast compound, training pitch, and hospitality areas for over 2000 users
- Capacity engineered for up to 700 simultaneous connections in the press suite alone
- New fibre and CAT6 cabling, including pitch side and changing room outlets for media and operations

Internet access and security

- Two diversely routed 10Gb circuits delivered by PXC from different local exchanges.
- DDoS protection from PXC to safeguard live streams and critical services from unwanted malicious attacks
- Active bandwidth monitoring during events to validate circuit size and capacity



Event operations

- Segmented networks and assured paths for TMO operations with two-way comms to central review
- Reliable connectivity for team performance systems and player safety analytics, including data from G sensor mouthguards for player welfare
- Support for digital signage and venue-wide media needs

Assurance and support

- A full-time engineer on site during the tournament for immediate response
- Continuous cloud monitoring by Focus Group throughout every match window
- Alignment with Brighton & Hove Albion Stadium delivery, who were also hosting WRWC games, to mirror best practice across venues

The result

Zero incidents at the venue

Sandy Park reported no technical incidents across tournament fixtures, while other venues experienced issues. Broadcast, TMO, and analytics services ran smoothly from start to finish.

Cyber secure and tournament ready

The venue passed an independent cybersecurity assessment, validating the strength of the upgraded design and controls.

Broadcast-grade performance

Live global broadcasting, press workflows, and team analytics were supported without interruption, with connectivity scaled precisely to match-day demand.

Targeted coverage, clear expectations

Event critical areas received high-capacity Wi-Fi without creating stadium-wide fan expectations, aligning delivery to real operational needs.

Future-ready investment

The infrastructure positions Sandy Park to attract more major events, conferences, and concerts, with a modern platform that is easier to scale and support. The approach and learnings were also applied to Brighton Stadium to underpin wider tournament delivery.

Ultimately, Focus Group worked hand in hand with venue stakeholders and technology partners to deliver a resilient, secure, and high-performance network that helped the venue shine on a global stage.

"Focus Group has been a long-term partner of Exeter Chiefs and Sandy Park, so they were the natural choice when we were looking to upgrade our IT infrastructure ahead of the Women's Rugby World Cup. All our communications and IT needs were met without any disruption or delay to ensure our tournament delivery met the excellent standards expected of us."

Natasha Pavis, COO