



National Policing Criminal Justice Technology Strategy 2025 - 2030



Introduction

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Our strategy aims to harness technology to achieve several critical objectives within the Criminal Justice System (CJS). These goals include enhancing victim outcomes, optimising service delivery, improving efficiency, and fostering seamless collaboration with partner agencies. Let's delve into the key areas of focus, particularly within police processes:

1. **Victim and Witness Coordination and Support:**
 - Leveraging technology, we seek to streamline the coordination of victims and witnesses. By providing efficient channels for communication and support, we empower those affected by crime.
2. **Effective Custody and Suspect Management:**
 - Our strategy emphasises smart custody management. Digital tools can enhance the monitoring and handling of suspects, ensuring their rights while maintaining public safety.
3. **Prosecution Case Progression and Pre-Charge Quality Enhancement:**
 - Technology plays a pivotal role in expediting case progression. From evidence redaction to file quality, we aim for seamless digital workflows that benefit both legal professionals and the public.
4. **Out-of-Court Resolutions:**
 - By integrating technology, we can optimise the process of resolving cases outside the courtroom. This approach balances justice with efficiency.
5. **Seamless Integration with the Courts:**
 - Our strategy promotes interoperability between police systems and court processes. Efficient data exchange ensures a smoother journey through the justice system.

Prevention as the Guiding Thread:

At the core of our strategy lies prevention and the fundamental policing principle of safeguarding communities from harm and criminal behaviour. By weaving prevention into our technological advancements, we create a safer environment for all.

Police Processes

In the realm of policing, accurate personalised data plays a pivotal role. Stored, reviewed, and interpreted in alignment with legislation, codes of practice, and policy, data informs critical decisions made by officers and staff. These decisions reverberate across victims, witnesses, and suspects, shaping their experiences within the criminal justice system.

However, we face a dual challenge:

- **Data Complexity:** The volume and intricacy of data continue to surge. While this presents an opportunity for service improvement, it also introduces hurdles. Policing must maintain accuracy and consistency, especially in time-critical scenarios.
- **AI and Robotics:** The spotlight is on artificial intelligence (AI), automation and robotics. These cutting-edge tools hold immense potential for data-reliant CJS organisations. By harnessing them effectively, we can maximise opportunities.

Our strategy revolves around several key principles:

1. **Consistent Framework:** Policing must adopt a consistent framework, rooted in best practices. This ensures that AI and robotics are seamlessly integrated, enhancing both efficiency and public confidence.
2. **Public Trust:** Our unwavering commitment lies in improving public confidence and the legitimacy of police services. By leveraging technology responsibly, we reinforce trust.
3. **Baseline Integration:** Throughout our strategy, the integration of AI and robotics serves as our baseline position. These tools are not mere add-ons; they are essential enablers.

In summary, data-driven decisions, coupled with technological advancements, will support Policing deliver safer communities and help enable an effective criminal justice system.

Victims & Witnesses

The **Victims and Prisoners Bill 2024** introduces crucial measures aimed at bolstering end-to-end support for victims of crime. Our goal is to equip officers and staff with the necessary information and digital tools to help victims cope, build resilience, and navigate daily life while actively engaging with the criminal justice system.

1. Incorporating Victims' Code Principles:

- The government proposals include enshrining the overarching principles of the **Victims' Code** in primary legislation. This will ensure that victims' rights and expectations are clearly defined.

2. Promoting Awareness and Duty:

- Relevant CJS bodies will be duty-bound to promote awareness of the Victims' Code. This proactive approach will enhance transparency and empower victims.

3. Enhanced Oversight and Local Collaboration:

- Improved data collection and involving Police and Crime Commissioners at the local level, strengthening the oversight of the Victims' Code delivery.
- Police, local authorities, and Integrated Care Boards in England will be expected to collaborate to provide holistic and coordinated victim support services.

4. Consistency in Support Services:

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors play critical roles. Statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State will ensure consistent and effective support.
- All individuals working with victims must adhere to this guidance.

5. Empowering the Victims' Commissioner:

- The role of the Victims' Commissioner will be updated. Departments and agencies responsible for meeting Victims' Code requirements must respond to recommendations made by the Commissioner in their published reports.

6. National Oversight and Thematic Inspections:

- There is a proposal for a power to direct joint thematic inspections, bolstering national oversight of victims' experiences within the criminal justice system.

In summary, the Victims and Prisoners Bill 2024 strives for a more compassionate, efficient, and victim-centred criminal justice system.

The Problem

- There is currently no consistent method for forces and criminal justice partners to measure their compliance(delivery) with the requirements of the Victims and Prisoners Bill and specifically the requirements placed on individual criminal justice agencies detailed in the Victims Code.
- There is no consistent digital platform available for victim and witness to provided them with the support they require at different stages of their engagement with the CJS. This means the ability of the CJS agencies to report on the quantitative and qualitative service provided is absent. Therefore it is challenging to capture and promote best practice, apply improvements and efficiencies consistently across victim and witness services.

Development Requirements

- The Police and other Criminal Justice agencies must be able to understand, report and improve service delivery required in the Victims Code, based on 'real-time' accurate quantitative and qualitative information and data.
- Victims should be able to access the quality and detail of the personalised service they receive. This would enable them to understand, have confidence and challenge the service deliver provided to them if appropriate and necessary.

Language and Interpreter Services

Non-English speakers who live in our communities and interact with the Police and other Criminal Justice System (CJS) services often encounter communication barriers. These obstacles hinder effective engagement and understanding. However, technology can play a pivotal role in bridging this gap.

1. **Automatic Language Translations:**

- Leveraging technology for automatic language translations can significantly enhance accessibility within the CJS. By providing real-time translations, we can empower non-English speakers to navigate CJS services and processes more effectively.

2. **Interpreter Shortages and Challenges:**

- Despite advancements, there remains a shortage of qualified interpreters. Their availability can be limited, especially in high-demand situations.
- Within the custody environment, interpreters play a crucial role in assisting police officers, supporting victims, and ensuring effective communication during suspect investigations.

3. **Timeliness of Prosecution Processes:**

- The wider CJS relies heavily on appropriately accredited interpreters. Their involvement impacts the timeliness of prosecution processes.
- Ensuring seamless communication between victims, witnesses, and suspects—regardless of language—directly influences the overall efficiency of justice delivery.

In summary, embracing technology-driven language solutions and addressing interpreter challenges will create a more inclusive and efficient Criminal Justice System for all communities.

The Problem

- Timely interpreter capacity and interpretation requirements is an increasing requirement across Policing activities and particularly for legislatively bound CJS processes.

Development Requirements

- Improved capacity and availability of interpreter services to deliver timely support service access to victims, witnesses and suspects through the innovative use of technology and AI.

Custody Management

The legislative and procedural requirements governing the detention of suspects, lawful custody, evidence collection, and disposal (including Pre-Charge bail) are undeniably complex.

These processes intertwine with the critical need to safeguard the welfare of detained and voluntary attending suspects, as outlined in the **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)** and the 'Safer Detention' Approved Professional Practice.

Key considerations:

1. **Complexity of Detention:**

- Each detention generates a wealth of personal data. Correctly utilising this data is essential to making informed decisions.
- The intricate coordination of interview rooms, support services, legal advisors, interpreters, investigators, and appropriate adults adds layers of complexity. Custody teams often operate in high-pressure environments.

2. **Manual Management Challenges:**

- Despite the effectiveness of Force Record Management Systems (RMS) in collecting and recording suspect detention data, many processes remain manual.
- Custody teams must meticulously interpret this data to ensure accurate decisions are made.

3. **Balancing Legal Requirements and Welfare:**

- Striking the right balance between legal requirements and the welfare of suspects is paramount. The Safer Detention framework emphasises this delicate equilibrium.

In summary, the interplay of legal mandates, data management, and human coordination underscores the intricate nature of suspect detention within the criminal justice system.

The Problem

- The complex management of suspects in police detention or subject to voluntary attendance investigations relies on custody staff and investigators assessing increasingly complex information and co-ordinating multiple investigative and support processes to ensure 'Safe Detention' and diversion to support services.

Development Requirements

- Automation and AI systems can assist custody teams manage the complex processes that must be coordinated to ensure 'Safe Detention' and effective custody based investigation. Intelligent integration and interoperability between Police and CJS systems will improve efficiency across the CJS.
- Automation processes to reduce demand on custody allowing partners expedient access to information. Utilising technology to bring together intelligence from the moment of arrest through to custody suite detention highlighting risks and allowing earlier interventions and planning by custody teams.

Out of Court Resolutions

The forthcoming **Diversions and Community Cautions Draft Code of Practice**, set to publication in 2024, lays the groundwork for legislation that will take effect in early 2025 under **Part 6 of the Sentencing and Courts Act 2022**. This pivotal framework aims to streamline processes for operational officers, ensuring evidence-based delivery of Out-of-Court Resolutions (OoCRs) that prevent reoffending and safeguard communities. Core aspects of the changes include.

1. **Simplified Operational Processes:**

- Operational officers require a straightforward, efficient process to manage OoCRs. By simplifying procedures, we can empower officers to focus on evidence-backed resolutions that enhance public safety and reduce reoffending.

2. **Building Public Confidence Through Prevention and Diversion:**

- The opportunity lies in bolstering public confidence. By emphasising prevention and diversion, we can foster legitimacy in neighborhood problem-solving.
- Effective OoCRs play a pivotal role in achieving this balance.

3. **Evidence-Driven Decision-Making:**

- The success of out-of-court resolutions hinges on evidence. We must continually assess what works and adapt accordingly.
- Robust compliance monitoring ensures that victim and community confidence remains intact.

4. **Leveraging Management Information:**

- Capturing best practices through management information is essential. It informs evidence-based commissioning of diversionary and prevention interventions.
- By aligning our strategies with data-driven insights, we create a more effective and responsive criminal justice system.

In summary, the Diversions and Community Cautions framework seeks to harmonise prevention, what works evidence, and community trust which will be a powerful combination for safer neighborhoods.

The Problem

- To support officers deliver quality preventative OoCR they require information and guidance to 'what works' and tools that support the processes.
- Management Information regarding the use of OoCR is key to identifying best practice, ensuring consistency and informing OPCC commissioning decisions.

Development Requirements

- The Home Office Capability Reform Unit is currently working in partnership with the NPCC OoCR Portfolio to scope and define solutions to the problems outlined through the Accelerate Capability Environment (ACE).

Pre-Charge Bail

The **legislative change** regarding **Pre-Charge Bail (PCB)** in 2022 led to a **10% increase** in the number of suspects with PCB status between 2021/22 and 2022/23(Home Office ADR). This surge places additional demands on policing, particularly concerning offences against the person and domestic abuse cases.

Pre-Charge Bail serves as a protective measure, ensuring the safety of victims and witnesses. However, its application must equally always uphold the rights of suspects and be proportionate and necessary to the circumstances.

Key considerations include:

1. Adherence to Legislation and National Guidance:

- Managing suspects with PCB status requires strict adherence to both legislation and national guidance. This ensures consistency and fairness.
- Forces are actively developing improved insight and performance management systems to enhance their handling of PCB cases.

2. Individual Investigator Responsibility:

- Investigators bear individual responsibility for effectively managing suspects with PCB status. Their decisions impact the timely progress of investigations.
- Balancing the rights of suspects with the safety of victims remains paramount.

In summary, effective suspect management within the framework of Pre-Charge Bail contributes to a more efficient and just criminal justice system.

The Problem

- Suspects must be managed during investigations to ensure victims and witnesses are protected whilst ensuring the use of PCB is always necessary and proportionate.
- Forces and officers would benefit from up to date accurate and timely information regarding the bail status of their suspects to ensure bail reviews, updates, extensions and bail condition amendments are managed effectively.
- Apart from the yearly Home Office Annual Data return there is no 'live' insight into the number of suspects being managed with PCB by forces.
- Across the country forces have significant numbers of staff managing the administration of PCB statuses, often simply via email updates to officers.
- Suspects with Released Under Investigation status or subject to an investigation following a Voluntary Attendance interview equally require effective management.

Development Requirements

- Policing seeks innovative agile solutions for investigators to the problems outlined which maximise live data availability and AI to improve investigation and suspect management.
- Improved management information availability in relation to suspect management which informs and enables suspect management improvements in terms of timeliness, outcomes and protection for victims and the wider community.

Case Progression

The **Digital Case File (DCF)** case progression solution, currently in development and operational implementation testing under the guidance of the **Police Digital Service**, represents a pivotal national change program. This development holds immense significance for policing, promising substantial enhancements to the processes followed by officers during prosecution case development and collaboration with **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** prosecutors.

Key aspects:

1. **Streamlined Processes:**

- The DCF aims to revolutionise case file management through digital tools. By integrating nationally agreed standards and specifications, we will eliminate cumbersome form-filling requirements.
- Officers will attach information, evidence, and disclosure material to DCFs, ensuring compliance with **National File Standards** and evidential presentation rules outlined in the **Director General's Guidance** and the **Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA)**.

2. **Equipping Officers with Digital Tools:**

- As digital evidence volumes grow, officers must be equipped with appropriate tools. **AI, Automation, and Robotic applications** ensuring their operational efficiency.
- Innovative technologies assist officers in managing, editing, redacting, and presenting digital evidence and disclosure material. A consistent national approach is essential.

3. **Case Progression Management Information:**

- Forces are developing case progression management information governance frameworks and insights, in various formats.
- Formalised case progression data will enable forces to support officers effectively, ensuring the delivery of quality prosecution files to the Criminal Justice System (CJS).
- It also provides insights into the efficiency of prosecution functions, allowing best practices to be shared across policing based on agreed performance information.

4. **Enhanced Service to Victims and Witnesses:**

- Improved case progression information enables tailored support and updates for individual victims, witnesses, and suspects.
- Automated and on-request updates can be provided to enhance understanding and provide necessary instructions.

In summary, the DCF represents a transformative leap toward efficient, victim-centric, and evidence-driven criminal justice processes.

The Problem

- Officers require the digital tools to manage large quantities of digital evidence and disclosure material.
- Management Information regarding force Case Progression functions is not consistent and does not provide victims, witnesses and suspects with the information they require.
- Consistent formalised Case Progression information will enable forces to identify and adopt best practice and improve efficiency and productivity of their teams.

Development Requirements

- Policing requires digital tools which maximise AI, Automation and Robotics to enable investigators to comply with the necessary legislative and guidance, whilst improving their efficiency and productivity.
- Policing requires consistent 'live time' Case Progression data to improve process and service delivery to the public. The ability to understand the cases progression real time status of every case through out the Criminal Justice System, is the ambition.

Disclosure

The **Attorney General's Guidance on Disclosure (Annex D)**, particularly concerning redaction, remains a substantial challenge for investigators and police forces. However, promising developments are underway:

1. **Digital Evidence Project:**

- The **Police Digital Service** is spearheading a critical national change program—the **Digital Evidence Project**. This initiative aims to streamline processes and enhance efficiency.
- The project focuses on equipping policing with the necessary digital tools to manage (redaction) evidence and disclosure material effectively.

2. **Enhanced Redaction Capabilities:**

- The **Home Office**, in collaboration with the **NPCC Disclosure Portfolio**, is actively working with suppliers to advance redaction capabilities.
- The goal is to develop and deliver tools that significantly improve the redaction process.

3. **Assessment of Automated Tools:**

- The Police Digital Service is currently assessing **automated visual and audio multi-media evidence and disclosure material redaction tools**.
- These tools promise to alleviate the burden on officers by streamlining redaction tasks.

In summary, the ongoing efforts to enhance redaction capabilities will empower policing to manage evidence more efficiently and uphold the integrity of the criminal justice system.

The Problem

- Investigators require the digital tools that will enable them to edit, present and redaction multi media digital evidence. The significant amount of digital material which is now routinely required to be considered by investigators necessitates the implementation of technology that maximises AI, Automation and Robotics.

Development Requirements

- The PDS Digital Evidence project provides the necessary delivery pathway to enabling the short term implementation of the necessary standards and digital redaction tools for investigators.

Charging

The future success and development of **Digital Charging** and **Digital Case File** hinges upon consistent and timely sharing of all digital evidence categories when cases are submitted to the **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** for a charging decision. To achieve this, an updated **Digital Evidence Strategy**, unanimously agreed upon by all Criminal Justice Services, is imperative.

However, the current landscape faces challenges:

- **Inconsistency and Limited Cohesion:** The use of diverse digital platforms and systems across CJS agencies hampers the effective and efficient transfer of case material in digital form.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):** While the updated MoU for sharing digital material with the CPS and the wider CJS provides valuable insights into risk considerations, it is essential to dynamically manage a comprehensive Digital Evidence Strategy. This strategy should adapt swiftly to the ever-evolving technology landscape and its enabling impact on criminal activities.

AI, Automation, and Robotics: These technological advancements will continue to pose challenges and opportunities for the CJS. Collecting and presenting digital evidence as part of prosecution cases remains a critical necessity.

In summary, fostering a cohesive and adaptable approach to digital evidence management is crucial for the Criminal Justice System's effectiveness and resilience.

The Problem

- The collection, interpretation and sharing of digital evidence and disclosure material across the CJS requires consistency and guidance. The fast pace of technological innovation and the requirement to manage digital material in traditional and evolving types of criminal behaviour is significant.

Development Requirements

- A dynamically managed Digital Evidence strategy with associated guidance is required to enable digital material to be collected and presented to support charging decisions and the safe prosecution of defendants.

Courts

The management of witnesses within the criminal justice system involves intricate coordination across various IT systems and teams. Unfortunately, this complexity often results in inefficiencies and inconsistencies. To address these challenges, we need to transform existing processes and innovate by maximising technology.

1. Leveraging Video Enabled Justice (VEJ):

- **Underutilised Potential:** Despite its potential, remote witness attendance at court remains underutilised. VEJ offers an opportunity to significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of court processes.
- **Video Remand Hearings (VRH):** VRH provides an efficient alternative to physically producing individuals in court. These hearings can effectively manage custody remand cases, especially during contingency situations (such as issues with police or HMCTS facilities).
- **National Adoption Process:** Establishing a national process and clear terms of reference for VRH adoption would further streamline its use.

2. Maximising Technological Opportunities:

- **Technological Innovations:** Technology advancements offer significant benefits for the Criminal Justice System (CJS). By linking these innovations to the transformation of **Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECs)**, we can unlock the full potential of VRH.
- **PECs Integration:** PECs can play a crucial role in supporting police custody. Integrating technology within PECs can lead to more efficient processes and better outcomes.

In summary, aligning technology with operational improvements can address the current inconsistencies and inefficiencies across the entire criminal justice system.

The Problem

- The aging and shrinking HMCTS court centre capacity is a key factor in the continuing backlog of cases in the CJS. Technology to allow witnesses and defendants to appear in court remotely exists, but its use is not being maximised.

Development Requirements

- Working together the CJS partners should commit to maximising existing technology and new technologies to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of the court processes. With the aim of delivering better outcomes for all users of the Criminal Justice System, delivering efficiencies through use of VEJ technology.