Police and the Multi-Agency Digital Transformation; Are You Ready?

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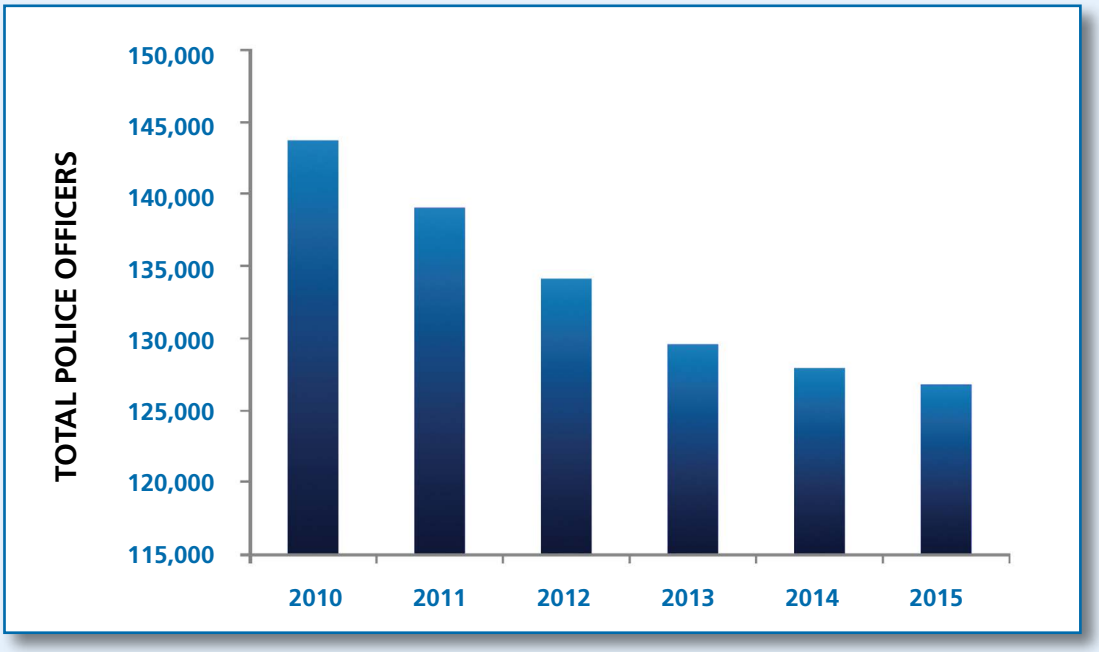
Introduction

Police forces across the UK are under mounting pressure to identify millions in savings. According to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), there was a 20 percent reduction in central funding to the police service between March 2011 and March 2015.[1]

However, the challenges for police forces and authorities has not been to only balance the books, but to change the way they deliver their policing services as well as to make them more efficient. In this way, citizens continue to receive improving services.[2]

In addition, the nature of today's policing is undergoing radical change due to the reductions in front line officers in order to realise these savings. In fact, the numbers of all types of officers, ranging from police officers to special constables have fallen from March 2014 to 2015, with the number of front line officers experiencing reductions since 31 March 2010.[3] By March 2015, forces were expected to reduce their workforces by 32,400—including at least 15,000 officers—and to cut their spending on goods and services by around £474 million.[4]



1 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Policing in Austerity: One Year On", 2012. www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/metropolitan-policing-in-austerity-one-year-on.pdf*

2 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Policing in Austerity: One Year On", 2012. www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/metropolitan-policing-in-austerity-one-year-on.pdf*

3 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Policing in Austerity: One Year On", 2012. www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/metropolitan-policing-in-austerity-one-year-on.pdf*

4 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Policing in Austerity: One Year On", 2012. ww.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/metropolitan-policing-in-austerity-one-year-on.pdf*

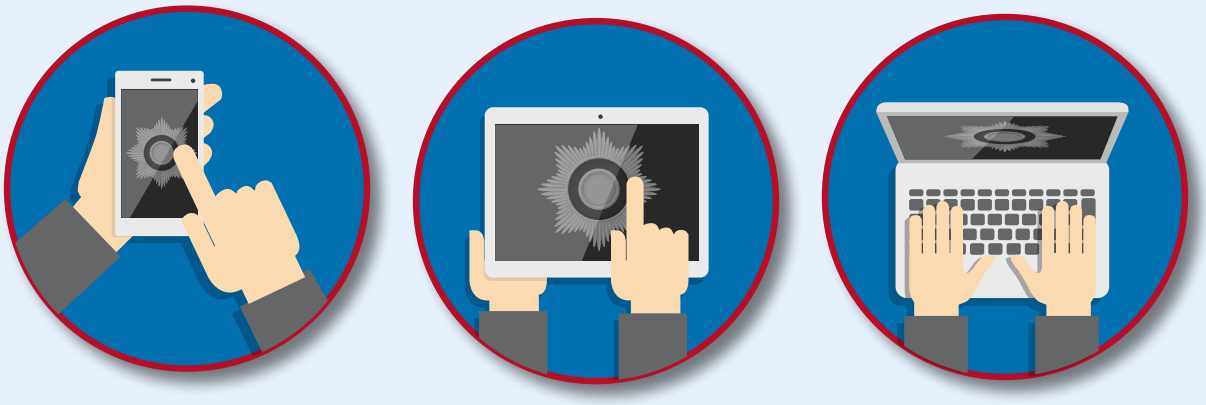
With the numbers down throughout police workforces, the processes available to them must be more proficient. Likewise, information needed has to become more immediately available to those officers on the beat. Officers require technology that works on any device or platform, and supplies them with what they require so they can work safely, quickly and while they are en-route to any situation, enabling them to make better decisions and removing the issues of working with disparate applications across agencies.

There is also increasing focus on shared resources across police forces. Warnings have been conveyed that police forces should potentially merge and share their resources with other emergency services and agencies or public safety may suffer from severe cost cutting.[5]

Technology cycles found within policing will be evident over the next five years more than at any time over the past 100 years as the launch of the ESN is built. Citizen-based outcomes from digital platforms and solutions combined with greater operational efficiency and effectiveness are what all business cases are predicated upon. However, there will be mistakes made. Double keying of data into systems needs to be avoided at all costs as this moves the problem from the front line

to the back office. The proprietary legacy systems need to be sidelined for new open-sourced technology. Cloud technology needs to be adopted for all types of infrastructure and especially Records Management Systems. That way data-sharing can occur between all regional police forces, not just neighbouring forces. Doing more of this can help police forces and public service agencies help vulnerable people from slipping under the net.

The purpose of this white paper is to discuss the challenges facing the country's police officers and their departments. It will examine the benefits mobile applications and working can offer to facilitate and enhance shared services and collaboration between police forces and other public service bodies.



5 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Increasing efficiency in the Police Service: The role of collaboration", 2012. www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/increasing-efficiency-in-the-police-service.pdf*

A situation that can face police and corresponding public services

A vulnerable gentleman moves into a mid-terraced house in the outskirts of a large city. This person has moved house on many occasions across a wide area across several counties, and is estranged from his family due to health problems, disabilities and other issues that they can no longer assist him with. As a result, he is left to deal with his debilitating health and surroundings—those that are becoming increasingly dangerous because of gangs that populate the area. At one point, individuals from these gangs gained access to his property and mugged him, stealing items from his home and leaving him with injuries.

In previous moves, this gentleman was lost in the system. Information about him and his vulnerable state was unavailable because his data was not shared effectively between police on that particular force, officers on the beat, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and other organisations such as the local council and their Adult and Community Services. Without technology, the information on this person was typically delayed because of the lack of shared resources and disparate applications.

This gentleman's situation does have a happy ending. The police, council and Adult and Community Services and the other public services across the region adopted mobile solutions that enabled them to easily share data among each other. All of those associated with this man—social workers, health workers, ambulance teams as well as the police were able to have his details at their fingertips for any issues that might arise. The key is to integrate policing with other key public services.

Mobile working for today's police forces

Technology has the potential to transform police work. However, some forces are still using out-of-date IT. What can be done to guarantee that officers are provided with the smart systems they need in the field?

How the police service protects the public from serious harm is not always apparent while the impact of not doing so can be significant. The HMIC has examined four collaborations and how they aim to keep the public safe through:

- Meeting and resourcing demand, both in overtime and space
- Reducing risk through the increased capacity and shared intelligence and routine access to experts in handling specialist crimes
- Preventing and detecting more crimes through collaborative expertise and resources to result in less victims of crime with even more offenders brought to justice.[6]

According to a 2015 Police Apps Market Study report, a need exists for the digital transformation of police processes. Forces widely understand this fact, and are beginning to act on this mission-critical requirement.[7] However, some forces remain hesitant and are waiting for others to take their place as early adopters. For those who are adopting digital strategies and processes early on, they are creating more efficient working practices. Throughout this

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transformation, most forces have realised that mobile working is an apparent priority. Most have already begun rolling out tablets and smartphones, mainly to their front line officers. When these devices are deployed, officers have the ability to work in a location-independent or an 'agile' manner.[8] As a result, they spend far less time in their stations, and the public benefits from their increased visibility. One police force representative commented: "In the short-to-medium term, the plan is that we will be a more agile organisation with a reduced estate footprint, and officers being much more visible on the front line."[9]

When forces are determining the criteria necessary for their mobile enablement solutions, several things are seriously considered.

These include:

- Cost
- Platform/device agnosticism
- Flexibility
- Database integration
- Functionality
- Future-proofing capabilities
- Niche and user experience abilities.[10]

6 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. "Policing in Austerity: One Year On", 2012. www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/metropolitan-policing-in-austerity-one-year-on.pdf*

7, 8, 9 & 10 Kable, "Police Apps Market Study", 2015.

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Source: *Kable, "Police Apps Market Study" 2015*

Some other force representatives made a distinction between cost and return on investment. Another respondent replied: " Cost is a consideration, but if we can show that there's a clear return on investment then it will make a business case. So if it costs £5 million to roll out across [the force] but in the first year we made £5 million in savings, then it's a no-brainer."[12]

Yet another reported: "Generally, you would think cost is the major factor, but I've found in discussions with our officer team that it's more about getting the right solution."[13]

Costs aside, several forces have already shared that mobile working and shared services are vital to their daily operations.

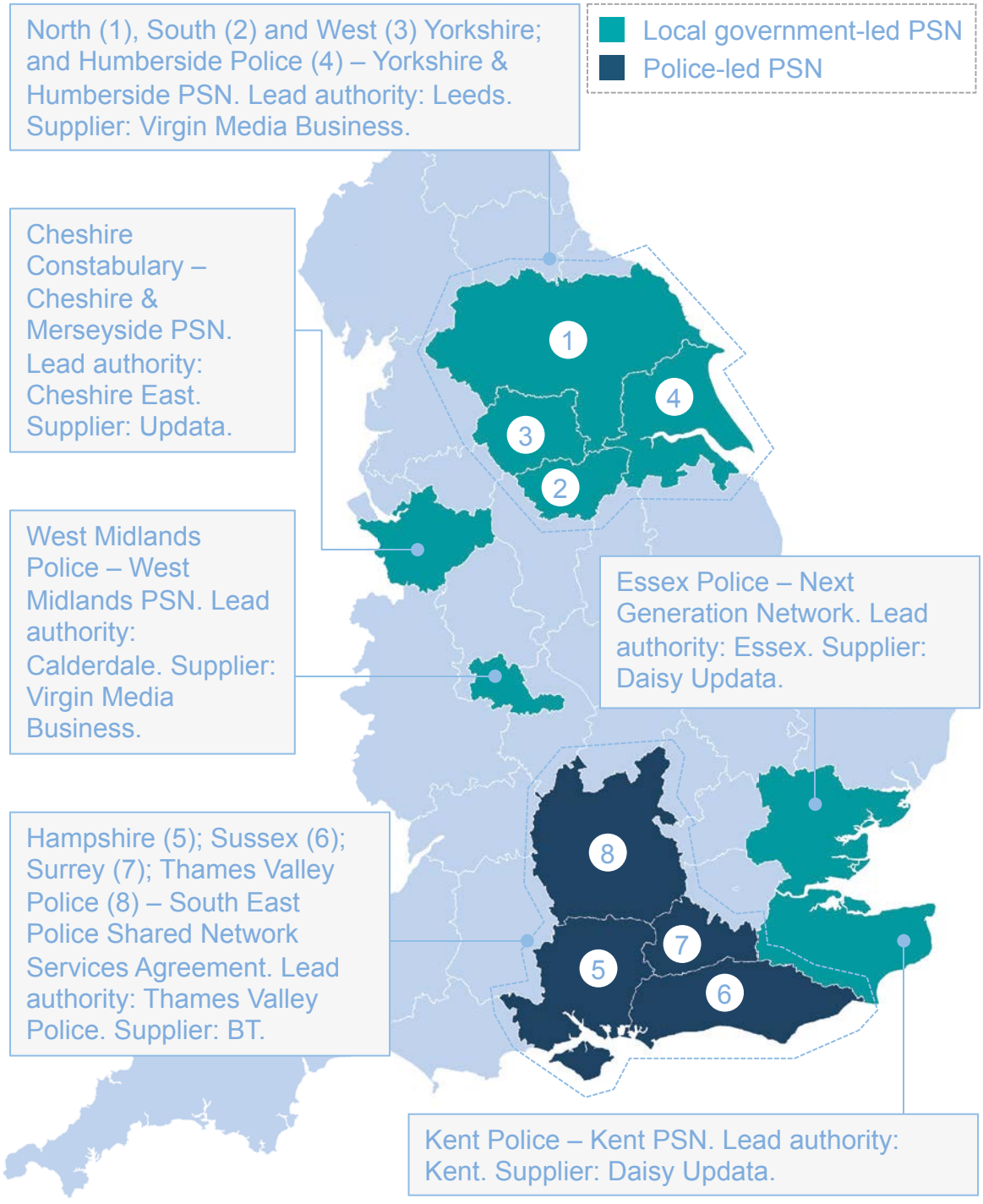
- Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire have a joint, single unit for procurement, and there is now a single head of ICT, Ian Bell, across all three forces. Cambridgeshire is leading on the rollout of 7,000 smartphones to officers to increase productivity and provide new features such as email and intranet on a device.
- Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Police use a similar Niche set up—as well as shared ICT.
- The Sussex and Surrey Police have a shared ICT team and when they shared their Niche platform between both forces, they managed to achieve an arrest within the first few hours of the platform going live.

These forces are not the only ones who are moving into shared services and established collaborative procurement arrangements with the common requirement to migrate to PSN. The figures on the corresponding pages show the breakdown of these arrangements.

Similarly, a number of forces have ambitious targets for their digital transformation programmes, and many expect a host of new services to be facilitated as a result. "We've got an IT transformation program which is enabling every digital possibility. We're looking at digital interview recording and body-worn video, Wi-Fi… you name it, we're looking at it," a head of IT said. "Digital, audio and visual evidence, or DAVE, is where everything's at. It's about big storage and big bandwidth, and networks and devices that contribute to that," another added.

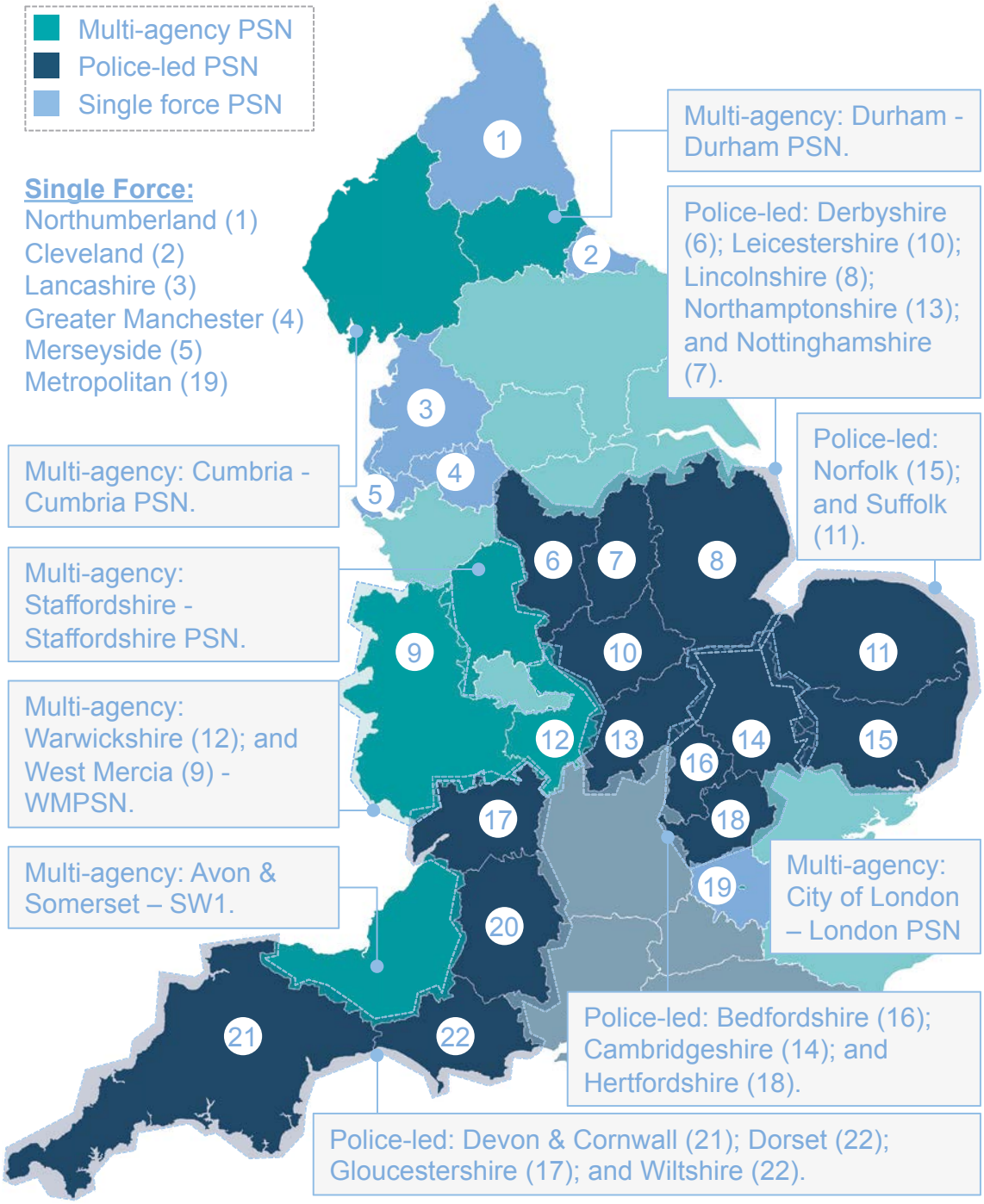
11, 12 & 13 Kable, "Police Apps Market Study", 2015.

Figure 1: Membership of PSN-compliant multiagency contracts amongst English Police Forces, January 2015



Source, Kable January 2015

Figure 2: Future membership of PSN-compliant multi-agency contracts amongst English Police Forces



Source, Kable January 2015

Introducing new mobile technologies

The TETRA radio communications that were supplied under the legacy Airwave contract are being replaced. Police forces are also migrating from the third Police National Network (PNN3) on to a Public Services Network (PSN)-compliant model of network. The new Emergency Services Network (ESN) will replace the current communications systems used by police, will provide a system that is better and smarter, saving emergency services around £1 billion over the next 15 years.[14]

This new technology has huge potential for policing. The introduction of the always-on smartphones and tablets, along with access to large amounts of specific data, demonstrates that officers can now be better informed and make more use of their time while on the beat. They also can leverage ways to deal with all of this digital evidence and focus on data-centric policing.

These new connections are available to not only the front line officers, but to their various partner police forces and even other public sector groups like emergency services, councils, social workers and health workers. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is the project to replace TETRA with 4G.

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>
> **Ian Bell** *Head of ICT BCH Cambridgeshire Constabulary*

Today's police forces need to become leaders in their sharing and collaboration. In doing so, this now develops into the new agenda for policing mobility and digital strategies. In order for this to be a success, forces must share their information assets and embrace both inter-force and inter-agency collaboration, especially on a regional basis. This can now be accomplished. Leaders implementing digital strategies are able to deal with the evidence they collect so they are able to focus on data-centric policing.

For examples, Ian Bell, the Head of ICT BCH, Cambridgeshire Constabulary reported: "We developed a plan to replace our whole estate with brand new devices and a mobile data project which spanned across three police forces. It was important to us that we could clearly articulate savings while keeping the whole project manageable… It allowed us to considerably reduce costs, while equipping our front line and back office staff with the latest 4G technology."

14 *Home Office and James Brokenshire, MP. "Significant cost saving for emergency services network contract", 11 February 2015. www.gov.uk/government/news/significant-cost-saving-for-emergency-services-network-contract*

Technology and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

High profile cases over the years—including that of the aforementioned vulnerable gentleman case study—highlighted what tragic consequences can occur when information indicating risk is held by one agency and not shared with others. Many areas have now established Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) to help mitigate the risk of anyone slipping through the system.[15] MASHs also provide secure access to the Police National Database (PND) and other confidential databases for police operating within the MASH. This enables real-time information flow without the need for costly gateway architecture.

What mobile technology can offer

Today's mobile digital technology provides police forces and other services with a wide range of benefits. These feature:

- Officers can now make accurate, timely decisions.
- Officers can now send email and book appointments away from the station on a mobile device.
- Officers can use their desktop intranet apps for easier booking and tasking, reducing the time they need at the stations.
- Front line officers can prepare reports in the field and upload them to their back office databases.
- Their devices work across the leading mobile platforms such as Android, iOS and Windows Phone.
- Police can leverage the IBM i3 analytical toolkit to access databases to help them use existing data to see what's coming—and when it's coming whilst on the road.
- Using the IBM i3 analytical toolkit to deliver more information to the field as well as take advantage of more crime and incident data sources like incident reports, witness statements, email and social media content.
- The technology allows them to conduct federated searches with data re-use capabilities.
- Officers can receive data from multiple sources that is suitable for on-street and in-car use as a real-time CCTV.
- This technology reduces the time required to receive information and produce a report.
- Any paper processes are removed.
- The digital activity record can be mined for accurate reporting, performance management and statistics.
- The technology also enables the use of cloud computing to seamlessly deliver information across devices and platforms, providing far greater data analytics insights.

15 *Home Office and The Right Honorable Norman Baker. "Working together to safeguard children: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs," 29 July 2014.*
www.gov.uk/government/news/working-together-to-safeguard-children-multi-agency-safeguarding-hubs

Officers can also receive better quality data. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology is used to help detect, deter and disrupt criminality at a local, force, regional and national level, including tackling travelling criminals, Organised Crime Groups and terrorists. ANPR provides lines of enquiry and evidence in the investigation of crime and is used by LEA throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.[17] In one ANPR use, it detected a vehicle reported to possess no road tax. The vehicle was searched, and a significant amount of drugs was discovered in the boot. Through the use of ANPR, there is greater community confidence and reassurance, and crime prevention and reduction.

Other solutions feature translation applications for incidents when officers need to talk with suspects or the public in different languages. These are available in the Android, Windows and iOS operating systems.

Solutions also use all the features and functionality available in the mobile devices. For example, the latest smart phones have high resolution screens, providing officers

With the ability to receive data from multiple sources and the capability to connect to back office databases, officers literally become a 'connected cop' operating from a 'connected car'.

with the ability to display high resolution video evidence. In addition, with the ability to receive data from multiple sources and the capability to connect to back office databases, officers literally become a 'connected cop' operating from a 'connected car'. They can now make quality decisions in the field because they have true mobility in their hands. In addition, when everyone is plainly on the same page, formulating multi-service agreements allow constabularies to aggregate demand without sacrificing requirements.

Conclusion

Embracing today's future-proofing agenda, new digital strategies, shared working, newest technology and using it for greater collaboration, will save forces money. The available solutions that remove the use of disparate applications will enable officers as well as other public service personnel and agencies across regions to get the best visibility whether they are on road or on foot. This will mean officers will have better quality information enabling them to make the best quality decisions, and this can be shared with partner police forces. The general public receives greatly enhanced services, and they can be guaranteed that crimes can be reduced and those offenders are brought to justice more quickly than before.

17 *Police.UK. "Automatic Number Plate Recognition."* *www.police.uk/information-and-advice/automatic-number-plate-recognition/*

O2 understands the pressures placed on police forces to reduce costs whilst improving operational efficiency. We believe that through our ICT and mobile solutions, we can enable greater efficiencies and deliver value through digital technology and shared services. Working with over 40% of the public sector and being the first mobile network provider to achieve CAS(T) accreditation, that is what makes us truly equipped to understand the needs and challenges of police forces and the wider Public Sector industry.

To find out more about our work with the Criminal Justice and Emergency Services industry, go to:

www.o2.co.uk/enterprise/sectors/public-sector/justice-and-emergency-services.

Telephone: 0800 955 5590

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Kable, John Carpenter House, 7 Carmelite Street, London, EC4Y 0BS
+44 (0) 20 7936 6997 or email us at clientservices@kable.co.uk