



TRANSFORMING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



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The Criminal Justice System (CJS) in the UK comprises multiple agencies and processes to prevent crime, hold offenders to account, rehabilitate, and provide victims with justice. It encompasses early intervention and prevention programmes, policing, prosecution and the courts, prisons, probation and rehabilitation services. Although crime has fallen steadily over recent years, the scale of the CJS workload is still staggering – it deals with over 3.7 million recorded crimes per year with 1.4 million cases reaching the magistrates court.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Like all government agencies, those in the CJS face significant budgetary constraints and must work smarter to achieve greater efficiencies and flexibilities in their work processes. The challenge is vast. The traditional paper notebook carried by police officers has been the iconic front end of all evidence processed by the CJS for over 100 years. Its continued use, together with the mountains of paperwork seen in courtrooms up and down the country, is symbolic of the extent to which the digital revolution has yet to make its mark on the CJS.

Airwave, with over 15 years' experience of working with the police and emergency services, is already working with several different CJS agencies across the UK to manage the transition to digital data capture. As part of that work, we are helping the CJS to better understand key areas for improvement in the incident to trial pathway. These include:

- The current pathway is built around constant checking and oversight of data. This is labour intensive and can act as a disincentive for building good quality information into the system from the outset
- The lack of high quality information in case files has resulted in a tendency to focus on 'firefighting' across the system as a normal response to increased demand

- Current IT systems do not support the cooperation of CJS agencies across the pathway. There is currently no cross agency IT case system available to all CJS participants

Greater digitalisation doesn't just save processing and administration times. Better quality evidence, captured on electronic, error free forms, perhaps with photos embedded as evidence, greatly increases the likelihood of obtaining a conviction. Evidence from Police Scotland suggests that up to 90 per cent of suspects confronted with video of photographic evidence plead guilty early, which in turn means that fewer victims undergo the distress of a trial.

SOLUTION: DIGITAL EVIDENCE CAPTURE WITH AIRWAVE

Over a third of police forces are already using Pronto, Airwave's suite of mobile data applications and services. This provides forces with an intuitive set of tools for collecting and inputting evidence out in the field or at scene of an incident. Using Pronto, data only needs to be entered once and can be reused and retrieved by authorised individuals in different CJS agencies throughout the pathway. Pronto is being rolled out to deliver paperless policing, police officers are already moving a range of processes online including Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) forms, collision reports and other traffic processes.



CHALLENGES

- To improve efficiency and productivity in the CJS by adopting technology and working smarter
- To reduce the amount of police resource used on evidence processing and storage
- To increase the speed with which cases are processed through the incident to trial pathway

BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY (PRONTO)

- Greater efficiency in information capture - data can be shared and manipulated across multiple platforms without the need for it to be re-entered multiple times
- Improved speed of cases processed through the incident to trial pathway
- Improved quality of prosecution cases with better quality evidence throughout
- Reduced administrative costs and resource



REALISING THE BENEFITS

Police forces rolling out Pronto applications as the new front end of their CJS are reporting positive results in deployment, particularly in dealing with minor offences such as traffic penalty notices. Previously, around 60 per cent of traffic penalty notices completed using the traditional pen and paper forms contained mistakes or omissions in data entry, adding considerable delays to the system as information is repeatedly reviewed and re-checked. The average paper ticket was processed by the CJS in around seven days and delivered to the motorist by post.

In contrast, evidence capture on specialist tools like Pronto are allowing police officers to record information digitally by the roadside, making it possible to print and issue penalty notices instantly without error.

THE FUTURE

Airwave's work with a number of police forces and CJS boards, from Surrey to Scotland to Wales, is building the case for technology adoption across different agencies. By working in partnership with CJS agencies, the roll-out of technologies like Pronto can better ensure that cases are dealt with correctly at the right level, with outcomes that are reliable and command public confidence. This will help not just victims but also provide better value for taxpayers.



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