



Digitally Enabling Next Generation Reassurance Policing

A platform approach to community
support and resolution

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Overview

Policing across the UK is facing significant and complex challenges; the emergence of new threats, a wave of technology-driven disruption, changing citizen expectations, an increasingly inexperienced workforce, retention challenges, a growing need for a multi-agency approach, and most critically “crumbling”¹ public trust and confidence. These challenges are only likely to increase given the tight labour market, cost of living crisis and the overall worsening economic outlook.

To address these challenges in the UK, and other countries, a resurgence in reassurance, or neighbourhood, policing is taking place. With a focus on officers being visible, accessible and familiar, they can better address the fear of crime, regain public trust and confidence, as well as respond to local community needs. This renewed focus, at a time of budgetary pressures, means that the police and their governance must learn from the lessons of the past and seize the opportunities of technology and changes in legislation to deliver more efficiently and effectively. To achieve this, it must be embedded as a core police activity, aligned to a digitally-enabled community-based policing strategy.

It is critical to provide officers with the capability to manage offenders and victims locally and for supervisors to monitor those interactions to divert, protect and support individuals and families. Officers should also be provided with the necessary information and guidance to make decisions accurately and confidently, and to be informed of the applicable follow-up actions from support agencies well after the initial contact.

The provision of the right type and quality of service must be delivered to the person in need, whether the offender, victim, witness or other at-risk or vulnerable individual. This will allow organisations who provide these critical interventions to reach those in need, helping to prevent offending, provide reassurance and further support.

The ambition for a new and evolved model of reassurance policing include; the effective issuance and management of Out of Court Disposals (OoCDs), reducing re-offending through Integrated Offender Management (IOM); and management of bail conditions and Youth Offending services. These all rely on enabling the diversion of at-risk offenders through managed partnership intervention, whilst supporting victims.

Police forces can deliver new ways of working by adopting the pioneering digital platform-based approach to reassurance policing developed by Make Time Count, a social enterprise developing a new and reimagined approach for the challenges outlined above. This approach is supported by Accenture, a global technology and advisory organisation with a proven capability to implement and integrate solutions into complex environments and with extensive public safety industry expertise.

Together, Accenture and Make Time Count are working to deliver this new platform approach, focused on multi-agency collaboration to support and resolve several use cases. By providing a digital approach to reassurance policing, a successful implementation at scale could save over £900m² annually as well as a significant reduction in the number of offenders and victims. This builds on work conducted with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services and the Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing acting as our data analytics partner.

¹ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/29/how-britains-trust-police-crumbled>

² Indicative business case for community support and resolution platform created by Make Time Count and validated by the Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing.

Reassurance Policing

Historic and current challenges

Reassurance policing, which developed from community-based policing methodologies, was designed to address the perpetual challenge that the public perceives crime rising, despite it falling annually, and to address fear of crime in local communities.

The National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) in 2003 developed a recognisable, accessible, and current police service, focusing on public reassurance and tackling crime whilst acknowledging the intrinsic link between them. This policing model faced the headwinds of austerity as the cost of delivering headcount within reduced budgets became a growing challenge. A lack of significant measures of reassurance outcomes, as well as digital tools to manage interventions and demonstrate the important actions being undertaken by staff and partners undermined both the ongoing justification of this model and its legitimacy.

In the past, police forces lacked access to a comprehensive community of service providers involved in offender rehabilitation. This was compounded by a lack of capacity and data to monitor and analyse offender profiles, characteristics and needs and determine the required services to support desistance and keep people safe. There is also a lack of sufficient ongoing insight to identify evidence-based interventions that meet strategic needs, ensure consistent delivery of rehabilitation services, and enable case recording.

Reassurance policing has a significant role to play in maintaining trust and confidence in state agencies and to promote the feeling of safety in communities. Several police leaders have declared their intention to reinvigorate this policing model, delivered through community-based officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) working in partnership with third parties, to improve trust and confidence, reduce the perception of risk and restore the level of policing by consent from communities. It is apparent that new tools and technology are needed.

A further challenge, and opportunity, is the introduction of the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022³ which amends the use of cautions to include OoCDs, and takes into account the victim's wishes. Simple cautions are replaced with a two-tier model, providing a more outcome-orientated focus and opportunities for victim reparation as a deterrent for repeat offenders. This is a significant first step to enable swift on-street intervention.

Used consistently, the new two-tier framework will accelerate community-focused reassurance policing by addressing low-level crime in a proportionate manner without removing officers from the front line.

However, there is understandable nervousness at the cost and additional administrative burden that will be placed on frontline officers and the risks of not following through on the actions required. The legislative changes require officers to:

- Determine offender eligibility for an OoCD (according to the new conditions)
- Assess offender need for rehabilitation
- Match and refer the offender to a service provider
- Monitor offender compliance
- Deal with breaches for non-compliant offenders.

³ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/32/contents/enacted>

Where do we need to be in the future?

An evolved model of reassurance policing suitable for 2023 and beyond must be digitally-enabled, data-led and community focussed. It should meet local needs with local services, and leverage community intelligence to continually drive down reoffending.

The new model must address the issue of public trust and confidence, as well as tackling challenges such as changing legislation, citizen expectations and an increasingly inexperienced workforce, by cultivating a multi-agency response. Crucially, it must address challenges around policing capacity to deliver reassurance policing despite budget cuts and associated headcount reduction. To achieve this, we need innovative digital tools that can equip officers, staff, partners and end users with in-hand technology. This will enable a proper focus on targeting, testing, and tracking through the effective collection and use of data to deliver the necessary and accurate insights.

Reassurance policing must move towards a holistic approach by developing greater alignment between all involved parties, including victims, offenders, officers and support service providers. Ultimately a vision for effective reassurance policing leads to a single justice continuum, with a shared understanding that puts diversionary activities at the centre of the criminal justice system - whether out of court or in, entering or leaving prison or on probation. This approach will bring together relevant partnerships and local leadership, and offer holistic offender management based on root cause analysis and understanding of the needs driving the criminal behaviour. A digital tool placed in the hands of frontline community officers, service providers, support workers, family members, mentors, and, crucially, the affected individuals, represents a significant step in the direction of a more cost-effective approach to reassurance policing.

A digital platform-based approach

This approach has been successfully implemented in many industries to reimagine the provision of services. For example, Uber for transport, Airbnb for hotels and Deliveroo for food. Designed effectively, the overall experience is quicker, easier, and more effective. They can also offer improved choice, quality, and services more tailored to specific needs, and crucially at a lower cost.

Make Time Count has already successfully tested the concept of a digital platform approach in criminal justice by bringing the officer, offender, victim, family members, support providers, and other third parties onto a secure common platform – creating a new “digital community support and resolution platform”. In doing so, it has created a holistic offender and victim management platform which provides a thorough understanding of the individual needs of the offender and victim.

Firstly, it helps guide the officer, alongside the offender or victim, through an eligibility screening tool ensuring that they have confidence in their decisions being correct, proportionate and defensible.

Secondly, the officer completes a needs assessment and, once understood, needs can be matched to local and national service providers. Currently it can take up to an hour to find and refer to the correct partners, without guarantee of success. With a digital approach this time is eliminated. The ease and simplicity of the platform-based approach encourages a more diverse set of services providers, resulting in greater access to specific or niche support. The range of services is unlimited, extending well beyond the traditional choices for the delivery of court orders and rehabilitation. It can include recruitment agencies, mentors, housing agencies and financial advice. Think of a “personal pit crew” around each individual.

The platform’s ability to track and understand compliance and engagement rates helps to identify and reinforce service providers who are more successful in delivering the necessary outcomes. Huge amounts of officer time is saved not having to follow up with partners regarding status.

Thirdly, the flexibility of a platform-based approach stretches further than just a two-way user / supplier relationship to one which can manage multiple agency collaborations.

This delivers an offender- or victim-centric, multi-agency collaboration accessible by all third parties, such as friends and family, help providers, and support agencies. This reduces the administrative burden on any single party and allows officers to manage referrals, communicate directly via instant messaging and provide all users with a real-time calendar for case notes, appointments and projects. This avoids the inevitable criticism levied during almost every public inquiry that there was insufficient communication between agencies.

Fourthly, the digital platform collects behavioural and data insights to increase the likelihood that intervention recommendations will reduce reoffending through measurement, testing and intelligence analytics. This is made possible through both tracked data, e.g. utilisation rates, attendance, and issue management data, as well as 360° feedback mechanisms from both users and providers.

Application of the digital community support and resolution platform

Make Time Count's platform was originally conceived in collaboration with probation and this same concept has found multiple applications in the wider justice sector, covering a range of use cases whereby digitally co-located teams all use real-time information sharing to support rehabilitation.

1) Delivering Out of Court Disposals efficiently

The central purpose of the platform is the ability to rapidly issue an OoCD, successfully proven in a trial with Kent Police. This allows an officer to quickly and effectively issue an OoCD, accurately qualify offenders and offences, and then have confidence in the automated decision-making process, which provides the correct range of available disposals. This generates a needs assessment which advises on the most suitable conditions. Following a decision on the relevant condition, the platform auto-refers to partners and offers ongoing condition management for the officer, their support team and the offender, by enabling appointment check-ins, chat messaging features and access to support information.

The platform can also be used in public order and transport policing, providing the ability to issue OoCDs on the street. It helps an officer to issue a sanction on the spot, ensuring prompt action against offenders, highlighting the range of consequences, whilst reducing the need to take officers off the street.

Further, in the post-COVID recovery environment and the continuing significant court backlog, the platform offers the ability for the backlog to be reviewed and identify suitable cases where an OoCD may offer a better outcome. It can then be swiftly applied with the victim's support, helping to alleviate pressure on the criminal justice system and ensure that an appropriate and effective disposal is applied. Crucially, it speeds up justice for those cases that must be heard in court.

2) Reducing reoffending through Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

Beyond issuing OoCDs, the platform can assist in delivering a Neighbourhood Crime IOM strategy, which aims to make communities safer by reducing reoffending. This is achieved through two pillars of activity – joint police-probation supervision and access to rehabilitation. The platform-based approach creates a single digital service for police, prisons, probation, local authorities and service providers to seamlessly integrate with each other and share information. Importantly and critically, this approach places the offender and their

needs at the centre of the journey, and makes sure individuals are managed holistically in their local communities, driving improved results in long-term desistance.

In the future, the platform could extend its IOM functionality to provide probation management and provision of bail. For example, the platform could provide digitally-enabled guidance for bail decision-making, with a complete audit trail, as well as conditions and service referrals, associated check-ins and curfew support for those on probation.

3) Supporting victims and providing reassurance through victim support services

While OoCDs focus on meeting the needs of offenders, the platform can also provide the same rigour to improve service to victims, an approach currently being investigated by Make Time Count in collaboration with the Accelerated Capability Environment team in the Home Office and Derbyshire Police. This focus will become increasingly important for criminal justice agencies when the Victims' Code⁴ becomes enshrined in law through the new Victims Bill⁵. The solution will put the victim in touch with a wide range of services to offer support, reassurance and also help to prevent repeat victimisation.

The platform has the capability to allow a victim's statement to be taken at the scene with configurable questions, voice-to-text functionality and file upload, providing victims with regular updates on the status of their case, as well as broader information on their rights. A feedback loop, via a survey module, enables victims to share their views on the suitability of any outcomes and decisions, as well as their satisfaction with the process. These opinions are crucial to shape future decisions and will truly put victims and their wishes at the heart of the process. This is key to ensuring that victims feel like their needs are listened to, and ultimately, if met, it encourages them to stay engaged with what is increasingly an elongated journey to justice.

4) Diverting those at risk

Importantly, the platform has relevance beyond purely offending situations. As a secure collaboration tool bringing together officers, support agencies, friends, family and mentors, it offers and refers at-risk individuals, in particular youths or vulnerable people, to diversionary activities that are specifically tailored to their needs. For example, it allows a teacher to refer an at-risk student to a range of diversions which might deter them from leading a life of crime. It will also help officers to gain a better understanding of the root causes of why offenders commit crime, enabling a more data-driven approach to diversion.

Benefits Case

Indicative analysis of the financial benefits case for the application of the digital community support and resolution platform to OoCDs suggests there are significant savings to be made for the criminal justice system and society more broadly.

Court is time consuming, expensive and rates of reoffending are currently around one third.⁶

Increasing the number of Out of Court Disposals by around 25% would result in an estimated **one million hours** of police time saved preparing for, and attending, trials. Not to mention completely eliminating a significant number of court procedures. We estimate this step alone would generate over **£260m of savings annually for the criminal justice system**.

⁴ Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime>

⁵ Draft Victims Bill: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-victims-bill>

⁶ Proven reoffending statistics: January to March 2020 - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2020/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2020>

In addition to court savings, repeated trials show that when OoCDs include effective diversion they result in lower rates of reoffending. Assuming we scale this nationally, we can deliver improved results that could result in a further **£640m+ annual saving to society** based on the standard cost of crime calculation.

Added together, the financial case for OoCD alone has a potential to result in over **£900m per annum in savings to society**⁷. With the benefits from reducing the court backlog, supporting IOM and other use cases, the total savings will only increase.

OoCDs present a compelling financial case. However, this is only if they can be efficiently and cost effectively implemented, and this requires the use of a digital platform approach.

Critically, beyond the ability to deliver financial benefits there are a range of benefits to key stakeholders that the digital platform could deliver, as outlined below:

Offenders

- **Matches offenders' needs to services** - enables offenders to be matched to local services and specialist support that suits their specific rehabilitation needs much more efficiently, and creates tailored sets of interventions.
- **Empowers offenders to engage** - gives offenders the opportunity to engage with rehabilitative services digitally, for example, through the ability to log their proof of attendance, potentially leading to increased compliance.
- **Gives offenders a voice** – through continual feedback, offenders are able to provide their feedback on services received.
- **Develops a support network** - becomes easier for offenders to access and interact with their network and to receive reminders about appointments, which reduces genuine errors and associated sanctions.

Officers

- **Supports officer decision-making** – navigate the new criteria for issuing a OoCD with ease, as decision-making is determined by the NPCC's Gravity Matrix⁸. This also has the potential to reduce bias and ensure greater consistency. Over time, forces will gain insights on the proportionality of officer decision-making and appropriateness of interventions to support the selection of future conditions.
- **Reduces administrative burden and eliminates significant frontline staff workload** – compared to purely paper-based processes, a digital approach reduces the administrative burden when handling victim engagement and reparation, alongside offender rehabilitation needs and referrals. A study created by a trial force, independent from Make Time Count, shows that the platform **saves 86 minutes processing time per case**. This equates to over **500 FTEs worth of saved effort** given the anticipated case volume.
- **Improves relationships through holistic offender management** – empowers officers to improve relationships with offenders through the delivery of a more holistic approach to their management in communities. This in turn enables quicker intervention.
- **Drives down breach rate** - results in single digit breach rates through a combination of behavioural insights, automatic notifications and manual reminders, saving thousands of cases ending up with fines or court time.

⁷ Indicative business case for community support and resolution platform created by Make Time Count and validated by the Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing.

⁸ Gravity matrix (Adult) <https://www.npcc.police.uk/2019%20FOI/Counter%20Terrorism/061%2019%20Gravity%20Matrix.pdf>

Victims

- **Provides bespoke victim support** – a better understanding of a victim's needs, matched with a wide range of support services.
- **Increases transparency and reassurance** – provides victims with greater visibility of the justice process by issuing regular updates on case progression, outcomes and rationale.
- **Enables restorative justice through active victim involvement** – enables victims to play an active role in the policing and justice process by allowing restorative justice through engagement in the case outcome, as well as providing feedback on their experience.
- **Improves quality of victim engagement** – encourages victims to stay engaged with the CJS by making interactions simpler, more personal, and positive.

Service providers

- **Supports more users** – speeds up the referral process to allow a service provider to support more users, as well as access data on the profile and history of a user to create a more tailored service provision.
- **Reduces administrative effort** – engage and manage users directly and gather feedback quickly and efficiently without the need for phone calls or letters.
- **Focuses on value-add activities** – automates appointment reminders for offenders, reducing the administrative burden and frees them up to focus on more value-add activities.
- **Promotes a wider diversity of services** – allows a greater number of service providers to offer their services to a larger audience.

Police and Crime Commissioners

- **Insights into service quality** – 360 degree feedback, in real time, on every intervention replaces infrequent surveys that achieve poor response rates. Provides unprecedented insights into attendance and user perception.
- **Supports effective decision-making** – ensures that they are making the most effective commissioning decisions based on insights from user feedback and outcome information.
- **Brings together community safety and criminal justice partners** - fulfils PCC obligations by connecting agencies, service providers and users in a single digital space.

Family, friends and mentors

- **Evolves the rehabilitation ecosystem**– friends, family and mentors can become more effective channels of support providing better rehabilitation for the offender.
- **Empowers a positive offender experience** – encourages the offender by providing 'nudges' to complete their rehabilitation and any reparation conditions (e.g., attending appointments, maintaining routines).
- **Support for the network** – family and friends can also access support and information for themselves (e.g. victim support services), enhancing their own experience of the process.

On a broader level, the digital community support and resolution platform could help increase public trust and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system through the capture of data relating to offender and victim management, processes and outcomes. This will help police forces to tailor their approach to each community's sense of being 'at risk'.

Conclusion

Confidence in policing is low, with legislative changes and fiscal realities posing a real challenge to police, partners and all stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

Policing and public safety are increasingly driving a collaborative approach. We can see this in IOM, Violence Reduction Units, Youth Offending Teams and more. Many of these initiatives risk falling short due to excessive offline administration and friction in collaboration.

Forces are seeking a digital approach as a way to simplify the process. Early adopters of the Make Time Count platform have co-designed the experience to meet the practical realities of policing and partnership working. Such a platform allows OoCDs to deliver the expected £900m savings, but more than that, it delivers an array of benefits to officers, offenders, victims, service partners, families and PCCs.

Despite increasing headwinds, forces must not deter from continuing to drive reassurance policing forward. By learning the lessons from the past, we can co-create a digitally-supported model that is fit for the context and environment in which today's police forces are operating.

The time is now for a platform-led approach to delivering reassurance policing.

About the Authors

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After a 16 year career managing global transformation programmes, Jonathan was asked to become a Special Advisor at the London Probation Service. It was his first exposure to the Criminal Justice sector, and he was in for a shock. Shocked at the way people are treated and the lack of technology to support them. After speaking to probation officers and people on probation, he recognised so much wasted potential. That's how Make Time Count was born - a platform which uses the latest technology backed by data science to connect people and have an enormous impact on reoffending.

Make Time Count is a social enterprise dedicated to digitally empowering the whole of the UK's criminal justice sector. Its mission is to make it easier for police forces to reassure communities through effective neighbourhood policing, and provide support to the most vulnerable; whether that's victims of crime, offenders or people at risk of offending. Make Time Count connects all parts of the criminal justice system together through the latest AI technology. It supports the police and probation to work together with local partners to reduce reoffending and enables the effective and efficient delivery and measurement of community policing across the UK.

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James is a Managing Director leading Accenture's Global Public Safety practice, focusing on policing, law enforcement, justice, prisons and probation. He brings more than 20 years of industry experience to his role helping public safety organisations enhance operational performance, increase efficiency and deliver improved outcomes to the public. A recognised expert in his field, James has spoken and written extensively in leading industry publications on a range of public safety topics including the use of social media, information management, analytics and digital disruption.

Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments and other organisations build their digital core, optimise their operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services — creating tangible value at speed and scale. We are a talent and innovation led company with 738,000 people

serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and we are one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. We combine our strength in technology with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability. We are uniquely able to deliver tangible outcomes because of our broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Accenture Song. These capabilities, together with our culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enable us to help our clients succeed and build trusted, lasting relationships. We measure our success by the 360° value we create for our clients, each other, our shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

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Peter was a police officer for more than 30 years, serving in Hampshire, West Mercia and Thames Valley (as Chief Constable). He set up and ran the National Policing Improvement Agency (as Chief Constable and Chief Executive). In the latter role he was responsible for national implementation of all the major programmes in UK policing, including Neighbourhood Policing, workforce reform and new technology. In 2010, he was commissioned by the UK Home Secretary to carry out a fundamental "Review of Police Leadership and Training" which led to the establishment of the new National "College of Policing" in 2012 and radical reform of the qualifications and training of police officers, creating the new "Police Education Qualification Framework".

He is the Co-Chair of the Campbell Collaboration Crime and Justice Coordinating Group and has been leading an international programme of systematic reviews on the prevention of terrorism and radicalization. He is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge and General Editor of "Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice" <http://policing.oxfordjournals.org>.

The Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing is a research and training consultancy, which applies research evidence to improve policing practices worldwide.

Evidence-Based Policing is the systematic practice of applying research to decision-making in policing. It refers to both the body of research that can be applied to policing practices, as well as the body of research about how to apply it, in a wide range of tactical, organisational, financial, and political contexts. Evidence-Based Policing is a global social movement by and among police professionals, who apply research evidence to improve policing practices. The Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing works with police forces in the United Kingdom, India, Trinidad & Tobago, Australia and Denmark.

The Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing provides professional expertise to police forces worldwide, as well as developing and implementing bespoke forecasting and other algorithmic tools.

It also provides training programmes to police forces worldwide, including readily available courses and courses tailored to address organisations' needs. The courses are delivered at Cambridge on a residential basis, at an organisation's site upon request, and/or online.