

Benefits of implementation of mobile devices with frontline police officers in Police Scotland

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'POLICE SCOTLAND MOBILE WORKING PROJECT': IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT EVALUATION, AND BENEFITS REALISATION

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STUDY BACKGROUND: The 'Mobile Working Project' is part of Police Scotland's 'Digitally Enabled Policing Programme' (DEPP), which seeks to equip operational officers with a digital mobile policing solution to replace the traditional paper notebook system, to provide remote, live access to key policing information systems.

The project's aim is to increase efficiency and improve frontline service delivery, and visibility, for both officers and the communities of Scotland.

STUDY AIM: The research study's aim was to evaluate the implementation, impact, and benefits realisation, of the national phased roll-out of digital mobile policing across Police Scotland.

The evaluation was undertaken concurrently with the phased Divisional roll-out of mobile devices; to identify associated issues, benefits and challenges; which will inform the final stages of roll-out to over 10000 police officers across Scotland.

BENEFITS REALISATION:

Identified long-term potential benefits of mobile policing include:

- ◆ realised time efficiency savings to both police officers and staff
- ◆ improved officer safety and wellbeing
- ◆ increased officer visibility
- ◆ improved detection rates
- ◆ improved public confidence
- ◆ reduced organisational risk

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW:

The national phased roll-out commenced in June 2019.

To date the mobile device has been deployed to 13 Territorial Divisions, Border Command and SPA Forensics.

Just less than 11,000 officers have been trained in using the device. This includes experienced uniformed police officers at the ranks of Constable, Sergeant and Inspector and officers in their probation.

The officers have been equipped with a high specification device, robust case, extra power pack and remote keyboard.

System access includes the Police National Computer, Electronic Notebook and Command and Control.

METHODOLOGY:

The project embarked on a Literature Review using published and grey literature, observations of officer training and interviews and focus groups with front line and management officer and administration staff. In total, the team carried out:

- ◆ 40 interviews across 5 territorial divisions
- ◆ 11 case studies following the device training
- ◆ 6 focus groups (21 officers) with officers with devices
- ◆ 3 interviews (4 officers) with officers seconded into frontline roles for COVID
- ◆ 4 officers who previously used the device but moved to a new role without the device

(Policing experience ranging from officers in their probation to officers with over 20 years service)

RESULTS: All frontline officers and stakeholders reported benefits of device. There was a consensus that the device was a distinct improvement on the paper notebook, especially in relation to time efficiency. Key themes that emerged from the project were:

Productivity— Efficiency, increased capacity, proactive policing, time management and time savings.

Information—Access to information, accuracy, immediacy additional sources, sharing of information and security of information

Connectivity and communications—Connectivity, real time communication, team and external communication and increased visibility

Officer wellbeing—Wellbeing, morale, officer safety, and autonomy (Pandemic-social distancing, access to briefings and information)

Technology and culture change—Changing attitudes, public perception, culture change and logistics.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Training
- Engagement with officers in device development
- Timeline of requested additional functions
- Sustainability of devices
- Interoperability of systems
- Pressures and governance to keep pace



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