

How mobility can improve frontline officers' efficiency

Power to the frontline



Why read this?

This whitepaper will help you evaluate ways to improve frontline officer efficiency through mobile technology. We also explore the positive impact of technology on your organisation's working culture.

Vodafone
Power to you

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1 Introduction

Mobile technology is emerging as a compelling option for police forces that want officers to spend more time on the beat and is playing a big part in changing the way policing is delivered on our streets.

Here at Vodafone we believe that providing officers with mobile technology can make for more effective policing. In this paper we examine how these objectives can be achieved by streamlining frontline efficiency. It supports better judgements and increases officers' chances of being prepared at the scene of an incident.

Anything that increases visibility makes people feel more secure and builds confidence in the service. Mobile technology can save officers from travelling to record and retrieve information, giving them more time to spend in communities and delivering results.

In this whitepaper we will cover:



The technology that can provide immediate benefits to frontline officers' efficiency



Results already achieved in police forces and in organisations across the public sector



Impact on culture and how you can manage change to your advantage

The growing momentum

Early in 2014 the Metropolitan Police unveiled a new IT strategy that takes mobile technology to the streets. The strategy includes plans to equip 15,000 frontline officers with tablet devices and up to 1,000 video kits to be worn on officers' bodies.

The Met's commitment is just one of the signs that mobility is at the heart of policing. There has been a recent stream of tenders for mobile data terminals and platforms from forces including Essex, Lincolnshire and Thames Valley. "Wholesale changes in the way we use technology are extremely challenging, but they present fantastic opportunities both to deliver more and save money," Richard Thwaite, Chief Information Officer, Metropolitan Police.

2 Mobile technology boosting frontline officers' efficiency

With the right mobile technology, officers are more visible and provide a more responsive service.

In recent years, mobile technology has become a proven problem-solver for organisations right across the public sector and, with citizens' demands rising all the time, it helps to provide a more responsive service. By making processes more efficient, mobile technology can also help to mitigate the impact of budget cuts.

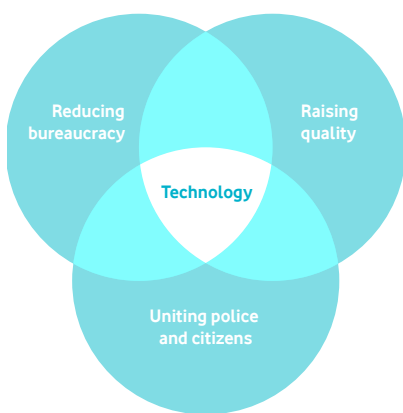
There are many examples where this has happened: from nurses improving care in the community using tablet devices, through to councils making waste collection more efficient through automated job scheduling. In policing, the productivity and efficiency issues that can be solved by mobile technology typically fall into three key categories, all of which keep officers away from the beat and contribute to a poorer experience for citizens.

These are:

- Manual processes that are time consuming and prone to errors
- Time spent travelling back to a desktop to file or process reports
- Lack of access to data that informs better and quicker decision making at incidents

Today, police forces across the UK are finding that all these issues can be solved by mobile applications and systems that focus on improving both the quantity and quality of frontline work.

The following examples show how processes can be improved to deliver a wide range of benefits.



A Search functionality with secure live access to back office records

With search functionality on smartphones or tablets, officers can radically speed up checks on persons, vehicles, locations or drivers' licences. Once the person or vehicle is identified their record is immediately available to officers, allowing them to respond appropriately with all the information they need, including Police National Computer (PNC) data and custody images.

The benefits are numerous, including less time spent on administration, more visibility on the streets, less radio traffic and a reduced requirement on control room resources. Officers also have a more complete picture than would be possible over the radio, resulting in a more effective response.

B Job scheduling for better caseload management

Mobile job scheduling can also be deployed to send caseloads and tasks to officers' devices, wirelessly. Officers can then update tasks as they are completed at the scene of an incident. They can also see other caseloads and enquire about any crime number, with all supporting information in the crime database available to them. A standard actions checklist can be included to ensure correct procedures are followed.

The key benefit is that officers are no longer required to call or visit stations to obtain vital information, saving time and costs. This increases their individual effectiveness, and they are able to spend more time in the community fulfilling service commitments.

C Paperless working and digital incident recording to evidential standards

Currently, data collected at the scene of a crime is usually recorded on paper and then entered into the system back at the station. With mobile technology, officers can simplify and speed up this process by taking statements at the scene on a range of mobile devices and get it signed digitally to evidential standards. Other information also captured at a scene can be instantly linked to the system back at the station. This effectively enables mobile crime scene investigation, with officers able to quickly collate and maintain forensic details about each crime and scene that's held on the system.

The major benefit is that this process is completed in one visit. No further follow-up action is required back at the station. The case management system is updated instantly and the data collected is available to other officers within minutes.

These solutions illustrate the potential of mobility to revolutionise both the efficiency and culture of police work. In the following pages we examine the wider business benefits that can be achieved. We also look at ways to manage the impact of cultural change and ensure that officers are comfortable with the new systems deployed.

Why the need for frontline efficiency in policing is stronger than ever

According to official government figures, the UK police workforce will be reduced by over 34,000 by March 2015 compared to 2010. HMIC has expressed concerns about the erosion of neighbourhood policing as the remit of police officers in these roles expand: "Some officers are spending more time away from their neighbourhood beats because they have more crime investigation work to do. This means they may have less time for crime prevention work, which is crucial to the success of the police's principle purpose – protecting the public." HMIC press release, 2014

3 Best practice examples from policing and across the public sector

Improvements to frontline officers' efficiency can also help deliver wider business benefits.

Public sector organisations that adopt mobile technology for frontline workers typically achieve a wide range of benefits that have been proven to boost both efficiency and service. These include:



Many hours recovered previously spent on paperwork



Less time travelling and more time to spend with citizens in the community, enhancing the public's perception of the service



Better access to and sharing of information, so forces can react faster to live situations



More efficient job scheduling and deployment of resources



Significant reduction in budget spent on desk space, travel and physical storage

As a number of emerging case studies demonstrate, police forces and other public sector organisations are also using mobile working to plan their resourcing more strategically.

Hampshire Constabulary: their story

Hampshire Constabulary, for example, has pioneered the UK's first Electronic Witness Statement application to great effect. The application, now deployed on over 2,000 mobile devices – creates more time on the beat and less time in the office, due to a reduction of admin and officers able to take details at the scene. But, just as importantly, Hampshire Constabulary is now also making the most of its officers' greater mobility and planning the future more strategically. Hampshire Constabulary is looking at how it can rationalise its property estate and is also exploring opportunities to share services, information and even offices with other public services.

According to Cleaven Faulkner, the Chief Inspector at Hampshire Constabulary responsible for the implementation of the witness statement project, this is a significant and positive shift in thinking:



Like police services across the country we're examining what we're doing from cradle to grave; taking the opportunity to look at what we can do differently. We need to take a long hard look at ourselves and get rid of the 'that's the way we've always done it' ethos ”

“It's been calculated that the system saves approximately 30 minutes per shift per officer in reduced paperwork alone, generating efficiency savings of around £6,037,475 per year.”

South Yorkshire Police

“Blackpool’s nurses now save up to an hour a day and complete up to ten more patient visits per week”

In another example, officers in South Yorkshire are using built-in cameras on smartphones to photograph evidence or film video footage at the crime scene, helping secure convictions. Officers have mobile access to extensive back-end records, including photography, helping to quickly validate identity checks. It’s been calculated that the system saves approximately 30 minutes per shift per officer in reduced paperwork alone, generating efficiency savings of around £6,037,475 per year.

But as with Hampshire Constabulary, these efficiencies are just the start. To continue the momentum, South Yorkshire Police now plans to mobilise National Intelligence Reports, stop and search forms and also Command and Control. Ultimately this will lead to more strategic and efficient deployment of officers.

Other examples from around the public sector demonstrate benefits that can be easily transferred to police forces. Blackpool NHS, for example, has recently enabled community nurses with tablet devices to achieve a number of strategic business objectives. On one level, Blackpool’s nurses now save up to an hour a day resulting in up to ten more patient visits per week. But the real impact spreads much further. Blackpool NHS has also managed to reduce pressure on hospital space and is releasing more time for planning, analysis and, most importantly, the care of patients.

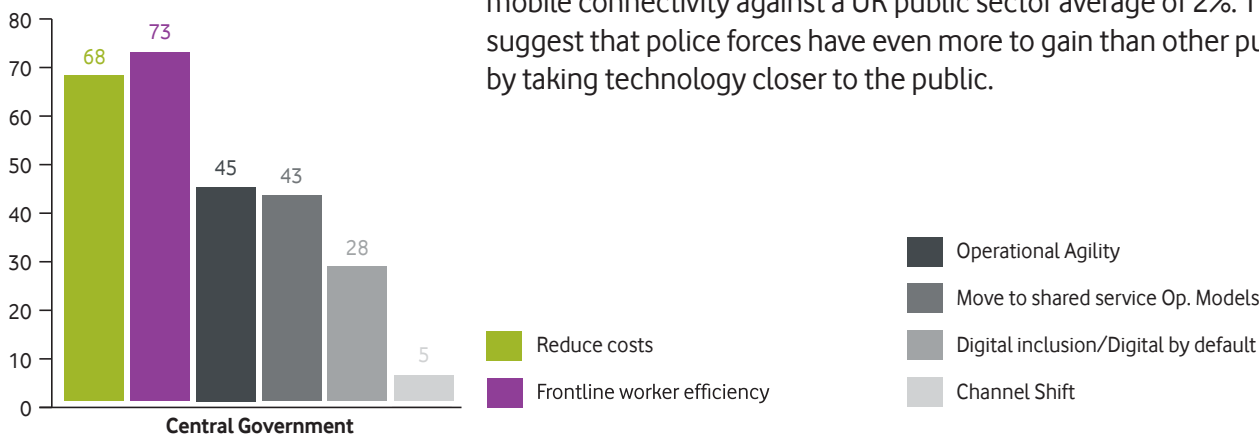
For anyone working in the police force looking to relieve pressure on dwindling station resources while also improving results, this and many other examples from across the public sector show that business cases for mobility are now turning into tried and tested business models with proven operational and strategic benefits. More than this, they demonstrate that we are moving towards a culture in UK public service where mobility will soon become the accepted norm for both staff and service users alike.

Kable research: frontline efficiency and reducing costs are top priorities for police forces

Cost reduction is a common by-product of improved frontline efficiency. New research from Kable confirms that both are a top priority for police forces.

Kable has also shown that UK police forces spend 7% of their budgets on mobile connectivity against a UK public sector average of 2%. The figures suggest that police forces have even more to gain than other public services by taking technology closer to the public.

Top priorities for police forces



4 Changing your culture

Workforce mobilisation has a positive impact on culture.

Changing the way your frontline officers work doesn't just have an impact on service delivery, it also brings about a significant culture change.

As illustrated below, the benefits of change have the potential to bring about a range of positive business outcomes for police forces, boosting both efficiency and quality of service.

How mobility encourages new and more agile ways of working

Old ways of working

- Officers tethered to desks and not on the beat
- Paper reports resulting in higher error margins
- Decisions pending face-to-face meetings
- Email
- Travelling to and from the station to pick up and enter information
- Longer lead times to complete witness statements

New ways of working

- Officers free to spend more time on the beat
- Real-time information always updated
- Faster decisions via real time collaboration

Benefits

- Higher productivity
- Faster speed to decision
- More time spent keeping the community safe
- Increased citizens' satisfaction
- Improved perception of police
- Reduction in office space and desktop maintenance costs
- Time and CO₂ savings due to reduced travel
- Potential to reduce property estate
- Potential to share space with other services

73% of police forces have made frontline worker efficiency a priority

As shown in graph on page 7

Managing the change

The most effective way to manage change is to conduct an in-depth study of frontline officer needs. This must look at how those officers act on a day-to-day basis and how behaviours have to change to accommodate new working practices. This will help establish a new culture that gets the most out of new technology applications.

Top three recommendations for managing culture change:

- 1 Set objectives:** always ask yourself what you are trying to achieve. Is it cost reduction or better service? It could be both, but by setting priorities early on and communicating them widely there's a much greater chance of success.
- 2 Profile individuals and officer roles:** take the time to profile officers, ideally through detailed 'day in the life' style studies. This is the ideal way to get the information that's needed to make decisions based on what is actually required by individuals from their working environment. It also helps to align new work styles to the wider objectives of the organisation.
- 3 Engage with officers from the start:** ensure people are engaged as early as possible by making the organisation's objectives clear from the outset. That means articulating three important things:
 - How mobile working will benefit the force as a whole
 - How it will help officers provide better service to citizens
 - How it will benefit them as individuals

With this approach, it is possible to achieve a workforce that is fully engaged with new mobile technology. Ready, in fact, to deliver all the benefits that improved frontline efficiency can offer.

“The only barriers to the technology are people’s thoughts. The technology is out there; it’s just how we use it. It’s about changing people’s culture and getting them to be more confident about the benefits.”

Stewart Crawford, Custody Manager,
West Midlands Police

5 Summary

Right now the UK police service is tackling the biggest set of challenges it has ever faced. We are aware that stations are closing, yet expectations from the public are still rising.

In response, forces are changing the way they work to provide a more visible and responsive service on the street. This is work to be proud of, but there's still work to do. This complex set of challenges means forces must find better and more productive ways of working while still delivering even better results on crime.

At Vodafone we help police forces achieve their objectives with a specialised solution for improving frontline officer efficiency. Total Workforce Mobility for Police Forces is built around a highly robust toolkit of technologies, including:



Electronic witness statements



Job scheduling



Automatic syncing with case management systems

All elements have been carefully chosen and developed so you can deliver a more efficient service, plus a better citizen experience. These include:

- Mobile access to the Police National Computer and back office data on mobile devices in near real-time, providing the information officers need at incidents and crime scenes
- Offline working that doesn't need a data connection to get access to records
- Automated job scheduling so officers can pick up daily caseloads and tasks without travelling
- Digital data and witness statement capture with no need for double entry
- Secure devices and data transmission to protect records and provide peace of mind for both citizens and officers

Benefits at a glance:

Key benefits of workforce mobilisation for police forces:

More time on the beat – less time chasing and filing reports

Lower costs – eliminate manual processes and cut travel costs

Quicker decision making – put information in the hands of frontline officers where needed most

We are committed to giving you insights and useful tips to help you plan your organisation's future direction and we hope you've found this whitepaper interesting.

Find out more

For a free evaluation on your workforce efficiency visit:

vodafone.co.uk/twm

See how we can help you improve frontline efficiency
by contacting us on **0845 241 9557**

(standard call charges apply)