

# Transformational Government

## *Enabled by technology*

### Criminal Justice

Delivery experts working on Criminal Justice have worked up, in their own words, some hypothetical examples that give a glimpse of what may be possible in the future. These scenarios are not policy statements of what will happen: they are illustrations of what might be possible in a simple pragmatic way when the principles of the strategy are delivered. These illustrations simply apply existing technologies to public sector delivery models, rather than trying to stretch the technology too far.

Underpinning the Transformational Government strategy, Criminal Justice IT is developing a new vision and strategy for how Information Technology will transform the Criminal Justice system between now and 2015, delivering tangible and realisable benefits. The draft vision for 2015 is:

*Information Technology will enable us to create a modern joined-up justice system: engaging and enabling the public, providing the ability to enforce more effective justice whenever and wherever needed, with tools to assist offender rehabilitation and enable better targeting of emerging and future crime patterns – all focused on an improvement in public confidence and trust to create a safer society.*

This vision goes well beyond the current investment phase, which is essentially about the redevelopment of 'case management' systems to support the activities of individual Criminal Justice Agencies and joining those systems together through CJS Exchange Services.

Below we provide an example of how this future transformation will be perceived through the lens of both a witness and a police officer:

#### Witness Day in Life – 2015

From the perspective of Mary, the mother of Max, who had witnessed a mugging.

“ On his way home from school, Max, my 12-year-old son, witnessed a mugging outside our local newsagents that left a pensioner needing medical treatment. Thinking quickly, and without the guy seeing him, Max took a picture of the mugger using the camera phone we got him for Christmas. I was reluctant to step forward as I was unsure of how the process would affect someone as young as Max. Rather than call the police, I went online to the Community Justice website, which I had subscribed to recently when we moved into the area. I selected the local police incidents page that informed me there had been a number of muggings in my area over the past week, one of which had left an elderly man in hospital. The police were appealing for witnesses to get in contact and there was a choice of web, email, phone, videophone or SMS text.

“ I filled in a witness statement on line, attached the photo from Max's phone, stated I did not want Max going to the police station, included my contact details and submitted it. The next

morning an officer from the local police station called to thank me for contacting them and to praise Max for his quick thinking in taking the photo. The police had used Max's photo, combined with other witness statements, to electronically search various linked facial recognition and justice databases; they had found a match and were now in the process of apprehending the suspect. It turns out it was a youth who lived over 80 miles away and although the police didn't have his details the search picked up a match on the youth offending team system in that area.

"As Max got the best view of the incident the police requested to see him to ask a few more questions. The police assured me that any statements Max gave now, or if the case went to court, could be delivered either from home, or in a witness support centre, using video links.

"Later that day Max gave a more detailed statement, which the police officer took using the voice recorder on his police radio. The police officer told me that this was instantly uploaded to an investigation database system and was later used as evidence, along with the photo Max had taken. Whilst he was there, the police officer also gave us a form with a witness log-on and PIN that allowed us access to a secure website so that we could check the progress of the case and, most usefully, when it was due in the court. Once logged in, we were able to specify how we wanted to be told of the hearing date and time. I chose to be emailed at work as I have my email open all day, every day. My experience of the justice system so far was good.

"About three weeks later, I was notified by email that Max had been asked to give evidence at the hearing. The case was due to be heard a week later. The email advised me that I would be sent a further email the day before confirming the time of the hearing. Attached to the email was a note from the Crown Prosecution Service describing the court process and offering to meet with them to talk through any element of being a witness in the Magistrates' Court. I felt this was just what Max needed so I called the Crown Prosecution Service to find out more about the hearing and the arrangements they were putting in place for Max to give evidence.

"As I was on annual leave the day before the hearing, I logged onto the community justice website from work and changed the notification to be an SMS to my mobile phone. It was easy to do, just like putting a cross on your lottery ticket.

"I received the text the day before the hearing to tell me that it was going ahead at 14:00 and the Witness Support team had arranged for Max to give evidence via a video conferencing facility in the witness suite at the local community justice centre, which was linked up the court room. We attended, Max gave evidence and it was all over in 10 minutes. My son never had to face the defendant or set foot in the court room. I was very impressed with the set-up in the court, the process was efficient, the court staff, witness support and crown prosecutors were all professional and they worked together as a team. Overall, technology was used to great effect."