

CAPITA

Devon and Cornwall Police

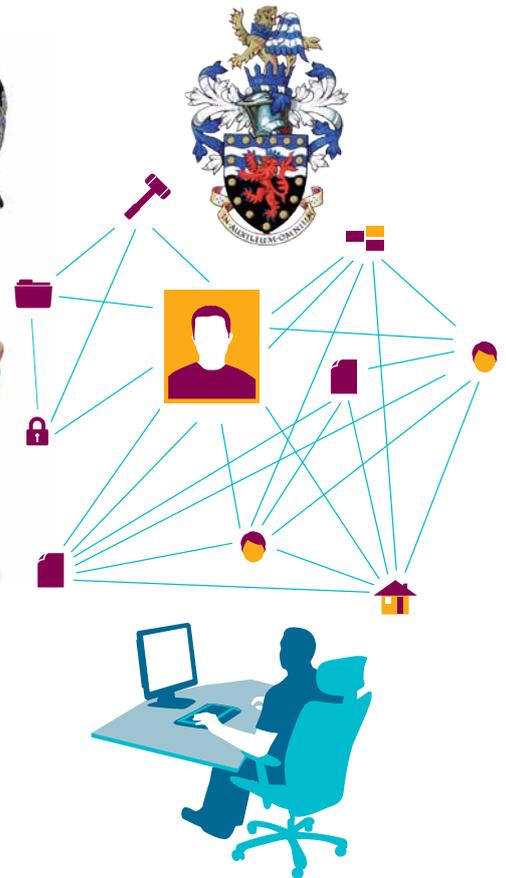
partner with Capita

for a 'smooth and thorough'
UNIFI implementation

Described by ACC Paul Netherton as 'the largest change in IT at Devon and Cornwall Police for 20 years', the implementation by Capita Case and record solutions (Capita) of its UNIFI police records management solution is critical to the force's journey of improvements in efficiency and performance.

Three legacy systems were previously in place: one for crime and intelligence, one for case preparation and one for managing custody. The project's first phase was the implementation of UNIFI for public protection and safeguarding, investigation and enquiry management (crime, non-crime, licensing etc.) and intelligence.

Both Capita management and senior figures at Devon and Cornwall Police were so pleased with the way the initial implementation was completed, it was decided to produce this case study to focus on some of the main aspects of the project.



First steps: defining the solution

Once the decision to implement UNIFI was taken, one of the first stages in the project was to install a familiarisation system at Devon and Cornwall Police Headquarters. This was a fully functional demonstration system that enabled officers and staff to try UNIFI ahead of the full implementation. More than 40 users were involved in this stage.

One of the benefits of this mini-implementation was that it enabled the project team to carry out deployment modelling. This was part of a consultancy process that established how UNIFI could be used to support the force's business processes.

Capita helped the force to bridge the gap between technology and operational processes to ensure that UNIFI would be used to its full potential and provide maximum benefit from the outset.

“ The project and go-live went very smoothly and hardly caused a ripple within the force. This is a credit to the thoroughness of the preparation and the working relationship we have built up with Capita. ”

Paul Netherton
Assistant Chief Constable
Operations Support
Devon and Cornwall Police

Implementing on a manageable schedule

Although the force is undertaking a business process review, UNIFI was configured to support the current processes as much as possible, but with flexibility to support future changes. This decision was quite unusual, because organisations implementing new IT solutions often prefer to redesign their processes and then commission a system accordingly.

However, this approach made sense in this context. When the scale of the implementation was considered, it felt right to all concerned that officers and staff should not be asked to change their processes and use new IT tools at the same time.

It was a pragmatic decision that appears to have worked: a phased approach means a more manageable project and an environment with less sudden change than would otherwise be the case.

With this phased concept in mind, the initial implementation has been a UNIFI solution for public protection and safeguarding, investigation and intelligence management that interfaces with the existing NSPIS custody system.

This unique interface means that the NSPIS custody system was able to search, update and exchange information with UNIFI from day one. Users see up-to-date custody information within UNIFI itself, alleviating the need to switch between systems or cut and paste data.

The interface will also go a long way to simplifying data migration when phase two of the project is implemented. This will see the roll out of UNIFI's Case and Custody modules. By then, the force will have completed a redesign of business processes and the new solution will be configured to reflect these new ways of working.

Buy-in from the start

Another benefit of installing a familiarisation system was that it helped to get buy-in from users from the start. People felt involved in the process: a crucial component of the change management side of a large scale IT implementation.

Alongside this was the appointment of super users and change champions. These were all enthusiastic about UNIFI, attended additional training and were kept fully informed throughout the project. At go-live, this meant there were people in every station on every shift to help colleagues with any usability issues.

Data migration: 20+ years of crucial information

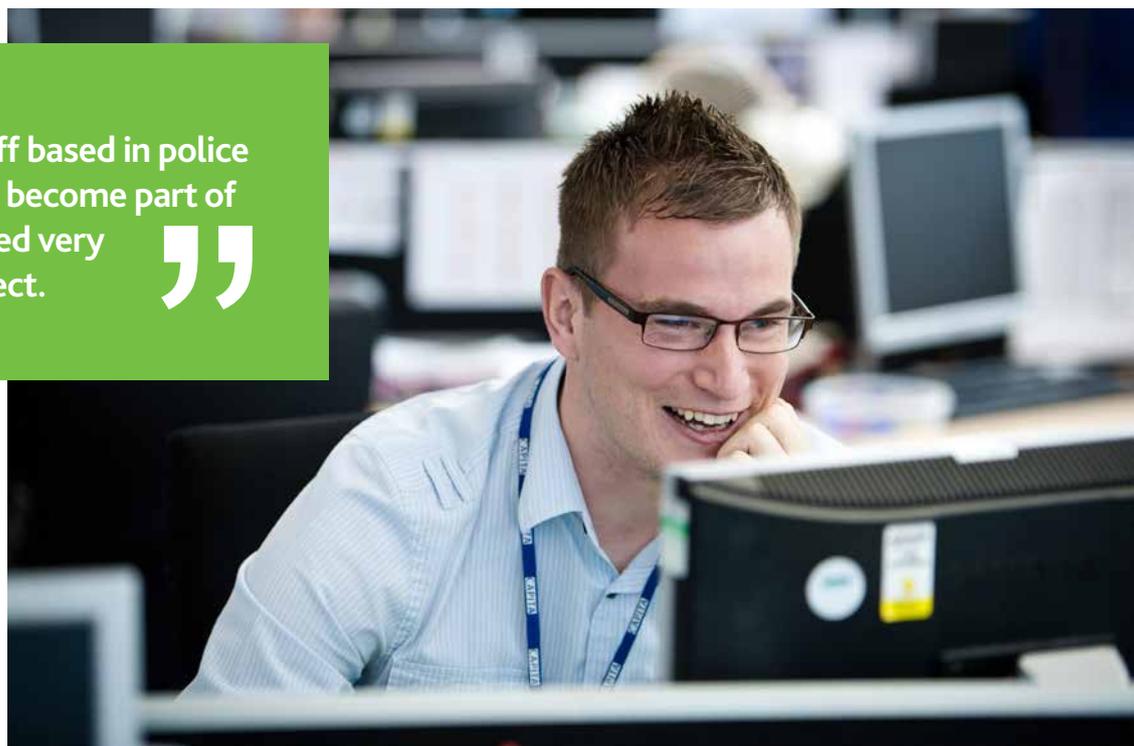
In parallel with the activity around the familiarisation system and defining the solution itself, the project team worked hard on the complex matter of legacy data migration.

The decision was taken to migrate almost all of the data held in the legacy system to UNIFI. This meant that more than 20 years' of data on crime and non-crime information, including records of nominals, had to be transferred.

It soon became clear that the data was not stored in a way that was easily compatible with a modern system, so the Capita team wrote bespoke code to facilitate the transfer.

All of the information was maintained in a read-only format in the legacy system as a failsafe measure, although this was never called upon as the data transferred successfully to UNIFI.

“ Having Capita staff based in police HQ meant they really did become part of the team. They also worked very hard throughout the project. ”



An effective blend of classroom and video training

One of the highlights of the implementation – especially for the force’s 5,000-plus officers and staff – was the way that user training was delivered. An innovative blend of learning methods has delivered excellent outcomes.

ACC Paul Netherton explains: “We did it in a way that greatly reduced training costs, while at the same time delivering superb results. The approach was to hold shorter classroom-based training sessions than would normally be the case, but to back them up with video-based materials.

“The classroom sessions were run by our own IT team, after they had attended train-the-trainer sessions with Capita, who also supplied a full set of user guides. After the training, users had access to a room equipped with a UNIFI demo system so that they could get some practice in. This was vital, as for some people their training was held several months before go-live.

“The decision to complement the classroom training with video was in response to the fact that people are used to using videos for learning. We embraced this and created a series of videos that take users through actions and processes step-by-step.

“These videos reinforce the classroom sessions, and are always available as a reminder should anyone forget how to use some UNIFI features. Each video includes a test for the user to complete - such as finding a criminal on the system - to give them practice and check on their ability.

“This approach seems to have worked very well as we have had no significant usability issues with UNIFI since launch. People in their thousands have logged on, watched the videos and completed the tests.

“The overall outcome has been excellent. Not only do users like the video resources, but the approach reduced the amount of time that we took people away from either frontline policing or core tasks in other areas.”



Project methodology that worked

As well as the use of a familiarisation system and blended training, the project team found that other aspects of their project methodology worked very well.

PRINCE2 was the chosen project management method used, although a pragmatic approach was taken, so that only those processes which added value were used.

In terms of project personnel, senior people from the force were involved from the outset, with a user group and project board also in place. But Devon and Cornwall Police went a step further to make this tried and tested project model even more appropriate to a police setting.

Paul Netherton explains how the cutover process was managed: “We mirrored the typical police structure and named the various levels of the project accordingly. So we had Gold Command as the name for the senior level, a Silver label for the project room and Bronze for the users on the ground.

“This is a terminology and structure that the police understand and it was another way we minimised the learning curve for everyone.”

The Silver project room at Devon and Cornwall Police Headquarters brought together 40 people from the force and Capita. Working alongside one another in the same room facilitated excellent communication. This was especially true at go-live, when Capita had additional people on site 24/7 to turn around immediate resolution of issues.

A culture of collaboration

Paul Netherton summarises the overall working relationship between the force and Capita: “Having Capita staff based in police HQ meant they really did become part of the team. They also worked very hard throughout the project.

“My experience in 20 or so years of being involved in large IT projects is that they are often chaotic. That wasn’t the case with Capita and UNIFI: the project and go-live went very smoothly and hardly caused a ripple within the force. This is a credit to the thoroughness of the preparation and the working relationship we have built up with Capita.

“The collaboration is continuing as we now work on reviewing our processes ahead of the implementation of the case and custody elements of UNIFI.”



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