Capita

Electronic monitoring:

A catalyst for transformation in the justice system

Introduction

The UK's criminal justice system is facing a number of challenges in the years ahead. With a sustained increase in the prison population, rising costs, and a growing awareness of the need for rehabilitation over incarceration, it is more important than ever for the system to adapt and innovate in order to meet these challenges head-on. One area in which the system has seen significant progress in recent years is in the use of electronic monitoring (EM).

EM is a powerful tool that can be used to keep the public safe and reduce the risk of reoffending. It can provide criminal justice partners with a cost-effective mechanism for monitoring, evidencing, and incentivising compliance with tailored restrictions, and it can also help to mitigate risk factors and facilitate community-based solutions as an alternative to custody.

In this report, we will explore the current status of the justice system in the UK, highlighting the key issues and opportunities faced by the system in recent years. We will also take a closer look at the role of EM in the justice system, detailing the benefits it can provide and the successes it has achieved. In addition, we will examine our own contributions - as a leading provider of EM services in the UK - and discuss how we have been utilising data and automation to improve services and reduce reoffending. Based on our experience of working in partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on delivering EM, we will share our key learnings from the past year, as well as areas of focus and opportunities for future development.

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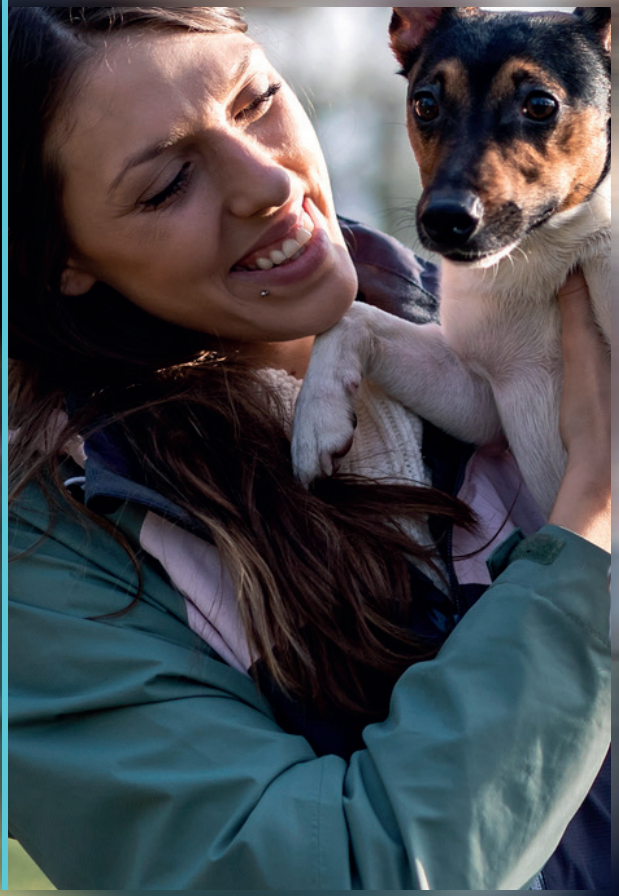
Section 1: The Status of Justice in 2023



The justice sector in the UK is constantly evolving and facing fresh challenges in 2023. The system has been under pressure to adapt to new trends and technologies, while also addressing ongoing issues such as prison overcrowding, delays in the court system, and limited resources.

Leaders in the sector are focusing on three key trends.

Trend 1: Driving digital transformation

One of the key trends that leadership in the justice system must contend with is the ongoing shift towards digital transformation. This includes measures to enable data-driven management and interoperability of data across services. This allows for more accurate and holistic decision-making, improved communication and coordination between different agencies, and better understanding of offender behaviour and risk factors. This can also increase resource efficiency, reduce administrative burdens and improve public safety.

The shift has also increased the use of technology such as video conferencing and digital evidence to improve efficiency and reduce delays in the court system, with the goal of enhancing processing times and reducing backlogs throughout the justice process to benefit defendants, victims, and the public.

Trend 2: Exploring alternative custody solutions

There is a growing concern about prison overcrowding and the need to reform sentencing and rehabilitation policies to reduce the risk of reoffending. This has led to calls for more community-based alternatives to custody, such as EM and other supervision programmes.

This is a critical issue that has been at the forefront of discussions in the justice system, and there is a growing consensus that changes need to be made to address this problem.

Trend 3: Improving access

Diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are also major concerns. There is a push to improve these issues throughout the justice system and legal profession, to ensure fair outcomes and representation for all. The goal is to create an inclusive and equitable justice system that serves the needs of all citizens, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Particularly, there is a focus on increasing access to justice for vulnerable and marginalised groups. This includes providing support services for victims and defendants with mental health or addiction issues, as well as improving the accessibility of the court system for all citizens.

Challenges facing leadership

Leadership in the justice system is tasked with navigating this complex and ever-evolving landscape. One of the most pressing challenges is the limited resources available to the system. This can manifest in a variety of ways, including budget constraints, staff shortages, and delays in court proceedings and other legal processes. These challenges can make it difficult for leaders to implement necessary changes and improvements to the system.

Another major challenge for leadership is ensuring compliance with the terms of non-custodial sentences. This requires closely monitoring offenders in the community, and taking swift action when violations occur. Coordinating the efforts of the various stakeholders involved in delivering justice can also be challenging, particularly when it comes to ensuring that all partners have access to the necessary information and resources to work together effectively. Additionally, it is important to be able to identify the underlying patterns and connections between an offender's behaviour and other social factors such as housing, employment, and substance abuse.

A further concern for leaders is balancing the need for monitoring and surveillance with the privacy and data protection rights of offenders. This requires implementing measures that protect the privacy and data of offenders, while still providing the necessary information to monitor their behaviour and compliance with legal requirements.

Finally, leaders must ensure that changes to legal procedures do not introduce technical errors that could compromise the fairness and integrity of the process. This requires careful planning and implementation of new technologies and procedures to ensure they are accurate and reliable.

While these challenges are not new, they are becoming more pressing as the legal system becomes more complex, and it's important to understand and address them to bring about fair, equitable, and digitally driven legal processes.

Priorities for delivering successful transformation

To address these challenges, leaders in the justice system must not only work together and collaborate with other agencies and organisations, but also be willing to embrace new technologies and tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system. This may involve investing in new technologies such as EM, data analytics, and artificial intelligence to better understand offender behaviour and tailor interventions to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Leaders in the justice system must also be willing to embrace new ways of working, such as agile development methodologies, to quickly respond to changing needs and requirements. This may involve working closely with private sector partners, who can bring expertise and innovation to the table.

Equally, leaders also need to focus on providing staff with the necessary training and development to perform their roles effectively and efficiently. This may involve providing training on new technologies, as well as providing ongoing professional development opportunities to help staff stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in the field.

The role of data in a digitally driven justice system

Leadership in the justice system must prioritise data collection, analysis, and accessibility in order to improve data usage and serve the needs of various stakeholders. This includes implementing systems and processes for consistent data collection, investing in technology and personnel, and using advanced analytics tools to extract insights. Sharing data across agencies via secure systems and protocols, building trust among stakeholders, and ensuring data is accurate, complete, and secure are also important for more effective and coordinated responses to justice-related issues, and improved outcomes for citizens.

By taking a data-driven approach, leaders can make better-informed decisions, identify areas for improvement, and track progress over time. This can lead to more efficient, effective, and equitable justice services for all citizens in the UK.

Section 2: Our contributions and successes in the justice system

Overview of electronic monitoring in 2023

Over the past year, the UK's criminal justice system has continued to recognise the value of EM in keeping the public safe and reducing reoffending. A major driver behind this was the release of the MoJ's Electronic Monitoring Strategy, which sets out the department's vision for the use of robust, innovative, and data-driven electronic monitoring.

As such, the system has been working towards an approach to EM that supports offender management in a cost-effective way. This involves using electronic monitoring as a means to oversee and encourage adherence to personalised conditions, as well as addressing factors that could increase the likelihood of repeat offending.

The system has also been focusing on community-based solutions as an alternative to custody, and EM is seen as a key tool in achieving this. It provides the information and insights needed for data-informed and responsive offender management, supporting the Probation Service's understanding of an offender's risk factors and rehabilitative needs. This enables the Probation Service to take more effective action to reduce the risk of reoffending.

The justice system is also taking steps to ensure that the Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams are aware of the benefits and opportunities of EM and is exploring the potential for EM to bolster their abilities to act swiftly and responsively in the supervision of offenders. This includes the use of technology such as GPS tracking and alcohol monitoring to observe and support individuals who have been sentenced for alcohol-related crimes.

The system is also exploring the use of agile and other modern digital development methodologies to deploy technology that meets service requirements. This approach serves to reduce the admin burden by using automation to ensure individuals are meeting their probation obligations without requiring manual intervention and interface with staff.

A cost-effective, compliant and community-based solution

The Electronic Monitoring Strategy is a UK government initiative that aims to use electronic monitoring as a tool to reduce crime and protect the public. It seeks to use EM to support offender management by providing a cost-effective mechanism for monitoring and incentivising compliance with tailored restrictions, and mitigating risk factors to facilitate community-based solutions as an alternative to custody. The strategy also aims to integrate EM more firmly into offender management, introduce new uses of EM, build EM capability and confidence, and create a robust, innovative and extensive EM offer. This strategy is the first in a series of publications that will underpin the Electronic Monitoring Expansion Programme. The goal is to work towards a target operating model for EM and to welcome engagement and collaboration with system partners, stakeholders, and suppliers to deliver the vision for EM.

Contributing to the MoJ's goals

Our contributions to the MoJ's activities have been significant, particularly in the area of electronic monitoring. As the Field and Monitoring Service provider for the MoJ's electronic monitoring service (EMS), we play a critical role in supporting the authority's efforts to reduce reoffending and protect the public. Our role in the multi-vendor delivery model involves providing a range of customer-facing services, such as a contact centre, monitoring service, and field force, as well as providing stakeholders with GPS monitoring data, back-office processing, and document management of residual non-digital case work.

Our work in this area has been instrumental in helping the MoJ to deliver an effective, reliable, and cost-effective service that supports offender management. Our expertise in service provision has been crucial in ensuring that the service is accessible to the individuals it is intended to support. Our ability to establish relationships with a variety of stakeholders, including the MoJ's other suppliers, who provide location monitoring software, monitoring systems and tags, and the telephony network, has helped to improve the pace and productivity of the service.

As technology and data continue to play an increasingly important role in the justice system, our contributions will become even more vital in helping the MoJ to deliver a more effective and efficient service that supports offender management.

Supporting increased use of EM

Supporting increased use of EM is a key focus for the MoJ. As a tool, EM can provide the information and insight needed for data-informed and responsive offender management.

One of the key benefits of EM is its effectiveness in reducing the risk of reoffending. Studies have shown that using EM in conjunction with other interventions, such as rehabilitation programmes and cognitive-behavioural therapy, can be highly effective in reducing the risk of reoffending. However, it's important to note that EM is not a panacea and should be used as part of a larger, holistic approach to offender management.

In addition to its effectiveness in reducing reoffending, EM also offers significant cost savings. For example, it's estimated that it costs £36,000 per annum to house a low-security risk prisoner in a category C prison, while the cost of an EM order is around £2,000 per annum. The reduction in costs also has a knock-on effect in terms of the opportunity cost of building new prisons, where capacity is often limited. These cost savings can be reinvested into other areas of the justice system, such as rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

Enabling the MoJ's EM ambitions

As a leading provider of EM services in the UK, we have been working in partnership with the MoJ to provide a comprehensive and effective EM service for people given a community sentence, awaiting trial, or on early release from prison. Since 2014, we have been the Field and Monitoring Service provider as part of a multi-vendor delivery model, where MoJ provides the service integration.

Guiding principles

Our approach to EM is based on the principles of integrity, safety, teamwork, respect, and accountability, and we are committed to delivering an effective and reliable service that supports the MoJ's aim of reducing reoffending and protecting the public across England and Wales.

Scaling capabilities

One of the key ways in which we are supporting the MoJ's EM ambitions is by managing a high volume of EM subjects. To date, we have managed 15,000 subjects, and have plans to scale to meet the MoJ's ambitions of 25,000. This demonstrates our ability to handle large and complex projects, and our commitment to delivering results.

Innovation

We have collaborated with the MoJ to improve and extend the EM service with innovative changes such as the introduction of GPS tracking, the delivery of the first national rollout of sobriety tags and using location monitoring to support police investigations into acquisitive crime. With a capacity to scale our service, our EMS has been proven to be effective in reducing the risk of reoffending and providing cost-effective alternatives to custody.

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Experience

Our domain knowledge and experience of working with stakeholders across the justice system, as well as our ability to manage high volumes of subjects and in a cost-effective way, makes us well-suited to support the MoJ's EM ambitions. Our innovative approach allows us to provide a service that is tailored to the specific needs of each case and ensures that the right support is provided at the right time. This, combined with its ability to handle large and complex projects and to work effectively with partners to deliver results, positions us as a strong partner to help the MoJ achieve its goals of reducing reoffending and protecting the public.

Demonstrating our successes

Our contributions have successfully reduced reoffending in a number of real-life situations. For example, in one case, an offender was released from prison and placed on a community sentence with an EM tag. The offender had a history of drug use and was at high risk of reoffending. Through the use of the EM tag, the offender's movements were monitored and any breaches of the community sentence were quickly identified and dealt with. This close monitoring, combined with support from a drug rehabilitation programme, helped the offender to overcome their addiction and stay out of prison.

Validating use cases for EM

1. Supporting police to maximise resources

In partnership with the Metropolitan Police, our EMS successfully tracked and located 34 individuals suspected of having breached their conditions of release. During a four-night operation, 28 arrests were made, helping to prevent further crimes and freeing up the police force to focus on active, open cases. The other six cases were closed without a need for arrest.

2. Sobriety rehabilitation

Working closely with the MoJ we have launched a new technology to help the rehabilitation of individuals who commit alcohol-related crimes in the country and help make our society safer. These court-mandated alcohol abstinence orders can be given to individuals who commit alcohol-related crime and are designed to help address their past behaviour.

Since October 2020, we have managed over 1,000 active orders, which are a combination of community sentences and alcohol monitoring on license. Furthermore, a Wales-based pilot programme showed 97% abstinence whilst on EM. The implied reduction in crime from those people is significant.

3. Reacting quickly to extreme and uncertain events

Our cost-effective service and quality standards were demonstrated by our fast and efficient response to the covid-19 pandemic in prisons. As the implications of the virus became known, we were able to quickly adapt our services to enable distancing and other forms of custody for inmates, ensuring that the prison system continued to function effectively and safely.

4. Tackling violence against women and girls using automation

One of the ways in which EM solutions are being used to support public safety is through the use of GPS tracking to triangulate the movements of various individuals involved in incidents involving at-risk women and girls. This can be used to ensure the safety of victims, for example, by providing advanced warnings, triggering calls to authorities when conditions are breached, and other similar measures.

An example of this in action is the work that we have done in partnership with the Greater Manchester Police. Together, we have developed a proof-of-concept app that has the potential to significantly reduce administration time and give officers vital information on emerging incidents. The app can automate further checks and provide risk flags, enabling officers to provide the appropriate level of support to victims by taking into account their full history and situation.

Section 3: From insights to action

Taking our learnings forward to support MoJ's ambitions

After working in the justice system for several years, we have gained valuable insight and experience in the field of EM and offender management, whilst collaborating with the MoJ to improve and extend the service.

In this section, we will reflect on the key learnings from our work in the justice system over the past year and identify areas for improvement and opportunities for future development.

1. **Power** of collaboration

One of the most important lessons we have learned is the value of collaboration. Joining up systems and improving visibility and transparency of data can enable a more holistic, data-driven approach to justice. By working closely with stakeholders across the justice system, we have been able to achieve greater success in reducing reoffending and protecting the public.

2. **Delivering** greater value to the taxpayer

Another key learning has been the importance of finding alternatives to incarceration to reduce the burden on state resources, while seeking to improve the risk of reoffending. The EM service that we provide is a cost-effective mechanism for achieving these goals, and it can serve as a community-based solution as an alternative to custody. This approach has been shown to be successful in reducing the risk of reoffending and it is a more cost-effective option than traditional custodial sentences.

3. **Personalised** justice

We have also learned that personalising justice is key to achieving better outcomes. By better fitting the conditions of the sentence to the individual, we can improve the chances of rehabilitation and reduce the risk of reoffending. For example, by using alcohol monitoring and GPS to monitor individuals sentenced for alcohol-related crimes, we have been able to encourage them to change their behaviour and stay away from alcohol.

The use of agile software development lifecycle to create custom software to meet service requirements has also been a key aspect of our work. By working closely with stakeholders across the justice system and being responsive to their needs, we have been able to create software that is tailored to the specific requirements of the service. This has allowed for a more efficient and effective service that is better able to deliver positive outcomes for both individuals and the wider community.

4. **Reducing** the admin burden

Another key learning has been the importance of reducing the administrative burden. By using automation to ensure individuals are meeting their probation obligations without requiring manual intervention or interface with staff, we have been able to improve the efficiency of the service and reduce the burden on staff.

This not only reduces the admin burden, but it also provides a more streamlined and efficient process for individuals to comply with their conditions.

5. **Supporting** behaviour change

We have learned that using technology and data to encourage expected behaviours and reward those that evidence their ability to remain within their conditions can be an effective way to achieve behaviour change.

The use of technology and data can play a vital role in this. Our approach to behaviour change has been focused on using technology and data to encourage expected behaviours and reward those that evidence their ability to remain within their conditions. By working closely with stakeholders across the justice system, we have been able to deliver a more personalised, efficient, and impactful service that is better able to deliver positive outcomes for both individuals and the wider community.

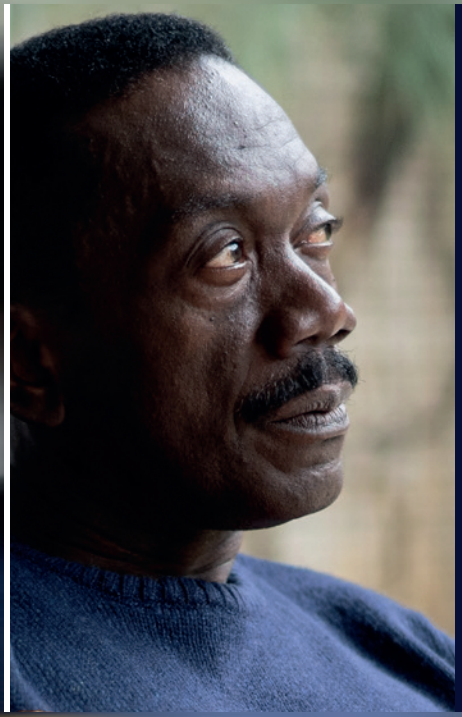
6. **Improving** access to technology is as important as the technology itself

Improving access to technology across the sector is crucial for achieving the goals of efficiency, accuracy, and cost savings in the justice system. The technology to support these goals already exists and has been proven reliable, but the challenge is in ensuring that stakeholders across the sector are able to adopt it and realise its full potential.

This includes providing training and support for staff to use new technologies, as well as working closely with other organisations and agencies to ensure seamless integration and data sharing. Additionally, it also means investing in necessary infrastructure and resources such as internet and device access for those in remote and underserved areas.

By working together to improve access to technology, we can ensure that the justice system is able to take full advantage of the benefits it offers. This will not only improve the overall functioning of the system but also helps to make it fair and accessible to all.

Conclusion: The next chapter for the justice system



The status of justice in 2023 is one that is facing many challenges, from limited resources and staff shortages, to concerns about prison overcrowding and the need to reform sentencing and rehabilitation policies. However, it is also a time of great opportunity, as new technologies and data-driven approaches are being adopted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system.

We have played a key role in this transformation, providing a range of services to support the MoJ's efforts to reduce reoffending and protect the public. Our work has highlighted the importance of collaboration and data-driven decision-making, as well as the need to personalise justice and support offenders in changing their behaviour.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we will continue to work closely with our partners in the justice system to support the implementation of innovative technologies and practices, with the goal of delivering greater value to the taxpayer, improving public safety, and ensuring that justice is served in a fair and equitable manner.

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