

About the Remote Working project



Remote Working, a Wiring Up Youth Justice project completed in April 2008, has enhanced the work of YOT practitioners by providing them with access to real-time case management information wherever they are – in court, in the secure estate or out in the community.

“The Gwynedd Môn Youth Justice Service has really benefited from our court link, because we’ve saved so much time getting information about young people to and from the court. It’s also improved our credibility with staff and magistrates because our staff can now provide information about a case in an instant, without having to leave to phone the office or to read through paper files.”

**Ceri Owen, Court Administration Officer,
Gwynedd Môn Youth Justice Service**



“The digital pens we obtained through Remote Working were incorporated into our business processes very quickly, and are being used all the time by our administrative staff, managers and practitioners. We’ve seen significant advantages for our administrative team in particular, with those using them saving up to four hours a week writing minutes of meetings.”

**Lesley Tregear,
Operations Manager, Business Development and Change,
Warwickshire Youth Offending Service**



YOT practitioners’ busy schedules mean they’re often away from their desk. The Remote Working project aimed to provide the ICT tools that such practitioners need to work effectively, in any place or situation.

Court links established by the Remote Working project are today providing 69 YOTs in 116 youth courts around

the country with secure remote access to their case management systems and Secure eMail.

In a second strand of work, the project also provided grants to those YOTs who had already invested their own resources in installing court links, enabling them to pioneer new ways of using mobile technologies in

the youth justice system.

This leaflet looks at what was achieved by the Remote Working project in both court links and pioneering technologies, and describes how YOTs have benefited in each case. It also considers some of the information security implications of using the new technologies.



“West London Youth Court deals with young people from a number of London boroughs. Since court links were established, our youth offending teams have been able to obtain information about young people much more easily, not only from their own records but also from the records of other YOTs. This has made a significant contribution to the justice process and has enhanced the reputation not only of the West London YOTs but also of those YOTs which agree to participate.”

David Simpson, District Judge, West London Youth Court

The bigger picture

Court links aren't just a good thing in themselves, they also have a positive impact on the wider criminal justice system. Two very significant initiatives benefiting from the increasing prevalence of court links are the Electronic yellow envelope process (Eye) and Simple Speedy Summary Justice (known as CJSSS).

The Eye process requires transmission of documents to the Placements and Casework Service of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) on remand or sentence of a young person into custody. Court links improve efficiency and save time by enabling practitioners to send case management information by Secure eMail while in court. This

removes the need to visit or phone their office, and helps ensure that information gets to the secure establishment before the young person arrives there.

CJSSS is a new way of working in youth courts that is currently being rolled out across England and Wales, which aims to minimise adjournments and see more cases dealt with at first hearing. Court links aid CJSSS because where YOTs have immediate access to up-to-date case management data they can feed into decisions – letting the magistrates know, for example, how the young person is responding to supervision.

Local staff at Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) are highly

supportive of YOTs and local authority IT departments' efforts to install connections to systems in court premises (this is most easily done where YOTs are granted office space for their own use.) At the request of the YJB, HMCS has also given the green light for YOT staff to use laptops in hearing rooms to record outcomes, and to use wireless connections in court buildings (subject to local technical requirements).

“We're very happy to cooperate on court links, and very happy that YOTs are taking the initiative on this,” says Enzo Riglia, Project Manager for CJSSS in the youth court. “It is making a significant contribution to the success of CJSSS and our work in general.”

Making the connection

There are several ways to make the connection from court to your case management system and Secure eMail, but you'll need advice on which method to choose.

The Remote Working project established court links using a mix of approaches and technologies that have included fixed lines, broadband, wireless and 3G. So which should an aspiring YOT go for?

There are several options, says Remote Working Project Manager Mark Ives. "But you can't generalize about the merits of one IT solution over another," he believes. "For example, although 3G is becoming more available and can bring significant benefits to practitioners' work, it may not provide the optimum answer for all

YOTs because of variations in their policy and requirements. So it's best to discuss all the options with your local IT provider."

The good news, however, is that all the technical options on offer do have the potential to extend remote working beyond the

courthouse itself. But again Mark advises YOTs to take advice on getting the best from their chosen technology.

"And always remember," he adds, "that whatever you do, information security must be your paramount concern."



"We haven't got a court link – but we want one"

What can you do if your YOT was not one of those that benefited from the Remote Working project, but you want to get a link in your courthouse?

The Remote Working project was initially aimed at those YOTs with average and above-average demand for custodial placements – around two thirds of the total. But towards the end of the project it looked as if funding might become available to extend the support to smaller YOTs.

"For this reason we carried out a full technical assessment with

each of those YOTs' local authority IT departments," explains Phil Sutton, Head of Business Change at the YJB. "Although the funding unfortunately didn't materialise in the end, each of those YOTs was provided with a full specification and costing, should funds subsequently become available."

Some YOTs have successfully used their specification and costing as a basis for local negotiations with partner agencies, particularly through their Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). LCJBs are leading the implementation of Simple

Speedy Summary Justice (CJSSS) in the youth courts, and a small amount of additional funding is being made available to them to help criminal justice agencies including YOTs to meet the costs.

"Your specification and costing will get your discussions off on the right foot," says Phil. "They will also give you confidence that the technical solution, once established, will work well and bring you the benefits that other YOTs are already enjoying."

Blazing a trail

As part of the Remote Working project, YOTs that already had a functioning court link were invited to propose other ways that new technologies could help them in their work. Proposals fell into the six groups below. If you want more information about these trail-blazing technological approaches, you can email the contacts provided.

Digital pens

Digital pens store handwritten text so that it can later be converted into type on a PC. They save time because they remove the need for subsequent transcription of notes and minutes of meetings.



“The staff here are completely won over to digital pens because they save us so much time, particularly when writing reports for court and panel meetings. Using a digital pen saves at least 45 minutes per report, which means practitioners can save about 90 minutes every week.

“With all that time saved, our YOT has had more opportunity to make sure that every report is complete and accurate. We’re also able to spend more productive time with our young people.”

Nicky Nicholls, Operations Manager, Case Management, Warwickshire YOS (nickynicholls@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Touchscreen kiosks

Kiosks are floor-standing, touchscreen systems with software including WiFi-enabled internet access. Robust and appealing, they act as an effective provider of information to young people as well as collecting feedback on topics such as drugs and health.

“Kiosks are a useful and effective way of engaging and informing young people, which is why we use them regularly. They also give you the opportunity to conduct up-to-the-minute surveys on what works in reducing reoffending.”

Karen Doyle, Assistant Head of Service, Derby City YOS (karen.doyle@derby.gov.uk)

Remote access to Viewpoint

Many YOTs, children’s services and even HM Inspectors already use Viewpoint products to find out young people’s views, via interactive, computer-based questionnaires. Remote access to Viewpoint allows staff to download the questionnaire to their laptop and then upload it to the web, once the young person has completed it, at a later point.

“Feedback that is relevant, timely and comes directly from young people and parents is so essential in making sure our projects work to

best effect. It helps us keep doing what is effective and stops us from doing what’s not working.

The provision of mobile working by the WUYJ programme makes this work so much more immediate. The young people enjoy working on the laptop, too, and the number of refusals we’ve had has declined as a result.”

Pauline Moorhouse, Deputy Team Manager, Manchester YOS Parenting and Prevention Team (pauline.moorhouse@manchester.gov.uk)





SMS text alerts

SMS text alerts enable practitioners to send reminders from an email account to a young person's mobile phone. Automatic transmission can be set up for evenings and weekends. Conservative estimates put increased compliance by young people at around 10% (it can be as high as 40 to 50%) which means YOT workers spending their time more productively.

“I've found the SMS text solution really useful in my work with young people, as it enables me to remind parents and young people about meetings and appointments. The young person benefits from getting all the information that they need in order to attend, which reduces levels of non attendance and breach action.”

**Nicola Padgett, Case Worker,
South Tees YOS (nicola_padgett
@middlesbrough.gov.uk)**



BlackBerrys and other PDAs

A personal digital assistant (PDA) is a pocket PC with a Windows operating system and all the usual Microsoft programs. It's an effective way for YOT staff to stay in contact and remain productive when out and about.

“Using mobile devices has improved our ability to be productive out of the office, which is great because office accommodation soaks up resources that can better be spent on direct work with young people.

3G allows us to keep up-to-date and use our time productively, providing us with the information and documents we need at all times. Working this way has meant more participation by young people and families – especially as we can now meet them in locations better suited for the hard-to-reach groups.”

**Larry Wright, Head of Youth
Offending Services,
Hammersmith and Fulham YOT
(larry.wright@lbhf.gov.uk)**

3G cards

A 3G card makes a laptop broadband-enabled, wirelessly. YOT staff are using 3G to access case management systems, the internet and email when out of the office.

“3G cards are saving us an average of 45 minutes per Asset, and are allowing our staff to work in a completely mobile way. This means we have more time for gatekeeping

the quality of Assets, thereby improving management and lessening risk in custody.

“The main benefit of 3G is when in court or on visits to secure accommodation. With 3G you have all your key documents and information to hand, as well as more time to be productive.”

**Mike Thomas, Head of Service,
West Sussex YOT (mike.d.thomas
@westsussex.gov.uk)**

Data security

– some do's and don'ts

New technologies are bringing immense benefits to practitioners and to the criminal justice system, but they can also carry the risk of personal information going missing or falling into the wrong hands. Here are some do's and don'ts to remember, particularly when using laptops, PDAs, digital pens or other mobile devices.

- **Don't** transmit personal information across open wireless systems.
- **Don't** store personal information on memory sticks.
- **Don't** place yourself where someone can read the screen over your shoulder when dealing with personal information on a laptop in a public environment.
- **Don't** copy data to external CDs, DVDs, floppy disks or other storage mechanisms.
- **Don't** leave a laptop in a vulnerable place, such as in a car.
- **Don't** make more hard copy printouts than you need.
- **Do** ensure that all laptops are fully encrypted and protected by a password that is hard to guess (usually involving letters and digits).
- **Do** securely destroy all paper documentation that is no longer required.
- **Do** maintain a need-to-know policy. Just because someone is cleared to see information does not mean that they necessarily need the information.
- **Do** make sure that memory sticks are fully encrypted and password-protected.
- **Do** ensure that you use a secure system when emailing anyone outside your YOT. The Secure eMail system can be identified by the ending 'cjsm.net'. For example, 'joe.bloggs@yjb.gov.uk.cjsm.net' is a legitimate, secure email address.
- **Do** be aware of the Local Government Data Handling Guidelines. Go to www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=9040133.
- **Do** seek advice from your security officer or line manager if you believe there has been, or could be, a security breach.

For more information about the Remote Working project email mark.ives@yjb.gov.uk

For further information about the Wiring Up Youth Justice programme go to www.wiringupyouthjustice.info or email wiringup@yjb.gov.uk

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