

A DIGITALLY EMPOWERED POLICE WORKFORCE

How can policing develop a digitally empowered, data literate and innovative workforce to meet the demands of modern, intelligence-led policing?



With over a decade delivering critical solutions to national policing, the NPCC Policing Problem Book felt very familiar. Through our TechUK membership, we jumped at the chance to share our thoughts and experience on solving these problems. Many of them mirror challenges we've already solved, in policing and beyond. We were asked to pick three. In this document we share our response to one of the problems.

How can policing develop a digitally empowered, data literate and innovative workforce to meet the demands of modern, intelligence-led policing?

As policing evolves to meet the demands of a digitally driven world, the profile of the workforce is changing. Forces must now build teams that combine operational expertise with advanced technical and digital skills, particularly in areas such as data science and digital forensics. This shift is essential to delivering proactive, intelligence-led policing that can respond effectively to modern threats.

However, policing struggles to develop and attract the key skills required for this shift across all levels, including within the leadership. Crucially, leaders within policing must also develop the digital fluency and strategic understanding needed to champion data-driven approaches and guide their teams through this transformation.

The absence of a structured, scalable framework for training and continuous professional development in these areas compounds the issue. There is an urgent need for a national approach to continuous professional development that equips all levels of the workforce, from frontline officers to senior leaders:

- What modular, scalable CPD platforms can deliver data science and digital forensics training?
- How can we assess and visualise digital skills gaps across the workforce?
- What leadership programs can embed innovation and digital fluency at senior levels?

Based on our technologies, expertise and innovation, how could we solve this problem?

Experience solving this problem

Modern policing needs a workforce with digital and data skills, and leaders fluent enough to champion the change. The barrier is structural: no scalable national approach exists to develop those skills. We answer from experience building national platforms for regulated workforces and delivering within policing's security constraints.

Modular, scalable CPD platforms: build once, nationally

We built and ran the single digital platform for Social Work England, the regulator for more than 96,000 social workers. One platform handles registration, training standards, CPD and fitness to practise, saving hundreds of thousands of hours a year through automation. That is the shape a national policing CPD capability needs: modular, so courses, assessments, skills records and specialist learning environments for data science and digital forensics all plug into one foundation, and scalable, so every officer in every force uses the same service.

Training works best when people get the right answer to their question, drawn from policies, guidance and training material that often sit in different formats and systems. The College of Policing faced exactly this challenge. Our proof-of-concept answers questions in plain English, blending structured data such as spreadsheets with unstructured documents such as policies and guidance in a single search. New data sources plug in without rebuilding the platform, with one integration layer serving every tool that needs it. It runs on an open integration standard already used by OpenAI and Google DeepMind, with more than 5,000 servers live worldwide, so adding a new force or data source needs no bespoke development and no lock-in to one supplier. The same proof of concept could replace the College's manual force dashboards, offering benchmarked insights for every force on demand.

For West Mercia Police, we built a knowledge base directly into their digital forensics case management application, so investigators can upload training guides, standard operating procedures, application help and work instructions, all version controlled. When a document updates, the system notifies everyone who needs to read the new version, with guidance linked into the application's own workflows. This is the modular pattern a national platform needs: training built into the tools officers use every day.

A national platform only gains traction if it is reliable, secure and easy to access, and force IT environments vary widely. Zero Trust access solves this

without weakening security, making training platforms, data science sandboxes and digital forensics environments reachable from any authorised device, without exposing them to the open internet or deploying them inside each force's network. Secure gateway policies block malicious content during forensics research, protecting trainees as investigative skills develop. We deliver this with our partner Cloudflare, as their first ZTNA Authorised Service Delivery Partner in EMEA. The same approach already underpins Single Online Home, where Cloudflare Access has been instrumental in national rollout and secure access across forces.

Assessing and visualising digital skills gaps across the workforce

Capability planning starts with visibility, and we practise what we propose. Every consultant at CDS records their skills against defined levels, giving us live analytics on coverage, gaps and single points of expertise across the business. The same approach works at force or national level: define the digital and data skills modern policing needs, assess the workforce against consistent levels, and visualise the gaps by team, rank and region. CPD investment then follows evidence instead of assumption.

Training and assessment must achieve two things at once: a consistent standard across every officer and force, so gaps and risk can be compared fairly, and enough flexibility to reflect each force's own priorities and each officer's role and seniority. These can pull in opposite directions. We have already built an AI-enabled proof of concept that achieves both.

Our CSTTX platform proves this works, built for one of the toughest organisation-wide training challenges: cyber security assurance. Every trainee reviews the same approved material and answers the same set questions, so delivery stays standardised. But CSTTX uses AI to assess the intent behind each answer, not just a multiple-choice selection, scoring right and wrong while surfacing the specific knowledge gaps behind a wrong answer. It then delivers tailored feedback, pointing each trainee to the material they need next, giving the organisation a sharper, auditable view of where the harder to spot, higher risk gaps sit.

Applied to digital and data skills, the same approach gives every officer an instant, evidenced skills level, and gives force and national leaders a live, aggregated view of gaps by team, rank and region. Built into a national platform, this turns training from a catalogue into a targeted intervention, shaped by where each officer is today and where their career is heading.

Embedding digital fluency and innovation at senior levels

Leaders champion what they understand, and the fastest route to understanding is seeing real technology work on real policing problems. We take leadership teams there in two practical ways.

Our AI Readiness Assessment gives senior teams a grounded, independent view of what AI can genuinely do, covering use case, data, infrastructure, governance and risk. It replaces board-level anxiety with a clear, prioritised position leaders can own.

Working proofs of concept then make it concrete. Our work with College of Policing on a supersearch proof of concept lets users query structured training databases and unstructured policy documents through one interface, with enterprise-grade security and audit for sensitive data. Ahead of building it, we ran AI readiness consultancy with their senior leadership, covering the people, process, data and technology needed to adopt AI safely, securing the buy-in the project needed. A working demonstration on genuine data does more for a chief officer's digital fluency than any training material, while showing innovation delivered safely within policing's constraints.

Where forces want sustained support, our senior practitioners embed alongside leadership teams through the change, building fluency by doing.

Build once, learn everywhere

Policing's own digital strategy calls for one national standard and one platform, built once rather than 48 times. Our answer combines a proven CPD platform pattern, Zero Trust access from any device, evidence-based visibility of the skills gap, and leaders whose confidence is built on working software, every part of it already delivered elsewhere, including at national scale on Single Online Home.

Solving policing problems for over a decade

Our deep understanding of policing sector challenges for over a decade, enables us to deliver solutions that excel in your environment. We act as strategic partners in your transformation journey working as one team—driving real change and innovation rather than simply implementing technology.

Speak to our experts

SPEAK TO US

