

ENHANCING PUBLIC CONTACT DELIVERY

How can policing enhance public contact delivery through Strategic Digital Transformation?



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 enhance public contact delivery through Strategic Digital Transformation?

Over the past decade, the Digital Public Contact (DPC) programme has significantly advanced the way the public interacts with police forces across the UK. The Single Online Home (SOH) platform, originally based on the Metropolitan Police Service's website, has evolved into critical national infrastructure. It now supports a wide range of digital services, including triage capabilities, bespoke forms, structured data outputs, and integrations with force systems. Innovations such as the iHub, Citizen Portal, and mobile app have further extended its reach, enabling two-way communication and self-service options for the public.

Despite these achievements, the platform is now at a critical juncture. The underlying technology stack is aging, complex, and increasingly costly to maintain. The volume and complexity of public contact—spanning 999 and 101 calls, emails, and social media—continue to rise, placing strain on legacy systems and control room staff. Public expectations for rapid, seamless, and compassionate service are growing, while internal challenges such as staff retention, fragmented governance, and inconsistent user experiences persist.

- How can policing increase efficiency in its call handling and digital contact systems?
- What technologies can unify emergency and nonemergency contact channels?
- How can digital transformation in public contact enhance public trust and confidence?

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

Experience solving this problem

Over the past decade, the Digital Public Contact (DPC) programme has changed how the public interacts with policing. Single Online Home now sits at the heart of that change, as critical national infrastructure. That success points to the next challenge and the next opportunity.

Contact across 999, 101, email and social media keeps rising, yet the public still faces dozens of different routes into policing, depending on where they live and what they need. Public expectations, shaped by the best of the private sector, are for one obvious place to go: report anything non-emergency, find out what is happening locally, and get an answer straight away, whether by phone, online, at a front desk or from an officer in the street, without creating an account. That is the service the next decade of Single Online Home should deliver. As its delivery partner since inception, we know how to get there.

We have run Single Online Home since it began, and our work has been central to national policing's aim of modernising how it engages with the public. When the Metropolitan Police Service first set out to move crime reporting online, the goal was straightforward: give the public a way to report crime without queuing on the phone or attending a station in person. Ten years on, that goal has grown into a national mission. It now has a natural end point: one digital entry point for every non-emergency interaction with policing in England and Wales.

Since then, we have modernised Single Online Home re-architecting it for national multi-tenancy while it stayed live in production, migrating it to Azure to save £200,000 a year with no unplanned downtime, and deploying the world's first public sector Cloudflare Zero Trust environment. The move to a current, fully supported digital experience platform (DXP) continues that modernisation, replacing older components with a modern, maintainable foundation built for what comes next: AI-enabled triage, deeper integration through iHub, and a genuinely national service layer.

Increasing efficiency in call handling and digital contact systems: let the platform do the routing

Policing can increase efficiency in call handling and digital contact by letting the platform resolve or redirect the demand that does not need a person. Today, around 20% of calls to police are for non-police matters, and 40% of 101 traffic is people chasing an update on a report they have already made. The public should never need to work out which channel,

which form or which force is the right one. The future of Single Online Home is a single national entry point where anyone can report any non-emergency matter, such as crime, anti-social behaviour, road traffic incidents, intelligence or lost property. The platform does the routing, so the citizen does not have to.

AI-enabled triage, delivered through the DXP, takes a report described in the public's own words. It directs the report to the right force, the right team and the right workflow, structured and legally admissible from the moment it is submitted. Reports that belong with other agencies are signposted or passed on, rather than dead-ending on a phone line. iHub carries every report into force back-office systems, so it is entered once and only once, eliminating manual or duplicate tasks. The National My Police Portal then closes the loop with proactive written updates, removing the single biggest driver of avoidable 101 demand.

The same intelligence becomes the front door to 101 itself. Directive AI answers the non-emergency line and understands the caller's need in natural language. It resolves the 40% of calls that are simply an update request and redirects the 20% that belong with another agency. Where the caller wants to make a full report, it captures that report by voice, structured and ready to use. The moment a conversation needs a person or reveals risk, it escalates instantly to a call handler, with the context already gathered. No caller queues to be told they are in the wrong place. Every caller is resolved, reported or routed within moments of the call connecting. Because directive AI and web triage run on the same national platform, a report started by phone and one started online are the same report, in the same workflow, held to the same evidential standard. Control room staff are reserved for the conversations that genuinely need a person.

The second part of the vision is local information, delivered without the need to log in. Using location alone, Single Online Home can present the neighbourhood policing team, local appeals and alerts, crime prevention advice and community events, supporting the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee's commitment to visible, accessible local policing. Crucially, none of this requires an account: anonymity and zero friction are deliberate design choices, so a victim, a witness or a concerned resident can report an issue and get local answers in seconds, with no barrier between them and the police. Identity comes in only where it adds value, through the Citizen Portal and My Police Portal, with GOV.UK One Login for those who opt in.

Unifying emergency and non-emergency contact channels: one platform, every door

The technology that unifies emergency and non-emergency contact channels is one national platform covering every channel through which the public meets policing: phone, web, front desk and officer in the street. The citizen chooses the channel, and the platform keeps the experience, the data and the outcome the same. On the phone, directive AI fronts 101 and hands seamlessly to control room staff. On the web and mobile app, triage and bespoke forms capture reports the moment the need arises. At the station front desk, staff work from the same national platform, so a walk-in report is captured once, to the same standard. An officer in the street can report directly from the roadside into the national platform, giving both the officer and the citizen the same record as if they had reported online.

Behind every channel sits the same infrastructure. One national platform integrates with force control room systems, rather than duplicating them, and complements the voice systems that handle 999. The Citizen Portal gives self-service case access, the National My Police Portal gives two-way communication, and iHub connects it all into force back-office systems, so a report is entered once, whichever door it came through. Ten years of building shared national infrastructure, rather than 43 separate force systems, shows this convergence is achievable at scale.

Improving public trust and confidence: reliability the public can already see

Digital transformation in public contact enhances trust and confidence by being demonstrably reliable and secure. Single Online Home has delivered 100% uptime for three years, against a 99.9% service level agreement, and every report is captured to a standard that is legally admissible from the moment it is submitted, with an audit log that can pass directly to the Crown Prosecution Service. Cloudflare Zero Trust protects the platform against around 500 million security events a year, and a decade of operational evidence shows that trust has already been earned.

One standard, one platform, one contact

Policing has already set this direction itself. The National Policing Digital Strategy commits national policing to one standard, one platform and one contact, and the government's reform proposals for a National Police Service call for buying technology once, rather than 43 separate times. A single entry point for all non-emergency reporting, fronted by directive AI on the phone and consistent across every channel, is the citizen-facing expression of that ambition. Single Online Home is the only platform positioned to deliver it: nationally deployed, publicly trusted, and already carrying the reporting, triage, portal and integration capabilities the vision requires. As reform continues, this gives DPC a proven route to keep improving public contact, build public trust and free up officer time for the communities they protect.

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

