

# Introducing Justice Digital & Strategy

Justice Digital & Strategy is a recently established team within the Justice Directorate of the Scottish Government. Our mission is to drive, support and enable transformation to create a Scottish justice system fit for the 21st century.

The impetus to harness digital to deliver better justice services in Scotland dates back much further though. In 2014, justice organisations articulated an ambitious vision for the justice system, kick-starting a new era of change which recognised the potential of technology as an enabler of a modern justice system.

The way we live and work is being changed more and more by digital technology, and the justice sector must seize the opportunities that digital provides to transform how the justice system works.

Justice investment has supported a range of reforms, including for example the development of a new on-line Civil Justice Case Management system which will enable, once fully implemented, the legal profession and the public to start a court case, submit documents, pay fees and track progress online.

Other justice reforms using digital technology include on-line systems for jurors and fines payments and the use of TV links for some court cases. For example video conferencing equipment has been installed across the country in remote sites allowing vulnerable witnesses to give evidence away from court where agreed in advance.

But there is still huge potential for further reform. In the same timeframe technology has developed at pace, while our understanding of digital transformation has matured. Digital has become integrated in all that we do and we recognise that technology plays only one part in a complex justice sector. The people, policies and business processes are at the core of our transformation – we need to engage, learn and understand before we can embrace the potential for service improvement that exists in our digital age.

Building on the 2014 vision, our digital ambitions are now an integral part of our overall vision for the justice system in Scotland, set out in Justice in Scotland: Vision and Priorities, a key outcome of which is: “We deliver person-centred, modern and affordable public services”. This means we take and promote a user-centred approach to transformation, ensuring in particular a focus on the experience of victims and witnesses.

## **Who we are**

Our team is Fiona Cameron (Programme Director), Jim Wilson (Strategy and Policy), David Duncan-Fraser (Programme Manager) and Tor Bollingmo (Product Manager). We work in partnership with the Scottish Government’s Digital Directorate who provide us with support in business analysis, technical architecture and transformation.

Connecting us to the wider criminal justice sector we have Product Owners representing the Police Service of Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service. We are recruiting from the defence community too to ensure that the defence perspective is as core to our work as that of our justice organisation partners.

## **Our partners**

As a Scottish Government team we work in collaboration with our operational Justice System partners to plan and deliver transformation. We promote collaboration across the system too by bringing partners together in a Justice System Planning Group. That has resulted in a better understanding of how changes in one organisation can impact the rest of the system, allowing justice organisations to better plan and prepare for change.

Our Justice Digital forum brings together digital colleagues from across the system to identify and create opportunities for collaboration and transformation. We are currently working with justice partners to support service transformation through our Justice Digital Transformation workstream – keep an eye on future blog posts for updates and further information.

## **Digital backbone for the criminal justice system**

Our current focus is on working with justice partners to deliver with and for them a solution for sharing digital evidence throughout the criminal justice process. Modern ways of working have the potential to save large amounts of both time and money allowing justice partners to focus on delivering the best possible justice system for victims, witnesses and other users of the justice system. It's also an essential building block for enabling further digital transformation. Future blog posts will explain this part of our work in more detail.

## **International Digital Justice Community**

We are also connecting with justice organisations around the world to learn about current and planned justice digital innovation and projects. Our aim is for this work to grow into a dynamic international justice digital community which offers opportunities for learning and collaboration across the globe.

## **Contact us**

We love talking all things justice digital. If you're interested to hear more about transformation in the justice sector in Scotland or would like to discuss with us any aspect of your work relevant to our please get in touch at [justicedigital@gov.scot](mailto:justicedigital@gov.scot).

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