

News story: Tech summit set to discuss disclosure of digital evidence

Ministers will today meet senior police and prosecutors at a high-profile summit aimed at improving the disclosure of digital evidence in the criminal justice system.

The Solicitor General, Lucy Frazer QC, and the Policing Minister, Nick Hurd, will host Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill, Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave, Victims' Commissioner Dame Vera Baird and representatives from the UK technology industry at the Law Society's offices in London.

They will focus on the handling of digital evidence disclosure in criminal cases and consider how police and prosecutors can be supported to better handle the increasing volumes of digital evidence – to ensure victims get the justice they deserve.

This includes looking at what programmes are currently being used to decipher evidence and considering technological innovations.

Solicitor General, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

We need to do more to support the police and prosecutors to adapt to the increasing volume of digital material in the criminal justice system.

The government is also determined to ensure that victims of sexual violence and all other crimes are not deterred from seeking justice because of fear of what could happen to their personal information.

We must ensure full public confidence in the disclosure system.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, said:

It is vital we maintain public confidence in the police and our criminal justice system to make sure victims are not let down.

Technological advancements have created challenges – the average mobile phone today is capable of holding the data equivalent of around five million A4 pages.

Police recognise the need to improve and it is right that the government works with forces, prosecutors and the tech sector to make sure both victims and criminals get the justice they deserve.

The tech summit follows a disclosure review by the Attorney General Geoffrey

Cox in November 2018 which found that digital evidence was not always handled correctly by police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), leading to concerns about miscarriages of justice.

The review acknowledged that increasing volumes of data stored on smart phones and other devices had significantly increased the workload of investigators and prosecutors examining digital evidence.

Attendees at the summit will include:

- Director of Public Prosecutions, Max Hill QC
- Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave
- Chief Technology Officer at the Crown Prosecution Service, Mark Gray
- Chief Technology Officer at the Serious Fraud Office, Ben Denison
- Victims' Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird QC
- Director General of Criminal Justice Policy at the Ministry of Justice, Mark Sweeney
- Deputy Chief Constable Janette McCormick from the College of Policing
- Head of Investigations at the Information Commissioner's Office, Melissa Mathieson
- Programme Manager at Tech UK, Jessica Russell