

BlackBerry delivers savings in Wales



Picture: North Wales Police

PC Kevin Dunning, North Wales Police, demonstrates the new mobile technology system.

North Wales Police have pioneered a force wide use of BlackBerry access to Niche Records Management System (RMS), bringing estimated savings of over £630,000 in manpower hours. Deployment of the devices is now being increased.

Test results from the initiative show that using BlackBerrys to access Niche RMS resulted in officers spending almost one hour more per shift out of the police station and in the community, as well as significant reductions in 'dead time', in which officers might be required to escort suspects to the station.

In 2002, North Wales Police implemented Niche RMS, the police information management

system that brings together all aspects of operational policing in one unified system. One of the key reasons the force chose Niche RMS was for the ability to combine the system with portable technology, such as the BlackBerry. Earlier this year, 300 BlackBerrys were distributed to a mix of users.

Sergeant Aled Eynon, quality assurance officer on the BlackBerry project, said: "Experience of trying to mobilise our information over the past few years leads us to believe that with BlackBerry, we are now able to provide officers in North Wales with a first class product and clearly, RMS is at the heart of this."

The ten crime car officers that already have BlackBerrys will have 3,300 more productive hours at their disposal, or the equivalent of two officers. Based on the time saved by community beat officers being able to access Niche RMS while on the streets, the introduction of the devices will save the force an estimated £636,000, or 29,000 productive hours. Police visibility and crime solving rates have improved and North Wales Police looks forward to continued success."

Although other forces also use the BlackBerry device for different

reasons, such as email access for example, North Wales use the device in a 'query only' fashion, to obtain information in a remote and mobile environment.

Sgt Eynon added: "By mobilising a single system, officers have access to the vast majority of information via the BlackBerry; they can do personal checks, vehicle checks, location checks etc, looking for links between individuals and events across North Wales including photographs of people who have been photographed whilst in police custody."

"Having access to information when it is needed is key, bringing real time benefits to policing and has improved the decision making process when considering arresting an individual."

Niche RMS is unique in giving operational officers access to all the information they need to more effectively do their job – preventing and detecting crime, says John James, Director of Operations and Business Development for Niche Technology Inc said: "Combining the Niche RMS with mobile data solutions such as BlackBerrys provides enhanced access to that information and delivers information where operational staff need it most – on the street."

Operation Utah is road block for criminals

The ACPO Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (AVCIS) is making it harder for criminals to use the roads thanks to the Service's first major crackdown codenamed Operation Utah.

Launched in November, the five-day operation took place at 'Le Crossing' in Kent. AVCIS detected a total of 291 offences, including drug offences, customs violations, immigration offences, benefit fraud and fly tipping. A total of 58 stops resulted in arrests.

Officers from Kent, Essex and the Met took part in Utah, which was the first in a series of similar operations which will be carried out by AVCIS across the country.

David Ainsworth, ACPO lead on Vehicle Crime and Assistant Chief Constable of Kent Police, said: "This is just the beginning. AVCIS will continue to visit forces, sharing best practice and leading crackdowns on those drivers who flout the law whilst helping forces to make the most of their own ANPR technology."

The operation resulted in 507 vehicles identified by the ANPR system as suspicious being intercepted by motorcycle units and searched by police officers and drugs dogs. There were 81 immigration offences – 14 of which resulted in arrest – and 38 of those stopped were either stolen vehicles or carrying stolen goods.

As well as facing police officers, drivers of vehicles pulled over were confronted with representatives from a range of partner agencies, including the DVLA, Customs and VOSA (Vehicle Operators Services Agency). There were a total of 91 VOSA prohibitions and 87 vehicles were either clamped or seized due to DVLA offences.

Kevin Lancaster, Senior Vehicle Examiner, VOSA, said: "The latest Operation Utah checks were the usual success with the targeted approach taken by our colleagues from the police ensuring an extremely efficient prohibition rate of 80 per cent. We look forward to cooperating with them once again on the next operation."

At-work drivers at high risk on roads

A quarter of all road deaths in Britain involve an at-work driver, according to Department for Transport (DfT) statistics released by Brake, the road safety charity.

Consequentially, the charity has launched a hard-hitting DVD on safe driving for work.

In 2005, 850 people were killed and 6,012 seriously injured in crashes involving an at-work driver. This translates to 16 fatalities and 117 seriously injuries every week in at-work crashes.

In 2005 the police started to record the journey purpose of vehicles involved in crashes. Brake obtained these figures directly from the DfT, following its failure to publish at-work casualty statistics in *Road Casualties Great Britain 2005*, released in September.

Brake is urging UK companies to

use these statistics as a wake-up call to ensure they have risk management practices in place to prevent road death and injuries. The awareness raising DVD for company drivers entitled *Busy Enough to Kill?* is supported by the DfT and includes interviews with families bereaved by road crashes involving at-work drivers.

The DVD is being incorporated into the FedEx and Brake Road Safety Academy, run by Brake and funded by express delivery company FedEx. The academy offers free training and resources to company representatives on delivering awareness-raising presentations to groups of drivers on safe driving. So far, almost 200 companies have taken part in the programme.

Jools Townsend, head of education at Brake, said: "Road safety

campaigners have suspected for many years that a large proportion of road crashes involve people driving for work. These figures demonstrate how important it is that, firstly, the Government takes corporate responsibility for at-work driving seriously and, secondly, all employers take the life-savings steps of educating employees on safe driving and effectively managing their road risk."

Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, Minister of State for Transport, said: "The Department for Transport is very much committed to preventing work-related road crashes, and as part of this commitment we are pleased to provide funding to Brake to produce its DVD. It is a hard-hitting and effective resource that fleet managers will find invaluable in raising vital road safety awareness among their drivers."