

North Wales Police: NicheRMS Powers Service-Wide Mobile Intelligence Delivery

North Wales Police (NWP) has 1,634 police officers and 700 support staff serving a population of 650,000 people in the counties of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Gwynedd.

North Wales Police and NicheRMS

Working with Niche and other partners, NWP recently delivered mobile RMS functionality, enabling delivery of telephone and core operational systems to frontline officers via handheld devices.

NWP, the first UK customer for NicheRMS, is a visionary force that recognized the system as a revolutionary approach to the challenge of information management in UK policing. The service has since led the way in developing RMS functionality in the UK, in particular pioneering work on mobilizing the RMS to meet the particular needs of operational officers as well as other force staff.

The Implementation Process

In 2006, NWP implemented a pilot mobile data project among 300 users, including front-line officers. The initiative revealed that accessing files and email via handhelds would lead to an estimated time savings per officer shift of 29,000 productive hours per year, an efficiency NWP values at £636,000. The crime car officers equipped with mobile data would together have 3,300 more productive hours at their disposal per year — the equivalent of two extra officers.

Based on these results, the force decided to deploy handhelds to all frontline officers by the end of 2007.

Mobility and self-sufficiency for operational officers are top priorities in NWP's mobile initiative. The handhelds support operations such as Microsoft Office's email and calendar, and most importantly, provide access to an upgraded version of NicheRMS featuring enhanced query capabilities.

They also provide access to the national police computer system (PNC) and useful web-based applications like the voters' register — the local electoral roll featuring current addresses — the national police/legal database (PNLD), and operational briefing sheets. With query-only capability for RMS at the outset of the project, NWP have now taken the next step to add reporting.

Niche Technology has given full support to NWP's mobile initiative, providing their suppliers with a web-based service that allows access to RMS data, and developing a mobile-compatible reporting functionality.

Key Benefits

- NWP set up an active internal user group, which played a big part in the design of the mobile data project, providing clear feedback on what users did and did not want. Feedback from officers was a top priority for NWP in their project design.
- Some of the first mobile users were officers from NWP's Crime Management Unit (CMU) — a team of about 70 specialist officers that provide 24-hour armed response force-wide. As well as supporting unarmed colleagues in responding to the most serious incidents of conflict, such as those involving weapons, the CMU has a proactive brief to engage criminality.
- The CMU officers' role and the large area they cover means they get full value from the mobile project, and the extremely positive feedback from CMU officers counted as a key factor in moving to full implementation.