

## North East forces collaborate on digital forensics services

**Four police forces in the North East of England are the first to use a new dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for digital forensic services.**

Created by the Forensic Capability Network (FCN), the DPS was launched in March and 16 suppliers are currently on board.

The Humberside, Northumbria, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire forces have now collaborated on their digital forensic service requirements and published the DPS's first competition. Suppliers responded mid-October and the evaluation is currently taking place.

Amie Knight from North East's Regional Procurement said: "We are excited to be the first region to be running a further competition for digital forensic services.

"We look forward to seeing the supplier responses and creating the contracts."

Lots in the system include digital data retrieval, and digital forensics investigation, case evaluation and quality assurance.

A further seven forces and law enforcement organisations are looking to use the DPS.

FCN says using this "dynamic approach" gives policing and suppliers a "flexible and agile framework", meaning forces can tender what they require over the DPS's six to eight-year duration and encourage suppliers to respond to their developing needs. It allows greater and easier access to suppliers for forces and also provides an automated electronic process, with an entirely paperless system.

FCN's senior commercial manager Paul Greaves said: "This is a great milestone to reach. We created this system through months of collaborative working with policing and suppliers, and it's great to see that starting to bear fruit. We believe this is an agile system that forces will benefit from whilst supporting the fragile marketplace."

Forces can access DPS documentation on the Bluelight Procurement Database.

## SYP platform for digital change

**South Yorkshire Police is rolling out digital evidence management software to 2,000 frontline officers, investigators and control room personnel as part of its Technology Enabled Change initiative that will "digitally transform police operations".**

The force says this will enable it to overcome digital evidence challenges and improve officer efficiency, collaboration and crime-fighting capabilities.

The deployment of the cloud-based NICE Investigate digital evidence management solution will take place over the coming months to provide a platform for "digitally transforming investigations and evidence management".

South Yorkshire Police will also use the system to electronically share digital evidence with the Crown Prosecution Service and other justice partners, speeding disclosure and improving efficiency for cases.

Jim Coppin, project manager (Technology Enabled Change) at South Yorkshire Police, said: "As part of our Technology Enabled Change initiative, and as a force that prides itself in being proactive and innovative, we are constantly on the look-out for technologies that can help us improve the efficiency of our officers and staff."

He said the framework contract with NICE was developed collaboratively with neighboring forces, including Humberside Police, North Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Police, "so they'll be able to take advantage of NICE Investigate in future projects as well".

Chris Wooten, executive vice-president, NICE, stated: "This project is commencing at an exciting time, as forces across the UK and around the world are embracing digital transformation in growing numbers, and initiatives to improve how police forces and businesses collaborate on crime-fighting are taking hold."

Currently, South Yorkshire officers and investigators log into many different systems to obtain digital evidence. As a one-stop solution for digital evidence management, the new system will improve operational efficiency by enabling investigators to collect digital evidence through a single login.

The system automatically pulls evidence into electronic case folders from records management, CAD (computer aided dispatch), body-worn video, mobile apps and other core systems. When investigators log on, "their evidence is waiting", says South Yorkshire Police. This significantly cuts down on time-wasting manual work and jump-starts the case-building process.

Obtaining and transcoding CCTV video is another significant pain point for the force.

"This has always been quite challenging because it requires our officers to travel to locations to secure relevant video, copy it onto discs or USB drives, transport it back to the office and then transcode it," explained Mr Coppin. "The NICE Investigate business portal will enable us to handle this process far more professionally and efficiently."

Using the portal, private businesses can register their CCTV cameras. When a crime occurs, investigators are then able to view area cameras on a map and instantly send out a secure link for local businesses to share their video. Uploaded video is automatically transcoded to a playable format and immediately available for viewing.

Mr Coppin said there was "positive momentum" among large retailers in the UK to register their cameras through the business portal and the force was "eager to make use of this capability as soon as possible".

"NICE Investigate will also improve how we're able to manage our public appeals, by making it possible for citizens to share both information and rich media files digitally," he added.