



Analysing the Opportunities in Moving to a Digital Solution for Police Interviewing Processes

1. Introduction

The technology to move to digital recording of audio and video interviews is now available in the marketplace and the question being asked is whether its implementation can deliver improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and cycle-time. In this case study, we answer that question.

2. Why invest in digital interviewing?

The pressures currently on the Police to improve performance in suspect, witness and victim interviewing processes include:

- budget constraints and challenges to demonstrate value for money and cost improvements
- the task of meeting the demands of Speedy, Simple, Summary Justice (SSSJ)
- technology that is in use being out-dated and prone to failure
- increasing costs of long-term storage of recorded media
- pressure on central transcribing teams who produce the typed records of taped interviews

A number of constabularies are considering investing in digital technology and a few are running pilots in some of their interview suites. The issue that many constabularies face is that they are unclear what their current interviewing processes cost them, what capacity they actually have within parts of the process, such as the transcribing team, and also whether there are potential cycle-time reductions that can be made which will improve their ability to meet the SSSJ obligations.

Without this understanding of cost, capacity and cycle-time opportunities it is difficult for senior managers to build a clear case for the move to new technology and thereby justify the investment of scarce budgets.

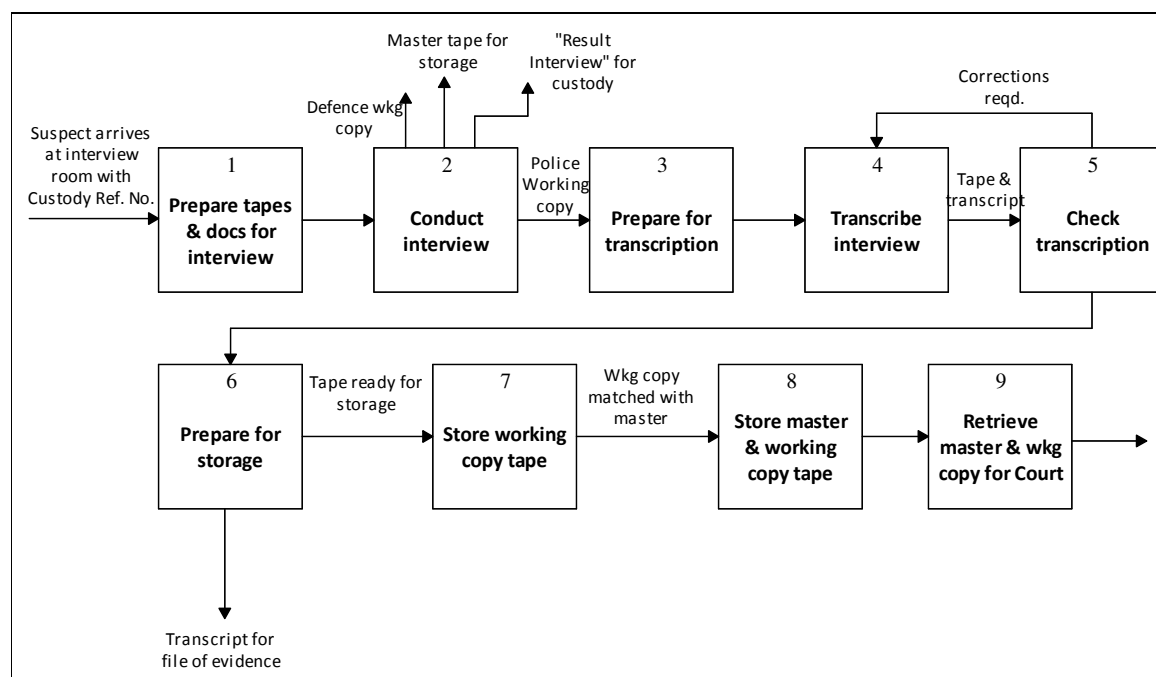
3. Understanding today's performance

The approach we have taken is to work with constabularies to develop a clear benefits case for the move to the new technology, as well as to identify other improvement opportunities at the same time.

We start by creating a high-level "as is" process map such as the one shown below. Once we have defined the scope and boundaries of the processes the constabulary wishes us to focus on we then meet with front-line staff involved with the interviewing process to carry out a process analysis and develop a detailed set of process maps which capture the current way that steps are carried out. This analysis also includes gaining an understanding of who carries out each step and the time taken.

Once the "as is" maps are produced we work with the constabulary to identify certain performance information and costing data which they need to provide us with to allow us to develop a fully costed model.

We also meet with senior managers to understand the wider needs of the constabulary and how digital interviewing technology could support their future strategic direction.



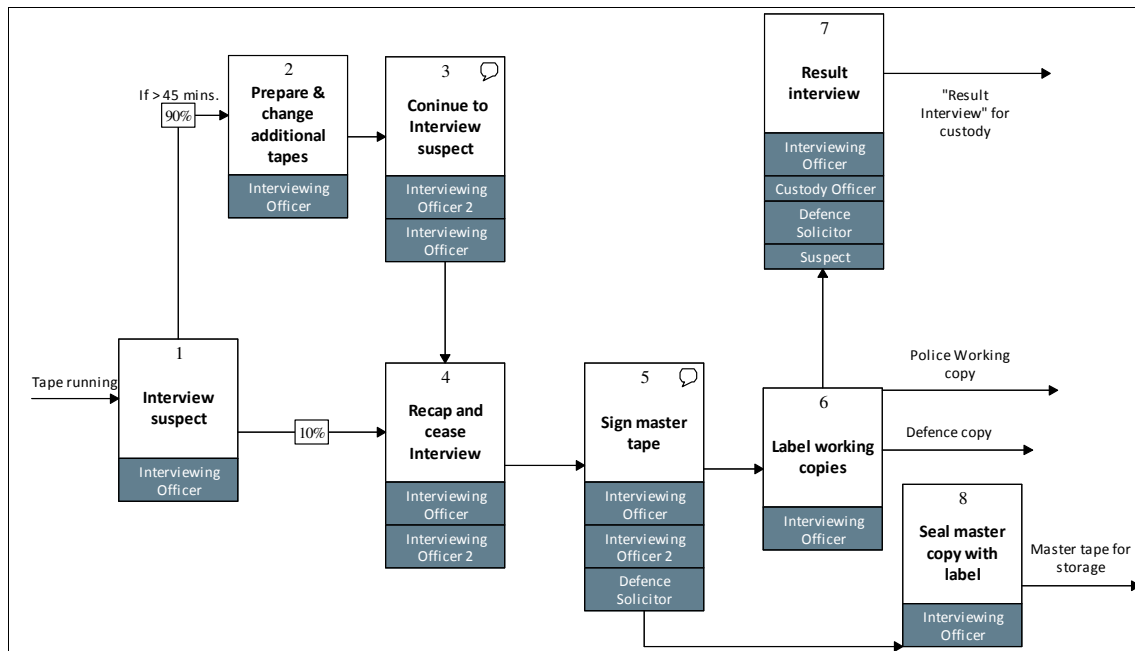
During the data-gathering phase of this work we review the present processes from a "Lean Thinking" perspective to identify where there are potential areas of improvement to be gained prior to, and following, the implementation of digital interviewing technology.

4. Demonstrating the benefits of digital interviewing

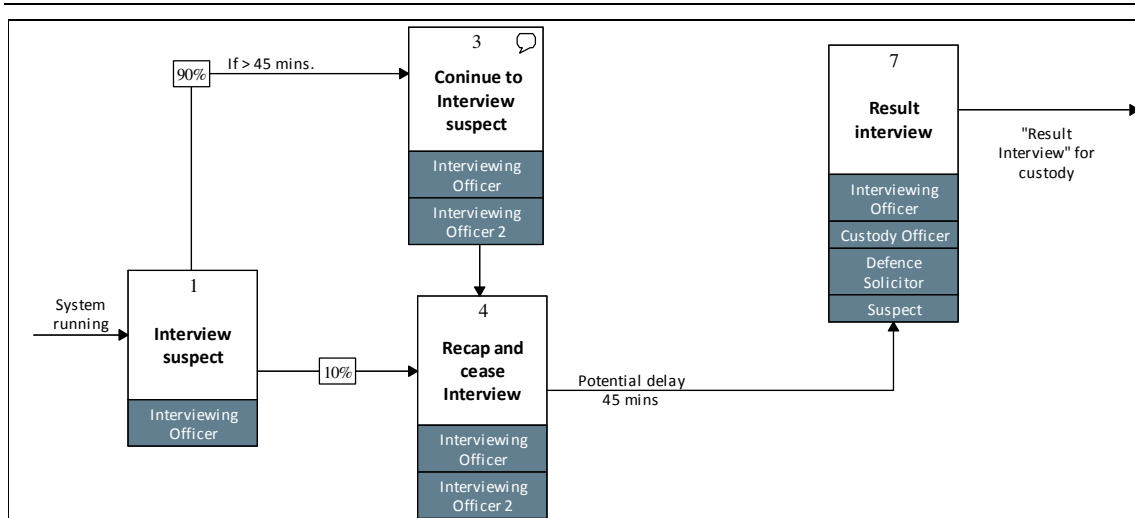
Once the current situation has been captured, we develop a fully-costed model which identifies the total cost of the interviewing processes. For example, present costs for one hundred interviews may be £8,000 depending on the mix of major, serious and volume crime that a particular constabulary has. This is the cost of staff time in carrying out the process and there are additional costs of tapes, transport and storage.

The model also allows us to identify how many full time equivalent (FTE) staff the present workload and process require. This can be compared to present staffing levels within the constabulary to demonstrate whether a "Lean Thinking" approach might offer opportunities for improvement even before new technology is applied. This approach also allows us to identify where potential bottlenecks might exist in the present process.

The model will drill down into a much greater level of detail such as that shown below. This example is of a major crime interview process stage prior to digitisation.



Our next step is to develop the proposed "to be" processes. Based on our knowledge and understanding of the technology available and the direction in which the constabulary wants to move we are able to develop a fully-costed "to be" process model. An example of what might happen to the above process if a server-based digital recording system was used is shown below.



The “to be” model will then allow us to show potential savings that are available. For example, server-based digital recording could bring the cost of staff time in carrying out the process down to £6,600 per 100 interviews, again dependent on the mix of major, serious and volume crime. As part of the report we will identify the likely payback period which can often be less than twelve months.

The report will also include a section on other areas of potential improvement opportunities as well as a section looking at the issues of change management that might need to be addressed when implementing this type of technology.

5. The value we add

Our consultants have worked widely across the Criminal Justice sector and understand the complexity of its agencies, processes and cultures. For those constabularies considering an investment in digital interviewing technology, we provide:

- A focussed review of today’s interviewing processes that will identify:
 - Staff time and cost
 - Direct and indirect operating costs
 - Demand and capacity
- A clear definition of potential performance levels that could be achieved through digitisation and application of Lean Thinking in interviewing processes
- The evidence-base for a constabulary’s Business Case for investment



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