

# DURHAM CONSTABULARY BRINGS VOICE SERVICES FLEXIBILITY TO A NEW WORLD OF POST COVID-19 POLICING



**DURHAM**  
CONSTABULARY

Durham Constabulary aims to deliver the best possible service to 600,000 residents of County Durham and Darlington by 'doing things differently and doing them well'. As one of the UK's top-performing police forces, it is proud of its efficiency, innovation, and ability to cultivate great partnerships to help solve problems.

## The Challenge

Improve voice communication effectiveness across the force; equip HQ and police station meeting rooms for teleconferencing; make remote working easier during and after post-COVID-19; reduce dependency on static telephony.



### Location

County Durham,  
United Kingdom



### Industry

Police



### Products

Microsoft Teams,  
CPS Professional Services

## | New Voice

As part of its 'doing things differently' philosophy, Durham Constabulary regularly reviews its operations. Communication is critical to delivering high-quality police services, and any opportunity to improve this area is welcome.

Like many police forces, Durham has used traditional private branch exchange (PBX) telephony for its inbound and outbound calling for many years. However, following strategic investment in Microsoft Office365 suite, Durham's IT management began to explore the potential benefits of using voice services in Microsoft Teams.

"We were using Teams successfully for collaboration," explains Ian Wilson, Infrastructure Manager, Business Innovation & Development Command. "So using it for PSTN voice calls seemed a good next step. We wanted to help our people work flexibly from home and between offices and cut demand on the ageing PBX."

Durham was also keen to leverage its Microsoft investment strategy. The force supports National Enabling Programme Office 365, which aims to align UK police technology.

## | Knowledge

Encouraged by its reputation with Cumbria Constabulary, Ian Wilson brought in CPS to assess Durham's voice requirements and develop a Teams-based solution. The project scope was agreed in late 2019, and a CPS solution architect with deep expertise in Microsoft Unified Communications worked on-site at Durham for three weeks.

CPS then provided a roadmap for deploying voice services in Teams starting with a trial for IT users and a detailed configuration for Durham's 33 HQ and police station meeting rooms. CPS fully equipped one room for use as a design model for the others. Handover included technical training and workshops to prepare the in-house team for rollout and a three-month support package to ensure any problems are quickly dealt with.

"CPS's level of knowledge was outstanding," Ian Wilson says. "In fact, everything we asked CPS to do was understood and actioned quickly and correctly. They coped with the problems of COVID-19 incredibly well. Having excellent support really helped us to see what can be achieved with the Teams voice solution."





## Designed for the Future

The voice in Teams proof of concept is underway with 50 IT users and proving highly effective. Seven meeting rooms are so far equipped with audio conferencing capabilities, and as the other rooms are kitted out, video conferencing will also be enabled.

"The major benefit is flexibility," says Ian Wilson. "We couldn't have imagined a more effective test than the COVID-19 business disruption. People working from home say it's straightforward to use voice on Teams and to join meetings. With home working likely to be much more common in future, I'm sure we will also see improved productivity."

The solution will likely be used for a wide range of Durham's operational requirements as it rolls out. For example, inspectors who travel between different stations to brief a police officer shift about to go on duty will do that with one conference call.



There will be cost savings if fewer desk telephones are needed and reduced travel to and from offices. Although 999 calls will still be managed with a PBX system, the overall reduction in PBX demands could mean a smaller and less costly system is used in future.

CPS continues to support the force, helping to deliver greater resilience for the Teams solution with no single source of failure or loss of calls. CPS is ready to implement other phases of National Enabling Programme Office 365 when Durham is prepared.

## Business Benefits

- Improved home working flexibility and productivity through ease of use and ability to join meetings remotely.
- Cost savings through redundant telephone hardware and reduced travel.
- Potential improved service quality for residents.



## A word from our team

“

When we need professional services in future, I won't hesitate to call CPS. I can't offer any higher praise.

”

Ian Wilson

Infrastructure Manager, Business  
Innovation & Development Command



## The Results

Successful trial of voice services in Microsoft Teams. Configuration and design plans for equipping 33 meeting rooms. Training and technical support package for project rollout.

## For More Information



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