

I am trying to establish some data surrounding the use of video-link technology and virtual hearings. I would be grateful if you could please provide me with the following information:

- 1) Do you have video-link technology to enable virtual hearings with the courts? Is this equipment used?

Yes we do have video-link technology to enable virtual hearings with the courts. The equipment is not generally used within the custody facility.

- 2) How many police custody facilities have the equipment to have virtual hearing with the courts? How many rooms are equipped at each site?

Two of our police custody facilities that have this equipment. There is a room at each of these sites.

- 3) Are there any future pilot schemes planned involving virtual hearings? Can you provide any relevant details?

There are no future pilot schemes within custody facilities planned involving virtual hearings.

- 4) Is there any data you can provide following the use of virtual hearings/video-link technologies ie:

- Frequency of use across the different police forces
- How many video-link calls occur on a monthly basis
- Proportion of video-link calls used for crown court hearings, magistrate hearings, probation visits, inter-prison visits and solicitors meetings.

We are not aware of any prisoner that has used the virtual hearing technology from a police custody suite.

Live link facilities provided and managed by the police are not used by civilians. The reason for this is because they are based in police stations which has been deemed an inappropriate environment to accommodate civilians.

Civilian witnesses give evidence via court live links. Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service may hold data on usage. West Midlands Police do not collate data on this subject.

Police officers give evidence via live link in police stations but the actual usage volumes are extremely low. The Crown Prosecution Service are responsible for making applications to use live link at the first hearing and we are working closely with CPS to increase their applications.

Please see below, a rudimentary data capture of the current status, which demonstrates low level usage of live links. The audit is not exhaustive of all eligible live link cases. That would involve a manual trawl of all trial cases. This is representative of the police officer only caseload.

Week commencing	Number of cases eligible for live link	Number of cases where live link was used
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04/07/2016	19	4
11/07/2016	23	3
18/07/2016	17	5
25/07/2016	12	5
01/08/2016	Data not available	
08/08/2016	12	0
15/08/2016	Data not available	
22/08/2016	12	2
29/08/2016	7	1
05/09/2016	19	5
12/09/2016	Data not available	
19/09/2016	9	2
26/09/2016	16	2
17/10/2016	18	1