Echo – feedback from callers, victims, residents and employees

Using a platform to capture and analyse large volumes of customer feedback, gathered through conversational SMS and a bespoke website.

First published
27 March 2023

Updated
2 May 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Community engagement Contact management Productivity
Organisation	[Hertfordshire Constabulary](#)
HMICFRS inspection report	**PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy – An inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary**
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Region	Eastern
Partners	Community safety partnership Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services)

Key details

Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2020
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	General public Victims Workforce

Aim

The main aims of Echo are to:

- receive and operationalise feedback from anybody who lives, works, studies, or travels in Hertfordshire
- make victim feedback a part of everyday policing
- make victim feedback an essential part of service delivery
- learn and adapt from the voice of the victim
- address victim concerns regarding a lack of communication

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of Echo are to:

- have a platform that tells the police, in a customer's own words, what matters most
- receive feedback from a vast range of groups
- develop insight into areas and topics of negative customer sentiment
- spot emerging trends
- develop new community initiatives
- celebrate success

Description

Echo invites automated feedback from:

- 101 and 999 callers
- victims of crime and anti-social behaviour
- anybody who lives, works, studies or travels in Hertfordshire

Echo asks four feedback questions. These are sent via an automated text message (SMS) or an internal telephone bureau for those who do not have a mobile phone.

Echo then uses advanced natural language processing to understand the opinion of customers. Echo matches the negative or positive response to the topic that the customer is talking about. This process allows for verbatim insights to surface and be addressed.

Victim feedback is managed using a dedicated dashboard in the force Victim Service Team. The Victim Service Team aims to directly address any questions or concerns conveyed through victim feedback within 48 hours.

Where victims don't have a method to digitally connect and provide feedback, an in-house team of telephone researchers calls them and asks for their feedback.

Feedback is solicited across all major touchpoints of the force. These include the force control room, Local Policing Command, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Safeguarding and Offender Management.

Echo seeks feedback from more than 70 incident and crime/non-crime types, including anti-social behaviour, via fully automated, quick and 'in-the-moment' feedback. This feedback surfaces insights to be addressed.

Echo was a finalist of three National Customer Engagement Awards in 2022. It has been recognised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as 'innovative' in a recent PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) 2023 inspection.

Echo Generation 2 will be implemented from July 2025.

Overall impact

Echo has had the following impact so far.

- 133,000 items of feedback have been received.
- Half of the population of Hertfordshire have received an invite from the police asking for feedback on the service provided.
- Echo has evidenced the crimes where satisfaction is notably lower than other crime types (such as anti-social behaviour).
- Echo has allowed the development of additional services to meet victims' needs – such as a new service that has kept more than 18,000 callers and victims updated on actions, including anti-social behaviour victims, via SMS.
- 96% of victim feedback has been reviewed and where appropriate, action taken.
- More than 2,500 officers have received a copy of positive feedback from Echo, directly into their inbox.
- 454 call handlers have received feedback from callers.
- To date, there are 21 operational, real-time dashboards. These operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week across the force, where feedback is reviewed and actioned by a wide variety of policing teams.
- More than 4,000 residents have fed back to the force on how safe they feel, and where, why and what can be done to make them feel safer.
- Feedback has been shared with local partner agencies, along with action plans developed and a 'YouSaidWeDid' campaign to keep residents informed of planned actions.
- The introduction of Echo has enabled us to leverage customer insights in new ways – from bespoke anti-social behaviour initiatives, closure orders and drug warrants, feelings of safety, engagement, and action, through to automated victim updates and the celebration of positive feedback.
- Echo has also led to the development of victim personas – specifically for burglary, anti-social behaviour, violence against person and vehicle crime. The personas are derived purely from victim sentiment. They are aligned via a framework of the four Rs (respond, resolve, recover, reassure). These provide a visual aid to help officers understand and meet the need of the victim. The burglary persona has recently been embedded into local policing guardian plans, which are facilitated and trained by the detective inspectors.
- The echo team are continuing the development of ProComm's to reduce demand on the force communications room (FCR) – close the loop/continue the Loop.

- Delayed response and victim updates have gone live in 2024, giving the FCR more tools to keep callers updated. SMS victim updates was launched in January 2024.
  Victim update one – the victim is sent a crime number as soon as the log is on Athena.
  Victim update two – the victim is sent the name of the officer in charge (OIC) allocated and email address.
- SMS delayed was launched in June 2024. This is any incident type. Where we have incidents regarded as prompt status (target arrival is 60 minutes). Where it is clear that this target will be missed, a SMS is sent stating we are still working hard to allocate resources to the incident.
- Victim satisfaction has slowly increased since the launch in January 2024.
  Over 15,000 of update texts have been sent since launch in January resulting in over 10,000 less calls into the force communications room.

Learning

The team have evaluated the work they have undertaken in the last 5 years, Echo 1.0, and are now looking to embrace a customer experience (CX) strategy ethos. This involves:

- moving from information to insight
- becoming more diagnostic and predictive to enable a better understanding of the victim's journey with the police

To transform our engagement with victims and the public there will need to be a change in mindset, focus and data culture across the business.

Diagnostic assessment of victim sentiment (DAVS)

Echo has started to introduce and share learning from its DAVS. DAVS is developed largely from victim sentiment (free-text feedback) and includes an extensive range of concepts, definitions, diagnostic models and terms.

DAVS seeks to make sentiment a primary means of moving from information to insight, This will help:

- meet the need (service)
- meet the expectation (confidence)
- improve the experience (satisfaction)

- reduce attrition (engagement)

Insight can be defined as the decision to act on information to change an experience. Echo is now reaching for support to:

- automate DAVS
- integrate data from the routine police record (conversational intelligence)
- promote the development of sentiment analysis as a new shared discipline in policing.

DAVS learning may be supported by the introduction by echo of a CX.
A DAVS approach may also be extended into other areas, such as the diagnostic assessment of first contact sentiment (DACS) and diagnostic assessment of resident sentiment (DARS).

Key learning points are as follows.

1. Involve the whole organisation, not just the top of the hierarchy. We spent 12 months engaging with more than 1,800 officers and staff on what they thought and what they wanted from a project like this. Taking an inclusive, consultative approach and involving the front line was a key part of the discovery phase of the project. This helped to embed Echo when we finally went live.
2. Look for inspiration from the private sector. Feedback is a critical part of their business and the police are no different. We used inspiration from JD Sports, Virgin Media, Sky, DPD, Apple, NatWest and Costa to develop the many strands of Echo and its messaging. An important aspect of Echo is to demonstrably behave like a service provider, differentiating the Echo brand from being a police proposition alone.
3. Develop an instantly recognisable brand that feedback is connected to. We developed a marketing plan, brand guidelines, a fresh logo and assigned a name to the new product. The organisational narrative refers to the brand name rather than just 'feedback'. This has provided a strong identity to Echo and has helped with the messaging in that Echo isn't a 'survey platform' – it's an insight platform.
4. Give ownership and accountability of the feedback to the respective business area. This has transferred feedback from an analytical, spreadsheet style of product owned by a 'team who work at HQ' – to a live, real-time and 'operationalised' programme of work.
5. Make customer experience (CX) an integral part of the service delivery profile by linking to existing internal management information. This has helped to remove cultural barriers that feedback and CX is a 'nice-to-have'. Feedback has become embedded alongside internal key performance indicators. This process has challenged the way the organisation views

performance (from an organisational centric perspective).

6. Celebrate the positives. Not all feedback is negative. Learn from what we do well and breed a culture of positive service behaviour.

7. Move away from just numbers, answer the 'why' and act. The development of personas – a common marketing technique used to profile and identify needs – has helped the organisation to understand visually how we can meet the needs of a wide range of nuanced victim types. Reaching a vast audience on the scale of Echo has allowed us to segment our customers, develop deep insights and target areas where it's needed the most.

8. Look at conversion rates. Feedback of this scale, and sent when the victim is most emotionally engaged, is an element we constantly monitor and tweak. We've learned the best time and day for converting an invite for feedback, depending on the customer segment.

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Tags

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Engagement and communication