

Digital course for management of sexual or violent offenders (MOSOVO)

A two-day digital training course delivered to staff as part of the MOSOVO course.

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Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Reoffending
Topic	Digital
Organisation	Thames Valley Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Thames Valley Police
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Region	South East
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.

Key details

Start date	January 2024
Completion date	March 2024
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Offenders Workforce

Aim

The current MOSOVO course is eight days long and lacked digital training. The digital MOSOVO course is a two-day training course designed to cover the digital knowledge gaps the force identified from the eight-day MOSOVO course.

The digital intelligence and investigation identified the need for a bespoke two-day digital training course, consisting of a three step model to plan, complete, and undertake a post-visit. The post-visit occurs after a visit with an individual is completed. The visit includes updating the Violence and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR), submitting intelligence, considering actions required at the next visit, or sharing any relevant technical knowledge.

This course is aimed at minimising the risk of re-offending by digitally minded offenders being managed by staff with no previous digital experience.

A shorter and more suitable training was developed to cover the knowledge gaps whilst maintaining a consistent force-wide approach.

Intended outcome

The course has been designed to give offender management staff the confidence to:

- inspect digital devices during home visits, understand relevant legislation
- recognise offending
- identify options to enhance risk management actions

The expected outcome is improved risk management and identification of offending. Though specific data points are not quantified to assess the improvement in risk management, the force's crime management system is able to track offending.

Description

The training needs assessment was developed with offender managers working with the digital intelligence and investigation team. The outcome result identified specific requirements, a bespoke two-day digital training course was created.

A three-step model was developed to plan and complete a visit, and then what to do after. The plan included:

- knowledge of relevant legislation
- understanding of risks associated with the digital world
- explanation of digital terminology contained within sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs)
- some basic tutorials to enable navigation around devices,
- expectations of offender managers post visit
- consideration of ongoing continued professional development (CPD) to ensure knowledge is kept up to date

The digital MOSOVO course is two-day training designed to cover the digital knowledge gaps identified as missing from the eight-day MOSOVO course.

MOSOVO staff are responsible for managing risks posed by offenders, in line with notification requirements and conditions imposed as part of a SHPO.

An increasing number of offenders utilise technology to offend and have SHPO prohibitions to manage this which use technical language. It is critically important for staff to have core training content, a basic understanding of the digital world, terminology, and a working knowledge of devices for effective on the scene review, risk management, and identification of offending.

The content of the existing digital media investigators course (DMI) is different from MOSOVO work, including different guidance on relevant legislation.

The training has been done within force resources without accruing additional costs.

Evaluation

A Thames Valley police-led evaluation is ongoing. The evaluation looks at the impact of the intervention. The evaluation does not look at how the measures change over time. According to the evaluation the intervention appears to have had a positive impact.

Representatives were invited from other forces to assess the content and advise on any amendments to improve the training programme while delivering the course in force. Feedback provided will be factored into future course planning.

No formal evaluation of the results have been undertaken, as the evaluation is an ongoing piece of work.

Overall impact

The confidence of offender managers speaking with individuals at risk offending has dramatically improved over the last 12 months.

In this time staff on the MOSOVO unit have identified, investigated, and secured positive outcomes on over 171 SHPO breaches, 44 indecent images of children (IloC) offences and 11 sexual communications offences. This is an increase on the previous 12 months.

A low-risk offender who was reactively managed attended the police station to discuss indefinite review. MOSOVO staff spoke with him and he allowed voluntary review of his device. Using knowledge gained during training, a review of the device was undertaken, and concerns were noted about some of the content. Further immediate enquiries were completed, and offences of rape, stalking and voyeurism were identified.

Following a full investigation, the offender was charged and remanded and has been sentenced to a significant term of imprisonment. Without the knowledge of the MOSOVO staff, this offender would not have been identified.

Learning

Staff feeling confident in their skills and abilities is crucial, particularly when managing significant risk. Staff deployed to the department come from diverse backgrounds and may have little to no training. They are responsible for managing the risks posed by offenders who in many cases have leveraged digital technology to facilitate their offending.

Following the completion of a skills gap analysis it became clear that staff required training due to the lack of understanding. Staff lacked confidence in navigating basic technology or understanding terminology within relevant SHPO conditions.

A lack of confidence or awareness would have significant impact on the outcome of the investigation. It is critical to know their skills and ability and then tailor the training to meet their needs boosting their confidence and the outcome of their digital work.

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