



Confederation of European
Probation

Practice recommendations regarding technologies in probation

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Co-funded by
the European Union

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Preparing the recommendation

Collecting CoE recommendations and benchmarking approaches

Discussion and appreciating differences

Inviting feedback and drafting versions

Agreeing consensus and writing

Approving the content, lay out, and next steps

Content of the practice recommendations

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Purpose of the practice recommendations

To support **jurisdictions** to consider identified issues before developing and using technology, undergoing digitalisation or considering hybrid working models.

To consider **the goals of probation** when considering using technology and digitising services.

To consider **the essence of probation** when choosing technology or digitalised working processes.

To share **good practice and the benefits** regarding the use of technology and digitalisation with members of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) and other counterparts.

To highlight **the recommendations of the Council of Europe**, regarding the use of technology and digitalisation in probation.

To act as a reminder that all members of the European Union must consider and comply with the **EU Directive on Data Protection and Security (GDPR)**.

Definitions

Remote working: Working from home or out of the office without contacting clients. It includes administrative work and using video conferences to facilitate meetings, phone calls and messaging, data systems, mobile applications, and online learning/education.

Remote supervision: Probation staff works without face-to-face contact with the client that can be done from home, probation office or somewhere else. It includes the use of technology as a tool for client reporting, provision of services and communication purposes.

Face-to-face supervision: Probation staff meet clients in the same space without using any technological means of communication. An exception might be where technology is required for the purposes of language interpretation or by staff/clients who require assistive technology. Face to face supervision can occur in a probation office, a client's home, at another trusted agency's premises or any other suitable location.

Hybrid working and supervision: A combination of face-to-face supervision, remote supervision, and remote working. It might include the use of video conferencing facilitate meetings, phone calls and messaging, data systems, mobile applications, taking part in online learning/education etc.

Principles in respect of probation and technology

Some examples

“Community sanctions and measures can provide just and effective supervision, guidance, and assistance to suspects or offenders without resorting to deprivation of liberty. They can enhance the prospects of social inclusion on which desistance from crime usually depends.” (Council of Europe, 2017).

“Probation agencies shall aim to reduce reoffending by establishing positive relationships with offenders to supervise (including control where necessary), guide and assist them and to promote their successful social inclusion. Probation thus contributes to community safety and the fair administration of justice.” (Council of Europe, 2010).

“It is also intended to bring to the attention of national authorities that particular care needs to be taken when using electronic monitoring not to undermine or replace the building of constructive professional relationships with suspects and offenders by competent staff dealing with them in the community.

It should be underlined that the imposition of technological control can be a useful addition to existing socially and psychologically positive ways of dealing with any suspect or offender as defined by the relevant Committee of Ministers’ recommendations....”

Digital probation

Probation organisations should aim to leverage all the many advantages and potential benefits that digitisation and new and emerging technologies might offer.

Nevertheless, this should not undermine the building of meaningful and trustworthy professional relationships with clients or their efforts to help them achieve positive life objectives on the path to desistance.

Digitisation is more likely to be successfully implemented if:

- Inclusive implementation methods are used;
- Both staff and clients are consulted and included appropriately in the process of designing systems and tools at all stages;
- This approach is potentially very useful and effective.

Digital probation

Evolving ways of working

- Probation offices as technological hubs
- Use of technology by frontline probation staff
- Agile working
- Working from home
- Remote supervision
- Electronic monitoring

Good practices

- Regarding remote supervision, video calls etc;
- What constitutes a safe space for the client and staff to undertake probation work;
- Importance of initially building a professional relationship prior to using remote and digital probation;
- Integrating general principles of probation work;
- Sharing agreed and approved protocols regarding the use of digital technology;
- Examples of technology and digitalisation that are/can be used in probation.

Checklist

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- ✓ Raise awareness of the benefits or disbenefits of new/emerging technologies;
- ✓ Adopt a holistic approach regarding the use of technologies that should be coordinated with other processes and activities of probation organisations;
- ✓ Be informed and open to critically evaluate and select technology that is appropriate and fit for purpose;
- ✓ Prior to implementation, undertake an impact assessment that sets out the risks and benefits of each technology is necessary;
- ✓ Responsible and appropriate use of technology is a prerequisite;
- ✓ Continuous evaluation of effectiveness in relation to probation goals should be undertaken at regular intervals;
- ✓ Specific training of staff in the use of certain technologies is vital (competences for the application of digital technology in probation, digital management competencies and so on);
- ✓ In respect of each technological implementation corresponding internal guidelines and policy, aligned with European guidelines and approved by senior management, need to be written;
- ✓ Careful consideration needs to be given to the level of skills and the respective capabilities of clients regarding the expectations that probation organisations may have regarding their engagement and use of technologies. Where necessary provide alternatives and other appropriate assistance and support.

Next steps

- **The Practice Recommendations will be published in October 2024.**
- Information regarding current technologies and online services will be gathered from CEP members.

Questions and answers

Q & A

Thank you

The CEP Expert Group on Technology

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