Science & Technology in Policing

POLICE STAR FUND 24/25

AI ASSISTANTS IN POLICING: FREEING UP TIME FOR THE FRONTLINE

Summary
Our project will explore how Large Language Models (LLMs) technology represents an opportunity to introduce AI powered assistance into the prosecution process. In this project we will explore the use of AI assistants, demonstrating their role in reducing labour intensive work, improving efficiency and quality while supporting training for officers.

Organisations
South Yorkshire Police
Fuzzy Labs, Microsoft, Sheffield Hallam University

Challenge
Police officers spend a significant amount of time on administrative tasks, particularly when preparing case files for prosecution. This work is often repetitive, time-consuming, and takes officers away from frontline duties. Bringing a case to court requires accuracy, attention to detail, and careful evidence handling - but human error, time pressures, and lack of experience can all affect the quality of case files. While hiring more staff is one solution, it's costly and reduces operational capacity. This project explored whether AI assistants, powered by Large Language Models (LLMs), could help reduce this burden and improve the efficiency of case preparation.

Innovation or research
This project applied Large Language Model (LLM) technology - the same kind used in tools like ChatGPT - to the task of preparing police case files. While LLMs are not new, using them in this way within policing is a first. The innovation lies in applying open-source, licence-free AI tools to a real-world problem, without relying on commercial vendors. The solution was designed to work securely within police systems, bringing AI to the data rather than sending sensitive data to external platforms.

The prototype demonstrated how LLMs can summarise case information, identify key individuals and events, assess evidence, and highlight inconsistencies - all tasks that currently take officers hours to complete. The approach is scalable, adaptable, and can be replicated by other forces. It was developed using South Yorkshire Police's records management system (Connect), and we are now exploring whether it can be transferred to Niche, the other major system used in UK policing. This project shows how AI can be used responsibly and practically to support officers and improve productivity.

Findings
The project successfully delivered a working prototype that demonstrated how Large Language Models (LLMs) can support police officers in preparing case files more efficiently. The tool was able to summarise complex case information in both brief and detailed formats, identify individuals and their roles, extract key events to build timelines, assess evidence against legal points to prove, and highlight inconsistencies across interviews and other documents. It also helped officers review their own statements by summarising MG11s and flagging areas that may need further development.

These capabilities showed that LLMs can significantly reduce the time officers spend on manual, repetitive tasks while improving the quality and consistency of case files. Importantly, the project demonstrated that this can be achieved using open-source, licence-free tools. This means forces are not dependent on commercial suppliers and can retain control over their own innovation. The solution was designed to bring AI to the data, ensuring sensitive information remains secure and compliant with data protection standards. It has also been structured in a way that allows it to be blueprinted and reused by other forces. We estimate that, with further development, the tool could halve the time officers spend on case file preparation. Even where full productivity gains are not realised, the technology offers a clear opportunity to reduce wasteful activity and support frontline policing.

Next steps
We are now working with another force to trial the solution in a different records management system. We are actively exploring new funding routes for transcription development and for moving the project to a higher technology readiness level. The project has been packaged into a GitHub repository to support future development and wider adoption across UK policing.