



Better Case Management (BCM) Newsletter

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Issue 6

Welcome to this sixth newsletter which provides an update on new technology available to all Police Forces in the UK and the National Crime Agency (NCA) aimed at tackling online child sexual abuse.

The Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) is now available to all Police Forces

The Child Abuse Image Database (CAID)

The CAID is a secure database of illegal images of children. The new procedures, explained below, are designed to help the police across the country work more efficiently and effectively, and to assist the parties and the courts. The CAID has been created using up-to-date technology and for low-level offenders it will change the way officers deal with investigations involving indecent images of children (IIOC). All Police Forces and the National Crime Agency (NCA) are now connected to the CAID. It brings the following benefits, in that it:

- increases the speed of investigations, with the result that children who are victims of sexual abuse can be identified and protected more quickly than hitherto;
- reduces the amount of police time, and it removes the duplication of effort, previously spent categorising images – this is achieved by providing consistent quality when grading the abusive images (this includes analysis of the unique digital ID: the image’s “hash” value which is, in effect, the “DNA” of a photograph);
- increases the ability of UK law enforcement agencies to prevent repeat victimisation (including the public identification of victims) by disrupting the availability of abusive images that are hosted and shared by way of “hashes”, anywhere in the world.

How does the CAID work?

- The CAID holds records of all child abuse images known to UK law enforcement in a single secure database. The CAID contains tens of millions of images and hash values. This library of images has been compiled from IIOC seized worldwide, including the UK.
- When investigators find a suspect in possession of images, they compare the images seized with those on the database to identify if any of the images are new.
- The police now recover an average of 11 devices capable of storing images whenever IIOC warrants are executed. Each device typically contains thousands of images, both legal and illegal. The CAID

allows officers to concentrate on the “new” images, thus increasing the opportunity of identifying recent abuse.

When an officer views an image, its severity is graded for the purposes of sentencing. Historically, officers across the country have wasted time and effort grading the same image. In the future, the CAID will record the results of the separate grading exercises and once an image has been graded at the same level on three occasions by different police forces, it will be treated as having a “trusted grade”. This is considered to provide a high level of confidence in the grading of the images.

- If the image is discovered on another device, the investigating officer will be sent a report stating that it has already been graded and no further grading will be necessary.
- The CAID has a number of victim identification tools which interrogate data ‘hidden’ within the image, enabling its origin to be identified.
- No officer will be allowed access to the CAID unless they have completed the College of Policing training on the grading of images.

How will this affect the court process?

- There will be a new streamlined process for “low risk” offenders. Because of the increasing number of investigations and prosecutions arising from the creation and possession of IIOC, the CPS and the police have developed a new streamlined model for dealing with certain offenders. This approach will only be adopted for those defendants who are considered to be “low risk”, applying the dynamic risk assessment model known as KIRAT (Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool)), which assesses the level of risk for the suspect. Typically, this concerns an offender who is believed only to be a “viewer” of images as opposed to someone who may attempt to make contact with children; who does not have easy access to children; who is not in a position of trust or in a high risk occupation; and against whom there is no evidence of other significant criminal conduct in this area.
- A Streamlined Forensic Report (SFR) detailing the findings along with a schedule of the images will be included in the Initial Details of the Prosecution Case (IDPC) for the defence to consider. This will assist with early case management, acceptance of findings and narrowing the issues in the case. This should lead to a reduction in the average length of these reports from 20-25 pages to about 3-4 pages.
- Additionally, the number of charges is also likely to be substantially reduced as consideration is given to “multiple offence” charges within each of the three sentencing categories, with the SFR setting out several (typically three) examples of each category. When there is no dispute by the defence, the police schedule, the description in the charges and the streamlined statement ought to provide sufficient information to enable the judge to pass sentence without the images being provided to the court. The officer will still be required to identify any images which contain specific aggravating or mitigating factors relevant to the Sentencing Council guideline, such as a large number of different victims or a child depicted intoxicated or drugged.
- This procedure reduces the number of occasions when the image of the victim will need to be viewed and it will save police and court time and resources.

- Whenever the CAID grading is disputed (either for the purposes of a trial or sentencing), the images will be made available to the court. If the grading of the images is accepted, this should be made the subject of an admission.

Next steps

- All police officers who it is anticipated will use the CAID have been trained to a national standard in the grading of images.
- A bespoke version of this training will be provided to all judges and recorders who may be involved in cases of this kind. The aim of the training is to provide a brief overview of the CAID and to ensure that those sentencing in cases involving IIOC are full aware of the types of image that the offender has been viewing.
- This training will be provided at Crown Courts throughout the seven Circuits starting in January 2016. Presiding and resident judges have been contacted to discuss the proposed arrangements.
- Guidance on the above scheme and the start date will be announced at the completion of the training.

Lord Justice Fulford

Senior Presiding Judge for England and Wales

Further Information

More information on BCM can be found at Judiciary.gov.uk