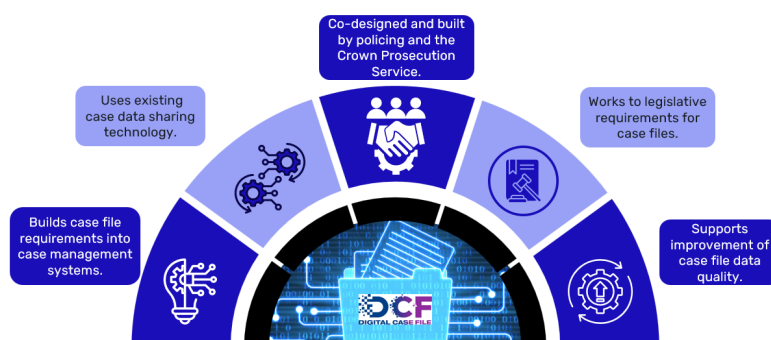


What is the Digital Case File project?

The Digital Case File (DCF) project is a national, multi-agency initiative modernising how police case files are created, reviewed and shared across the criminal justice system. It replaces the largely form-based Manual of Guidance process with structured digital information captured within existing police and Crown Prosecution Service case-management systems. DCF is an upgrade to existing systems, rather than a new standalone platform.



Case information will be entered once, reused where appropriate and transferred securely between police and CPS systems. The project uses the existing Two-Way Interface Function to support two-way sharing of case information, updates and actions. DCF is being jointly designed by policing, the CPS and wider criminal justice partners and is aligned with national casefile and disclosure requirements.

What are the intended benefits?

- Better-quality case files: Mandated steps, gateway questions and built-in guidance will help officers capture the required information at source, reducing omissions and inconsistencies.
- Less duplication and rework: Information such as names, addresses and case details can be entered once and reused, rather than repeated across multiple MG forms.
- Earlier and clearer disclosure decisions: Case material will be classified as evidence, relevant unused material or non-relevant material as the case develops. Relevant unused-material schedules will then be generated by the system and available for police and CPS review.
- More proportionate case files: Gateway questions will guide users through the information relevant to the particular case, reducing unnecessary fields, repetitive material and “not applicable” entries

- Improved case progression: Shared Action Plans will allow police and CPS users to create, update and track actions through their respective systems, providing a clearer audit trail and better visibility of outstanding work.
- Better identification of victim and witness needs: Structured questions and mandated steps should make information such as special-measures requirements less likely to be overlooked.

What changes are the defence community likely to see?

The principal change should be to the structure, consistency and presentation of case-file information, rather than the introduction of a separate DCF system for defence practitioners.

- Many existing MG forms will be retired and replaced by structured and unstructured data captured within police systems. Some documents will remain, including witness statements, records of interview and streamlined forensic reports.
- Information may be presented under clearer case-based headings, including factual summary, defendant information, victim and witness information, confidential information for the prosecutor and case material.
- The information passed through the criminal justice process can be assembled from relevant component data, potentially producing a more concise file with less duplicated procedural material.
- Disclosure schedules will be generated from structured classifications of case material. Those classifications can be reviewed and updated by police and CPS during the life of the case.
- Existing material that remains document-based, such as witness statements and records of interview, will continue to form part of the case file.
- Defence practitioners should therefore expect some changes to the appearance, terminology and organisation of information within the case papers.

Key message

DCF is intended to create clearer, more consistent and better-structured digital case files. For the defence community, the most visible changes are likely to be improved organisation of information, reduced duplication, clearer disclosure material and some changes to the layout and terminology of case papers, rather than a new system that defence practitioners must operate. Case papers and information will remain in their current location and be accessible in the same way they are today.