

# Virtual Courts and Real Life Lessons

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# The Ministry of Justice

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- Formed in May 2007 from Department for Constitutional Affairs and parts of Home Office
- Total Staff - around 95,000 including probation
- Responsible for
  - United Kingdom
    - Specialist Courts
    - Tribunals 28 at 120 sites
    - Prisons 39
    - Probation 100 approved hostels
    - Constitutional Reforms
  - England and Wales
    - Magistrates Courts 370
    - Civil Courts 216
    - Crown Courts 77
    - Appeal Courts up to 12 courts in RCJ

# What is the England and Wales Virtual Court?

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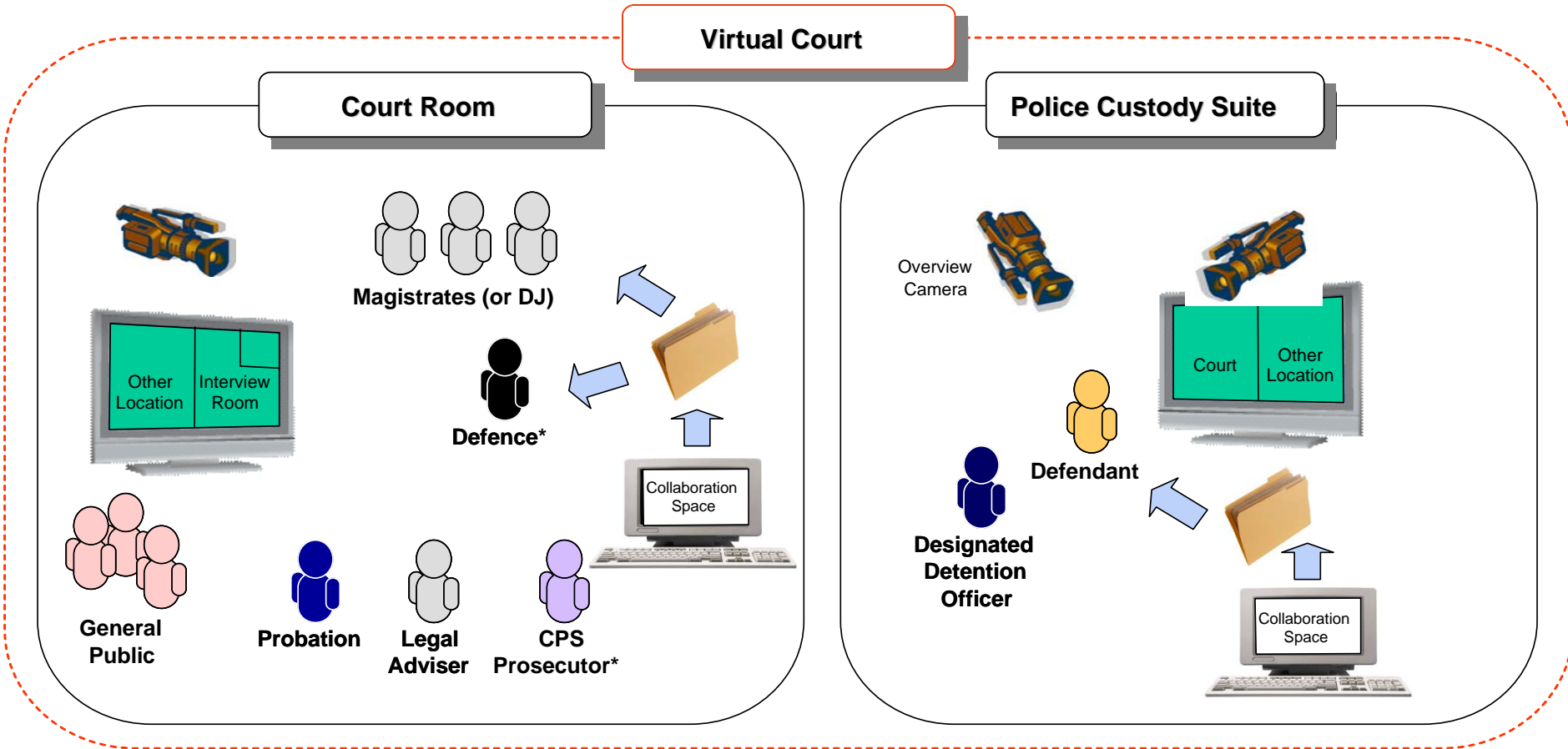
## The Two Strands

- Video Conferencing Technology deployed between the court and police custody suites
- A shared collaborative space, for documents to be viewed, shared, amended and downloaded electronically, side-stepping the limitations of current IT systems

## Why will it make a difference?

- It is a business change project with IT enablers, NOT an imposed IT solution
- Scope is for initial hearings and guilty pleas not full trials

# Virtual Court Process



*\*Typical location. May participate from another location*

# Current Position for Virtual Courts

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- **Business case for further extension has been agreed**
- **Procurement exercise conducted for services to run a wider pilot across more courts**
- **Initial Pilot is scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter in London followed by Kent**
- **London**
  - Inner City
  - 1 Court and 15 Police Stations
- **Kent**
  - Non-Urban area
  - Initially 1 Court and 1 Police station

# Collaboration Service

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**A way to share documents quickly and accurately**

**Transient space rather than document storage**

**Single version of documents for all parties**

## **Challenges**

- Ease of use
- Security of service given multiple access requirements

# Videoconferencing Equipment Procurement

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- **Use of Videoconferencing across Criminal Justice System**
- **Identified that Videoconferencing solution being procured for three main services at same time**
  - Virtual Courts
  - Prison Video Links
  - Offender Management
- **Change of approach towards procurement**
  - Procurement mainly for service not for equipment
  - Centralised management of videoconferencing sessions
  - Maximise use of current equipment
  - Maximise use of current networks

# Lessons from use of Videoconferencing Service

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**Think about the business and process change that is necessary to make the best out of videoconferencing**

**Make sure people know what is available and where**

**Look for wider use of equipment**

**Don't be too prescriptive on use**

**People will find innovative ways of using the equipment if you let them**

## More information

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