

# Cleveland Police

A Golden Nominal solution saves ten years' worth of work and supports positive policing

A long-term partnership delivers award-winning results

## Helping to keep communities safe

### Background

The first of its kind, Cleveland Police's 'Golden Nominal' project showcases how the power of better data can positively impact policing. Such was its innovative nature, that the project was recognised at a national level by the Home Office, who provided co-funding from its Innovation Fund. Testament to its phenomenal success are recent award wins at the 2018 National Business Awards for its flagship 'Data Excellence' award and DatalQ's 'Breakthrough With Data' award.

### Challenges

Cleveland Police collects huge amounts of data, often in challenging circumstances. The result was a very high number of duplicate and incomplete person records within their main policing system. The scale of the issue was vast and impossible to quantify with 1,867,000 person records in their system vs. an estimated population in the Cleveland policing area of less than 600,000.

#### Solving this would be a major breakthrough in two areas:

1. Removing the need to search through duplicate records would provide a holistic view of one person and their interactions. This can better expose any potential threat that they pose to the community or how vulnerable they may be and enable a response that's far quicker and more appropriate to the situation.
2. Significantly less time would be required to manually link and manage duplicates, saving valuable resources at a time when the Force has seen cuts of 25% in the last 8 years and 500 fewer police officers.

Whilst Cleveland Police had made efforts to reduce the number of duplicates via third party matching tools, the impact was limited. This was because many records didn't contain enough accurate information within them to qualify for high-level matching rules. The Force were determined to find an alternative solution that would eliminate the issue going forward.

### Solution

Convinced of its transformative potential, Cleveland Police chose to partner with Experian, who were best placed to meet the requirements through providing a combination of software and data. This was championed by Superintendent, Alastair Simpson, and the Force Data Protection Manager, Maria Hopper. As the first of its kind, it solves an issue hindering many forces. It essentially provides a 'Golden Nominal' of each person record, a concept commonly referred to as a 'Single Customer View' or 'Single Citizen View' in other sectors.



**Cleaning and matching existing data:** A Golden Nominal database uses Experian verified reference data to clean existing data and then deduplicate in Experian's data management platform. It uses intelligent reversible matching rules to produce the highest number of credible matches. Maria's team also realised that it couldn't merge some records because of limited or poor-quality information. Experian therefore provided a solution to append date of birth to over 100,000 of these records. This identified significantly more duplicate records which could be auto-merged rather than going through a lengthy manual review process.



**Accessibility to the Golden Nominal at the front end:** The Golden Nominal database and Full Electoral Role was made accessible to call handlers who can now instantly look up, assess and match back to an existing record or create new ones using a comprehensive and accurate data source.



**More accurate MoPI response:** The Experian tool also provides flexible business reporting and insight for better deployment of resources and delivery on MoPI (Management of Police Information) legislation requirements. One example is the introduction of auto deletion of MoPI 3 records. Forces must link together the records of offenders who have committed or are alleged to have committed minor crimes before they are deleted because it flags up possible serious offenders where multiple records exist. A clearer view of data removes the risk that this may be missed.

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**Data Governance:** A data governance suite provides a holistic view of data held. This produces 23 bespoke weekly reports that monitor specific elements of data quality to flag up where issues arise that could pose a significant risk to the Force.

### Results

According to Maria, the results have been phenomenal – with a dramatic reduction in the growth of new duplicate records by 100,000 per year.

*“Experian’s data assets have made all the difference. One particular highlight has been the date of birth append. We’ve saved 10 years’ worth of manual work for one data quality staff member because of the automatic merging it’s allowed - that’s staggering.”*

A true ‘breakthrough’, it’s created huge opportunities to serve the community better and identify those most vulnerable far more quickly.

- Poor data quality was estimated to be costing over £250k per year i.e. inputting, processing, reviewing and amending data. The solution means these costs are now starting to reduce significantly.
- Response to the public is quicker and more appropriate as call handlers have instant access to existing data. New records are created from an accurate data source, which requires little to no inputting.
- It’s impacting public safety in cases where having a holistic view reduces the risk that vital information may be missed. One such example is the internal police vetting team who process security clearance applications for those wanting to work within the Policing arena. They estimate the time taken to resolve data quality issues has reduced from 1.5 hours per day to just 15 minutes.

“Data is central to policing – we need it to protect people and to prevent crime. The Golden Nominal solution genuinely drives efficiency and helps us to do really important police work more quickly, at a time of austerity. Behind the scenes it’s transforming the way we do business and we are seeing the impact on our culture, financial efficiency and, importantly, our ability to serve to the community.”

— **Alastair Simpson**, Chief Superintendent for the North East Regional Special Operations Unit, Cleveland Police



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