

MoJ: Justice Sector Change Notification system

The information shared between justice sector agencies is about people. How well that information is shared will help to ensure outcomes are fair and just. Changes to shared data or underlying technologies must therefore be well co-ordinated.

Four agencies use the justice sector Change Notification System: Ministry of Justice¹, Department of Corrections, NZ Police and the Land Transport Safety Authority. These agencies agreed, a simple, yet responsive system, was required to manage changes to common shared code table data.

The participating agencies subsequently agreed to keep each other informed of the various types of infrastructure changes that occur within each agency.

This led to the establishment of the Justice Sector Change Notification system. The system therefore supports some of the principles of the two Justice Information Strategies.

Agencies agreed the following

- The system should use web and email technologies to fully automate the processes.
- Changes to shared code tables would be notified in a timely fashion.
- Any changes would be broadcast to the other agencies, which would then accept/not accept the proposed changes.
- Responses would be required from all agencies, including null responses for future reference.
- The originating agency would remain accountable for a change as it progressed through the system.

The first component of the system covered change notifications relating to the common shared sector code tables, amounting to 151 went live in October 2002.

Examples of shared code tables are Offences Codes, Bail Conditions, Driver Licence class, Parole Decision, Prison Classification, Body Mark, and Police Diversion Type.

The second component - infrastructure change notifications went live in July 2003, and added a further eight types of change notifications.

Examples of infrastructure changes notifications are: shared information, interfaces, messaging, policies & standards, security.

¹ Recently merged Department for Courts and Ministry of Justice.

Benefits

- Integrity of the code tables is maintained
- All organisations use the same values for coded information
- The system forms part of each agency's internal change control processes.
- Ensures that all agencies receive the same information at the same time
- Ensures that all agencies know that other agencies have taken note of planned changes.
- Provides a mechanism for agencies to quickly identify changes that will impact on them - no surprises.

How it works

For each organisation, the creation of, or amendments to changes requires:

- Change notifications that show the following
 - Identity of the change required
 - Name of the person responsible within the originating agency
 - A grading for priority (High, Medium, Low)
 - A proposed system implementation date.
- Emails are sent to the other agencies advising that a change notification has been created or amended.
- Reminder emails sent to non-responding agencies twice a day 7 days prior to the agency "Date sector approval required".
- Reminder emails sent to non-responding agencies twice a day until an agency responds post the "Date sector approval required" date.

Other agency users can only:

- Accept/Reject the code table change notifications. (If Rejected, a reason why must be stated.)
- "Acknowledge" or "Acknowledge With Comments" infrastructure change notifications.

All notifications are retained for future reference and all code table changes are reflected in a page for each table showing the details of changes made, including date values were added or became historical.