

New eye detection technology 'could save forces time and money'

Professor working on the project says using the technology could allow police to redirect resources to those who are higher risk.



Professor Don Grubin has been working on eye detection technology

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By - [Helena Hickey](#) - [Police Oracle](#)

Eye detection testing of offenders could save police forces time and money, a leading forensic psychiatrist has said.

As previously reported, a collaborative bid between Northumbria Police and Durham Police to the Police Innovation Fund secured £171,510 for polygraph and eye detection tests which will be used in their management of pre and post-conviction sexual offenders.

Although a number of forces already use polygraph testing to monitor registered sex offenders and test downloaders of illegal images of children, this will be the first time eye detection testing will be used in the UK and could save the service huge amounts of time and money, according to Professor Don Grubin, who is involved in the project.

The technology works by tracking the eye movement of a person reading a number of statements, with an algorithm then leading to a decision about whether someone is being deceptive.

Such a process is already used in America to screen people who want to work with the Border Agency.

"They have a big problem there with drug smugglers from Mexico so they want to eliminate people who have anything a drugs record," said Prof Grubin, who helped train British police and probation officers to become polygraph examiners.

"At the moment they are using polygraph tests but they are time consuming and highlighting a lot of people who can't go any further in the process because of their background with drugs. So by using eye detection first, people can be eliminated at an earlier stage which saves time and money by not subjecting so many of them to polygraph testing.

"The eye detection tests only take about 20-30 minutes and six to eight people can do it at the same time. Additionally, the person in charge of the test doesn't need a high level of training because it is all based on computer analysis. This is very different to polygraph testing which takes ten weeks of training and high levels of supervision."

Northumbria and Durham Police are now looking at how such technology could be used with sex offenders in the North East.

"We are looking at how we can use it with so called 'internet downloaders' to assess whether they are lower or higher risk – are they going to go on to commit more serious offences for example," he said.

"We want to screen out those who are clearly lower risk with the eye detection, leaving those who are higher risk for the polygraph – meaning police won't be churning through the large numbers of lower risk people and can redirect the response to those who are high risk."

The force will begin by using both eye detection alongside polygraph testing to see whether if they didn't use the polygraph anyone would slip through the net.

"It is still in the very early stages as we have just been awarded the money, but I'm meeting with the force next week to see how we are going to get this off the ground," he said.