



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 28 August 2014

CALL HANDLING UPDATE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on current performance in relation to Call Handling and Contact Management.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board note the contents of this paper.

3. Call Handling Performance

- 3.1 Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) emergency call handling performance has remained strong throughout recent months, with the target of 90% of calls being answered within 10 seconds (excluding those abandoned before the threshold) exceeded in every month, as shown in the table below. The average wait time remaining at 4 seconds for the last four consecutive months.

999 Emergency Call Handling Performance

(Call Volume and % of Emergency Calls answered with 10 seconds with FORCE CONTROL ROOM)

	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014
Call Volume	10043	10050	8693	9641	8741	9129	7596	8256	8304	8203	9090	8980	10215
% answer in 10 sec	96.69	95.66	95.83	96.68	97.65	96.99	98.00	96.30	96.10	96.30	96.05	96.01	93.44

101 Non-Emergency Calls

(% calls within POLICE SERVICE CENTRE answered in under 30 seconds)

	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014
Call Vol	32382	30690	28227	29411	27889	26439	27297	26085	29369	27003	29753	31336	33400
% ans in 30 sec	92.47	92.70	95.56	96.39	97.16	95.74	95.46	95.18	94.44	94.55	94.25	91.35	92.50

3.2 The above table sets out the sustained improvement in call handling performance with in excess of 90% of calls answered in less than 30 seconds which remains in line with the current Police and Crime Plan.

3.3 The average wait time for initial response to the 101 call has ranged between 6 - 8 seconds during the last six months.

4. Secondary Call Handling

4.1 Secondary call handling remains the pressure point within the Police Service Centre.

4.2 Every 101 call that comes into the force is subject to an initial triage assessment which assesses threat, risk and harm and prioritises accordingly. Any calls which are deemed urgent are routed to the Force Control Room for immediate action. Any call that needs putting through to a department or extension number is routed accordingly. It is then calls that are of a general or crime recording nature that get routed through to separate staff within the Police Service Centre and it is here that a caller can experience some delay.

4.3 Approximately 50% of all calls get put through to this secondary number. Secondary call handling performance has experienced significant pressure over the last four months. The average and longest wait times peaked in June and July however have reduced into August as a result of additional measures put in place, albeit further work is on-going to improve this still further.

5. Current Influencing Factors

5.1 The Police Service Centre has seen a significant rise in absence resulting from long term health conditions and maternity leave. This has been addressed in part by additional staff but to train any new staff member to a competent standard to be able to deal with the range and complexity of issues received in the Police Service Centre takes a number of months.

5.2 Analysis has shown that the average length of calls has increased. This is due in part to 'young in service' staff but primarily as a result of a change in some working practices in relation to calls involving vulnerability. This would include matters relating to public

protection, vulnerable children and adult, serious sex offences. This increase in time is necessary to ensure that a comprehensive assessment takes place from the outset thereby ensuring continued safeguarding of those involved and all investigation considerations are thoroughly assessed. Some additional analysis has also been done to assess the impact of this and enhanced victim care ahead of the new Victim Hub commencing in October 2014.

- 5.3 Some challenges were encountered in recruiting against some of the temporary vacancies given that only temporary contracts were offered to new staff as the original post holders would be returning to their post at some point. As a result, recruitment saw a reduction in numbers and calibre of applicant hence the decision was made to offer full time permanent contracts in order to increase numbers and calibre of applicant.
- 5.4 Demand analysis to identify peak times is often problematic given the varied nature of public contact. Some of this is seasonal and to an extent predictable, some is not. Continued use of demand management software, breaking down predicted demand to 15 minute segments continues to be used to best deploy resources against predicted demand. In order to further improve the management of peak levels of demand, there has been an investment in the telephony software to allow 101 calls also to be routed through to the Force Control Room and Major operations Room as well as the Police Service Centre. This has allowed additional staff to be used to respond to 101 calls at times of peak and often unpredicted demand. This has been in place since late July and has already seen a much improved service and reduction in waiting times.

6. Additional Actions

- 6.1 Despite the above actions and improving performance, it is recognised that further work is required to respond to the current challenges in the area of secondary call handling. We have commissioned further analysis to assess current demand which once complete will inform the some predictive analysis in relation to forthcoming demand/challenges. This combined work will inform the overall resourcing level in order to assess whether this is correct or a further uplift in resources is required in which a business case can be prepared.
- 6.2 In addition to the above, consideration is being given to commissioning some external consultants and subject matter experts to review current process and performance in order to further advise on any additional opportunities to improve service delivery and performance.
- 6.3 A review of available call-back software is being considered in order to improve options for callers during times of unprecedented demand. This is being assessed in combination with the on-going demand analysis as if purchased would need to ensure sufficient resources were available to return calls swiftly and within an agreed time period.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, call handling performance remains excellent in the context of 999 emergency calls and stable in the context of initial 101 responses and triage. The pressure point remains the secondary call handling as outlined above. The Constabulary is addressing this issue with the measures outlined above which will seek to further improve performance and also the caller experience.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That the Board note the contents of this paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	
Contact Officer	Supt Chris Mead, Head of Contact Management