



**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Chief Constable

**Date:** 02 October 2014

## CALL HANDLING UPDATE

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) 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 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 for August 2014 was 5 seconds, a second up on the previous four months of 4 seconds.

#### 999 Emergency Call Handling Performance

(Call Volume and % of Emergency Calls answered with 10 seconds with FCR)

	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014
Call Volume	10050	8693	9641	8741	9129	7596	8256	8304	8203	9090	8980	10215	9308
% answer in 10 sec	95.66	95.83	96.68	97.65	96.99	98.00	96.30	96.10	96.30	96.05	96.01	93.44	93.41

## 101 Non-Emergency Calls

(%calls within PSC answered in under 30 seconds)

	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014
Call Vol	30690	28227	29411	27889	26439	27297	26085	29369	27003	29753	31336	33400	29303
% ans in 30 sec	92.70	95.56	96.39	97.16	95.74	95.46	95.18	94.44	94.55	94.25	91.35	92.50	94.82

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. In August the average wait time was 6 seconds.

### **4. Secondary Call Handling**

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

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 (FCR) 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 PSC 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 from these peak levels into August and September 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 PSC continues to experience above average 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 PSC takes a number of months.

5.2 Analysis has shown that the average length of calls has increased. This is due in part to new 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 Victims' Hub commencing in October 2014.

- 5.3 Currently there are five vacancies in the PSC which are subject to on-going recruitment. The most recent advert did not attract enough applications from staff of sufficient calibre. Of the 34 applicants, only 4 were invited to assessment centre and 3 were successful, hence the need to re-advertise. The standard required of staff in the PSC is high and we continue to recruit to that standard, not permitting any reduction in the standard in order to achieve the numbers, which whilst challenging, ensures staff of the necessary calibre and professionalism.
- 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 FCR and Major Operations Room as well as the PSC. 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 an improvement in service and reduction in waiting times that has continued into August and September.
- 5.5 During August there was hourly data capture of demand within the PSC which has now been passed to the Corporate Performance Department for analysis. The results of this will be available ahead of the next meeting.

## **6. Additional Actions**

- 6.1 Despite the above actions and improved performance, it is recognised that further work is required to respond to the current challenges in the area of secondary call handling. This is subject to a further paper that will be submitted in October.

## **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**

<b>Source Document (s)</b>	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Supt Chris Mead, Head of Contact Management, Cambridgeshire Constabulary