



**Chief Officer Team
Briefing For PCC**

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Title: Customer Contact Centre Call Handling report Jan 2017

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Report Details

CCC - call handling report – January 2017

West Yorkshire Polices' Customer Contact Centre consistently performs at very high levels in terms of call handling response times and customer satisfaction as can be seen in the body of this report.

Despite increasing call demand the Force's 999 performance has actually *improved* over the last year, so highlighting how effective we are at managing our most critical risk.

As indicated in the "WYP 999 Performance" section of this report, the current average queue time for a 999 call is 5 seconds, with a customer satisfaction rate of 97.3% for ease of contact and 94.5% for knowledge and skill of the call handler. Also, the Force's call abandoned rate has never been lower and compares exceptionally well against other Forces, in fact I have yet to discover a lower abandoned rate in any other Force.

There is nothing currently available by way of tabular data to highlight our Forces position nationally, but we have close working relationships with many other Forces and our 999 call position is confirmed by colleagues from these Forces, also within the Home Office statistics regarding 999 call queue times which show us managing our demand successfully with consistently low queue times.

BT also report monthly on delays to 999 calls and again the picture here is strong and positive.

(Appendix A and C indicate the increase in 999 call volume during the period in question)

We are also starting to see some significant improvements with the 101 service indicated in the section marked "WYP 101 Performance"

This report highlights the factors around recent past, current and future aspirations.

The call handling demand increase is a national issue, (please see Appendix D) which has been well reported by many Forces and in particular has affected 101 performance. This is the result of a number of factors including cutbacks to Council and Social Services and a warm, fine summer which has driven up demand on call handling.

We are often the unintended "fall-back" number should calls to other services not get answered.

Also of note and recognised nationally with press coverage as recent as September / October 2016, are factors such as the increase in the number of missing person reports. These calls can be lengthy and require much more time to deal with than other types of calls. These calls also tend to come in at peak times, (Friday and Saturday nights for example) which places additional demands on the service.

By way of perspective, during the peak period for demand during the summer WYP CCC received in excess of 1000 additional contacts per day. We peaked at 5600 contacts against an average of 4000 per day, numbers not seen even during peak demand such as New Years Eve and demand is still up on the same period last year.

For example, last week 999 call demand (weekly average) has increased by 8.8% on the same period last year, 101 by 4.4%, and on-line by 20%. This equates to around 59,000 extra calls for the year so far and around 8,468 on-line transactions.

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WYP 999 Performance:

1. Our current average queue times for a 999 call is less than 5 seconds, and we have achieved 3 seconds queue time in recent weeks. This is consistent, solid performance. For information, due to how our systems work, it is impossible for us to answer a call in less than 3 seconds.
2. Our abandoned rate, bearing in mind the size and demands on the 4th biggest Force in the Country, is 0.001% currently. So in our most critical risk area, despite summer pressures, West Yorkshire Police has maintained an exceptional and improving 999 service. The Home Office abandoned rate aspiration for 999 is less than 2%.
3. We achieve 95% of 999 calls answered in 10 seconds against an aspiration of 90% in 10 seconds.
4. Our current customer satisfaction for 999 calls is 97.3% for ease of contact and 94.5% for ability of call handler. (please see Appendix B)
5. We have an effective and proven method for dealing with “silent” or “dropped” 999 calls which means that the risk reflected in the media recently regarding silent calls is mitigated.
6. We have been identified by a recent HMIC inspection as being “best in country” at recognising vulnerability at initial point of contact.
7. As well as receiving an “outstanding” rating from the HMIC for call handling last year
8. We compare more than favourably with other Forces in terms of queue times, especially in terms of 999 queue length. Other Forces are looking to us for developing their best practice.

WYP 101 Performance:

- 9 Budgetary pressure in 2014 led to challenges in staffing which have now been resolved. That, coupled with a strategy that involved protecting the critical 999 service has had an impact on the Forces 101 service.
- 10 We have also seen an increase in non – Police calls of between 15%-20% for the reasons mentioned earlier.
- 11 Our average queue time for 101 is improving, with periods over the last few weeks where this has been as low as 3 seconds, comparable with our 999 service.
- 12 We have a dramatically improved abandoned rate of 6.6% in Jan 2017 (against a Home Office aspiration of 5%) and we are now concentrating on stability and consistency. Anecdotally our performance compares well with other Forces, but there is limited national Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN) data available due to sensitivities regarding content.
- 13 Our current customer satisfaction for 101 calls is 94.5% for ease of contact and 95.6% for ability of call handler, but we appreciate that ringing at peak times can be frustrating (please see Appendix B) and we are working on educating callers as to the best time to ring to get through easily.
- 14 We have been recruiting at a pace we have never attempted before and this is starting to yield benefits, but the unit still has 70 staff with less than 12 months service against a 185 full time equivalent staffing complement which is challenging but makes the knowledge of operator CSAT even more impressive.
- 15 CCC staff try to resolve as many calls as possible on initial contact, currently about 60-65% of contact to the unit is dealt with at that point. This means we free up valuable Officer resources and also offer a better service to callers.
- 16 And in terms of non-emergency contact options, this Force leads the way with webchat (first Force in the country to provide this popular service) online crime, lost property, ASB, Hate Crime, book a call back, contact an Officer and track my crime, as well as plans to develop these options further.
- 17 TWe also have a hugely successful “self-service” option, “clickB4ucall” accessible from the ‘Contact Us’ page of the Force website and offering information on not only Police matters, but also links to Council websites.

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- 18 We are utilising social media to publicise alternative contact options as well as highlighting road traffic issues, or peaks in demand in a bid to control demand more effectively, manage avoidable demand and keep the public informed. Our "Police aware" message on the 101 system is a tool we use to advise well intentioned callers that we may already be aware of an issue that they are ringing to let us know about (for example a blocked road) and have made use of the hashtags "#helpustohelpyou" and "#not999" extensively.
- 19 We are recognised nationally by other Forces as a lead Force in this area with a large number of Forces benchmark visiting us to copy what we are doing. In the last 12 months we have been visited by a over a dozen Forces and the College of Policing as recently as Jan 2017 as we attract attention on our on-line and call management processes. GMP is the latest Force to express an interest in how we manage 999 calls.
- 20 We are also working on a Force "peer review group" including Staffordshire, Leicestershire (and surrounding Forces) as well as North Yorkshire and GMP to share best practice.

IT

- 21 We have increased the specification of the main computer in our Contact Centre with faster processors to allow us to handle calls and data more effectively. By 22 Jan 2017 we will have upgraded our emergency power supply which caused us issues in the summer and in November 2017. The IT within the unit has improved significantly with a dedicated IT business manager in place. Upgrades to our telephony are also planned and in a trial test.
- 22 The Force Demand Management Review team are working with CCC and IT on enhancements to systems. This will involve better use of technology including a Customer Records Management system (CRM) which is essential to our work, as well as a workforce management system which will help us to more effectively manage resources more quickly.
- 23 We work closer than ever with IT to ensure that systems within the Contact Centre are closely monitored for deviations from normal service and so faults can be corrected more quickly. At the same time our working relationship with BT, a key partner, has never been closer.

Resourcing

- 24 The demands of call handling coupled with the training staff receive means that when applying for other front facing roles the CCC staff have an advantage. Our staff initially trained at CCC have previously moved into new roles including Police Officer, PCSO, Detention Officer, Force Crime Management Unit, Regional Scientific Support, HMET, Safeguarding, IT, Training, Dispatch and Force Command. These staff often come with a career plan and the CCC has been a doorway to the Force for many staff.
- 25 The Force benefits from the recruiting/training we undertake as staff move on to other key roles and are at least part trained for their new role with a good understanding of how the Force works.
- 26 We have call handler courses planned into late 2017 and are recruiting to not only ensure staffing numbers are constant within CCC, but also to allow us to provide staff moves to other roles as explained earlier.
- 27 There is attention on potential summer volumes and a plan to ensure the CCC will be staffed effectively.
- 28 Additionally, we have utilised modular training to get new staff up and running more quickly, so alleviating pressure on the CCC and assisting IT training with scheduling due to the current demands on their services and facilities. The training for these staff is comprehensive and intense, involving basic law, customer service skills, the use of a number of IT systems that the call handler has to be able to move between during their role, as well as a grounding in Force policy and procedures. Plus the training around complex areas which includes cybercrime, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Hate Crime for example.
- 29 We continue utilising our training Hub which allows new staff to complete calls in a safe environment, but with a reduced ratio of experienced staff to new recruits which eases pressure on the CCC and has been acknowledged as best practice within Police Forces and outside industry.
- 30 Finally, in an area that has traditionally seen high sickness rates, we currently have 4% sickness rate and this has been as low as 2.5% during the 12 months. The current figure is slightly elevated due to a series of virus based illnesses that we suffered from in recent months, but is low nonetheless.

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