

North Yorkshire Police
Force Control Room Report
October 2017



This report outlines current performance issues and the steps being taken to improve the service to the public.

Contents

999 performance	1
101 performance	3
Service Improvement	5
Conclusion	9

999 performance

The following tables outline performance on 999 calls over the last five months and a comparison with the previous two years.

Over the summer an unprecedented number of 999 calls have been received, with a 20% increase in calls nationally between May and July. These high volumes have now started to reduce.

Volumes

Table 1: Volume of 999 calls

	Volume	Daily average (normal 185 per day)	Average time to answer (Target under 10 seconds)	% Calls answered Secondary Alternate lines *	Calls from other emergency services
May	6625	213	13 seconds	1.12% 0.28%	1322
June	7076	235	18 seconds	1.44% 0.59%	1283
July	8189	264	19 seconds	3.8% 1.73%	1530
August	8551	275	17 seconds	1.91% 1.15%	1701
September	6954	231	12 seconds	2.37% 1.06%	1442

*All emergency services are required to provide 3 lines, primary secondary and alternate. Guidelines for calls transferring to secondary and alternate lines is 2% and under.

- The normal daily average volume is 185 calls (Daily rate 1 Jan – 30 June 2017)
- Highest daily rate was 376 calls on 1 July and 399 calls on 11 August (Higher than New Year's Eve)
- 60% are answered in under 4 seconds
- Since June 2017, BT 999 liaison report 999 calls for all emergency services rising from 80,000 per day to 101,000 per day
- Highest volumes received in July since 2009
- Repeat callers with mental health conditions have resulted in an increase in referrals to the NHS team in the Force Control Room (FCR). During August 160 calls were received via 999 from 2 callers with mental health conditions (NHS referrals: May 136 /June 199 /July 216 /August 227)
- Calls from other emergency services to NYP have also increased from a monthly average of 1254 per month as indicated in the table above

Comparison with previous years

Table 2: Comparison with 2015/16

	Volume			Daily average volume			Average time to answer		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
May	5519	5761	6625	178	186	213	05 seconds	06 seconds	13 seconds
Jun	5773	6074	7076	192	202	235	07 seconds	09 seconds	18 seconds
Jul	6335	6830	8189	204	220	264	06 seconds	10 seconds	19 seconds
Aug	6651	6560	8551	215	211	275	06 seconds	11 seconds	17 seconds
Sept	6575	6082	6954	222	202	231	07 seconds	10 seconds	12 seconds

Other Forces

All forces have experienced the same pressures over this period.

- 15 forces who responded to a national survey have reported an average increase of 12% in 999 calls. This ranges from The Met at 16% and Surrey at 6%
- 87 calls per month are taken on 999 by North Yorkshire which are for surrounding forces (overspill or roaming or border calls)

BT 999 Liaison has also reported that the national trend for 999 calls continues to increase. The national level of delays in calls being answered is starting to reduce from 28th August 2017.

101 performance

Over the summer period there has also been a significant and unforeseeable rise in the number of 101 calls. These high volumes are also now reducing.

Volumes

Table 3: 101 volumes and answer times

		May	June	July	August	September
Volume	2015	21656	23101	24616	24214	22585
	2016	25551	26701	27265	28001	25957
	2017	25387	26115	26896	24017	19997*
Average time to answer (seconds)	2015	44	59	69	69	71
	2016	76	61	97	99	100
	2017	138	225	253	205	139
Abandoned percentage	2015	8.20	9.32	11.26	9.83	11.65
	2016	15.97	23.37	15.44	19.02	18.63
	2017	21.52	32.46	34.72	29.29	22.71
Average abandon time (seconds)	2015	98	106	114	108	124
	2016	124	102	135	123	133
	2017	164	210	242	215	166
Average call duration (minutes:seconds)	2015	3:54	3:50	3:47	3:51	3:55
	2016	3:46	3:52	3:49	3:43	3:58
	2017	4:22	4:25	4:33	4:15	4:10

*This does not include calls handled through the operator function or by the call-back system.

In the 4 months May to August 2017, FCR answered an average of 1300 more 999 calls per month than the same time period last year.

Whilst there has been a similar volume of calls via option 1, compared to last year, during August there has been a total of 9689 calls via the new operator service. This is a net increase of 5705 non- emergency calls during August.

The reduction in non- emergency calls is most likely to be attributed to the introduction of “Queue Buster”. This facility has enabled customers to receive a call back from the control room rather than waiting on the line themselves. A total of 2970 call backs have been made to customers with the average time to receive a call back from the request has been 7 minutes 29 seconds. It is important to point out however that we will not get the best utilisation of Queue buster until the appropriate number of communications staff have been recruited, trained and tutored.

Other forces' 101 three-month comparison (July – September 2017)

Table 4: Three-month average comparison for 10 forces

	Monthly Average volume	Average answer time	Ave abandon %	Volume increase from 2016
N. Yorks	23637	3min 19sec	28.9%	-12.7%
Force 1	30735	2min 01sec	21%	+15.4%
Force 2	22281	2min 30sec	11%	-2.5%
Force 3	25560	Not quoted	24%	+4%
Force 4	20763	Not quoted	8%	+9.2%
Force 5	50195	Not quoted	25%	-1.1%
Force 6	30286	Not quoted	11%	+4%
Force 7	44446	Not quoted	18%	+7.3%
Force 8	91293	Not quoted	15%	+3.3%
Force 9	39272	Not quoted	16%	+12.3%
Force 10	64648	Not quoted	17%	-11.1% *

*The reduction in 101 volume for this force is attributed to the introduction of a switchboard which has resulted in less abandoned calls and therefore less repeat callers.

Incidents reports and response

An average of 18136 incidents per month are logged by FCR staff as a result of calls from the public. Incidents and crimes form 87% of the workload generated from the volume of calls received.

Over the last 2 years there has been little change in the percentages of incidents logged by incident type.

Table 5: Incident logs by incident type (percentage)

Incident type	2015 – 2016	2016 - 2017
Anti - social behaviour	12.55	12.8
Crime	17.26	17.5
Public Safety & Welfare	33.33	34.4
Road related	16.48	16.0
Administration	20.38	19.3

Thirteen percent of calls into the control room are relating to:

- Civil matters
- Other agency
- General advice
- Requesting updates on progress of incidents

In 3 months (July – September 2017), 2717 incidents have been recorded where mental health is a factor. This is 5% of the total incidents logged.

- 17% of incidents are immediate (urban and rural) grades
 - 25% are priority grades
- These are being responded to within the target times:

- 11.7 mins urban (Urban target: 15 mins)
- 16.4 mins rural (Rural target: 20 mins)
- 57.1 mins Priority Grade (Priority Grade target: 60 mins)
- 19% are scheduled grades with appointments being made
- 39% are other grades, which are information/intelligence with no attendance required

Service Improvement

A service improvement plan is in place with a number of strands, progress against which is set out below.

General

- 10 new operators will be employed from the end of September 2017 to enable the trained 999 and 101 operators to be freed up to take Option 1 and 999 calls
- Work is in progress to improve the automated switchboard to enable better voice recognition and for teams within the force to better handle their own calls
- Calls intended for the Traffic Bureau account for 14% of the calls being answered by the operator. This is being addressed by a direct dial telephone number for Traffic Bureau being issued and advertised on letters and other literature

Hold for Operator

The automated switchboard was amended on 2nd August 2017 to provide the public with an option to speak to an operator should none of the 4 options be suitable.

The aim of this service is to improve the way in which customers can navigate the options at the automated service. It is understood that these customers are now waiting for an operator rather than selecting option 1 as their preferred choice.

During September, 8451 calls were answered by operators in the control room. This is a daily average of 281 calls.

Since the hold for operator facility was introduced, the following benefits have been seen:

- The number of calls being abandoned at the automated switchboard has reduced by 32%
- The voice recognition rate has improved by 7%
- Callers speak to a person rather than attempting to negotiate the automation

The volumes of calls via “hold for operator” vary during the day. The types of call are in three broad categories:-

- Incident to be reported following triage by operator (35%)
- Calls for other departments or individuals (32%)
- Quick queries dealt with by operator (33%)

The recruitment of 10 operator staff via an agency continues. Two are already in place and the remainder will follow over the next two weeks.

Crime Recording and Occurrence Management

Crime Recording and Occurrence Management (CROM) administration tasks will be abstracted from FCR on 5th September 2017.

The removal of this function will mean 14000 administrative tasks will be removed from FCR and only call handling and dispatch will remain in FCR.

Each CROM task takes on average 10.5 minutes to process. This will remove 2450 hours of administrative work per month from FCR. Trained staff will manage the CROM administration. Processes are being improved to provide efficiencies in the CROM work.

The combination of call handling and CROM administration results in lengthy periods of time to input information on to force systems. This can be as high as 42% of staff time in addition to the duration of the calls. It is estimated that once CROM is removed from the FCR that the time to input information will reduce to 28%, thus allowing staff to have a higher level of availability to pick up calls.

Information technology

There have been several occasions in the last three months where systems issues have prevailed. This is mainly in relation to the storage area network. This has resulted in loss of STORM Command and Control and computerised telephony meaning calls needed to be taken on manual telephones and word document templates being completed to be input on to STORM when the systems are recovered. Work is being carried out to improve the resilience of IT systems.

The introduction of mobile data will potentially remove 30,000 Police National Computer (PNC) checks from the FCR as Officers will be trained to carry out these checks themselves on these devices.

SMART STORM is an enhancement to the current command and control functionality which will provide a more modern stable platform with more user-friendly interfaces.

Call back service - Queue Buster

This is a call back facility introduced on 30th August 2017. This allows the customer to request a call back rather than waiting themselves in a queue. A total of 70 call backs were processed in the first day. The longest time for any caller to wait was 30 mins 44 seconds with an average time of 5 mins 46 seconds before call backs have been made.

On the second day 155 call backs were requested. All were completed. The average time to call back was 6 minutes 28 seconds with the longest call back taking 27 minutes.

A total of 2970 call backs have been made to customers with the average time to receive a call back from the request has been 7 minutes 29 seconds.

This facility will be closely monitored to establish the effectiveness. Customers have so far been complimentary in respect of this service.

It is important to point out however that we will not get the best utilisation of Queue buster until the appropriate number of communications staff have been recruited, trained and tutored.

THRIVE

- Since the introduction of THRIVE the additional telephone resolution has **reduced the number of P grade incidents by 7000 a year** (Reduced demand to frontline).
- This is largely down to an **additional 10,000 incidents** per year being dealt with in the FCR by call handlers (4,000 of which are crimes)
- The increase in the average call duration since THRIVE was introduced has added an **additional 10 hours of call handling time per day**, with no increase in staffing levels.
- The increase in call duration has also led to an increase in more checks being necessary on Niche and PNC, for vehicles, property and people. As a result there was is an increase in time to input information on to the command and control service.

Post April 2014 the FCR call handlers have taken demand from the frontline, saving a significant amount of police officer time. This was illustrated in 2014/15 (THRIVE Year 1) in the reduction in P grade attendance times.

Table 6: Priority grade attendance times

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (to date)
Priority	63.45	47.00	51.34	56.15	57.1

The P grade attendance times have risen again in years 2, 3 and 4 since THRIVE implementation. However, the total number of incidents reported in 2015/16 and 2016/17 have risen by over 5000 per year, which may account for the extra attendance times.

In summary without the excellent work of FCR call handlers, the frontline would not be able to meet the 60 minute P grade target time. More importantly the service to the public would be considerably reduced if the 7000 P grades which are currently subject to telephone resolution go back to frontline officers to attend and deal with.

It is entirely appropriate for the FCR call handlers to manage this demand as it allows the frontline officers to focus on the people who need us most. However due to the extra workload on the call handlers (additional 10 hours of call handling per day) there is a clear requirement to now recognise this and look towards increasing the capacity of call handlers. The ultimate solution to this may be to invest in more staff through an increase in establishment.

It is clear that we do require extra resource to maintain telephone resolution without having a detrimental impact on call handling. Any potential increase in establishment is yet to be fully calculated as we need to ensure we take account of all factors affecting the FCR performance.

It's important we also review what the call handlers are dealing with to ensure the right resource is dealing with the right demand. One example of this has already been raised in terms of Claire's Law. These important requests from some of the most potentially vulnerable people in our communities are currently being dealt with at source by call handlers. It can take over an hour to deal with these requests. Measures have already been put in place to move this demand to the police officers within the SNSD as we feel they are the most appropriate resource to deal with such request and in turn this frees up call handlers (there was an average of one Claire's Law request a day in September).

Recruitment and training

An intensive recruitment and training programme is in place. The courses and tutorship have been revised. A tutor unit to support post-classroom training is being established. This will allow a small group of tutors to monitor the trainees with "on the job" training. This will reduce the abstraction level in the FCR as one to one tutorship will no longer be carried out.

Twelve dispatchers were recruited on 31st July 2017. They have received classroom training and tutorship in 999 calls. They are now being tutored with an expectation that they will be fully accredited and able to work under normal supervision by 17th November 2017.

Four communications Officers were recruited on 31st July 2017. They have received classroom training for handling all types of calls and are now in tutorship. They are expected to be accredited and able to work under normal supervision by 25th October 2017.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

On Monday 9th October 2017, eleven communications officers and five dispatchers have started classroom training. The communications officers are expected to be accredited to take all types of call by 22nd December 2017.

The five dispatchers will be accredited to take 999 calls by 1st December 2017. They will then receive further dispatch training on 4th December 2017. They are expected to be accredited to work under normal supervision by 2nd February 2018.

A course has been arranged to start on 8th January 2018 for 20 new staff. The recruitment of these posts is in progress with 115 candidates attending assessments and interviews during October 2017. The communications officers will be accredited by 23rd March 2018 and the dispatchers by 27th April 2018.

The training and tutorship plan has now been revised with the newly formatted tutor hub now in place at Harrogate with a substantial plan until April 2017. An additional training room has been configured at Alverton Court to assist with displaced training from the Harrogate room.

Further courses have been arranged for April 2018, August 2018 October 2018 and January 2019. Due to the increased number of training positions now available, FCR will be able to train increased numbers of staff on each course.

Analysis has shown that during the summer months of 2017 compared to previous years there has been an increase in emergency calls. This is echoed by BT 999 liaison and other forces. In order to plan for such an increase next year, the FCR team are in the process of recruiting students who will be residing in York and surrounding areas during next summer. The students will be on fixed term and flexible hours contracts and will be trained to take calls.

Table 7: FCR training schedule

Course end date	Number of staff	Role	Anticipated accreditation date
16 June	6	999 and 101	30 August 2017 confirmed
1 September	4	999 and 101	25 October 2017
18 September	12	Dispatch with 999	20 November 2017
6 November	14	999 and 101	22 December 2017
6 November	5	Dispatch with 999	2 February 2018
2 February 2018	8	999 and 101	23 March 2018
2 February 2018	12	Dispatch with 999	

Table 8: FCR Establishment

Type	Establishment
Total recruited Communications - 999 and 101	32
Total recruited Dispatch and 999	29
Total budgeted established dispatch and 999	79 FTE
Projected established dispatch and 999	96 FTE
Total budgeted Communications 101 and 999	75 FTE
Projected established 101 and 999	90 FTE

Future requirements

Wallboards

FCR managers are currently liaising with Digital Information Services Group (DISG) in order to provide a better wallboard facility. Two service providers are currently being considered. The main improvement is that the new wallboard will have a continuous audible alert which does not stop until a 999 call is taken. This will further support improvements to 999 answer times.

Workflow Management software

Staffing levels within the control room are broadly based on Police shifts and established budget. In order to better understand the staffing levels *required*, FCR management have identified a requirement to purchase and implement Workforce Management Software (call prediction).

The introduction of this software will enable FCR to accurately and consistently project call volumes and to plan staffing. This software is used in call centres world – wide based on call handling data formulated through a scientific industry standard calculation.

This software is used in other forces and works well. A demonstration by a reputable company of this software will be provided to the Deputy Chief Constable and FCR Management on 6th September 2017.

Switchboard

To further enhance customer service, a full switchboard facility could be reintroduced. This will eliminate customers' frustrations in relation to automation.

Conclusion

The combined initiatives outlined in this report are intended to improve service to the public. A table of anticipated benefits is provided below.

Table 9: Anticipated improvement timetable

Initiative	Start date	Benefits expected
Removal of crime recording	5 September 2017	End October 2017
Introduction of operator service	2 August 2017	Already apparent
10 dedicated operator staff	End September 2017	End October 2017
Introduction of call backs	30 August 2017	End September 2017
Recruitment over establishment	July/October/January	By end April 2017
Revised training and tutorship	31 July 2017	By end April 2017
Reduction in 999 volumes	End September 2017	End October 2017
Wallboard implementation	November 2017	November 2017
Mobile data – reduce checks	January 2018	January 2018

There are, however some events which may impact on service. Op Kingfisher, the operation in Kirby Misperton for fracking, requires two dedicated dispatchers from the FCR. Officers who have spent time in FCR over the summer may not be available to continue this support during Operation Kingfisher. It is unknown whether there will be any extra telephone calls in to FCR from the public during this operation.

Progress will continue to be monitored and will be reported on a regular basis.