

North Yorkshire Police
Force Control Room Report
December 2017



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

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999 performance

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

Volumes

Table 1: Volume of 999 calls

	Volume	Daily average	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
October	6950	224	09 seconds	1.41% 0.37%	1491
November	6172	205	07 seconds	0.94% 0.21%	1355
December	6585	212	09 seconds	1.08% 0.26%	1484

*All emergency services are required to provide 3 telephone lines to ensure 999 calls are answered within service levels – primary, secondary and alternate. The guideline for calls transferring to secondary and alternate lines is 2% and under. Whilst NYP percentages exceeded this guideline during July, August and September, an improvement has been seen during October, November and December with a return to under 2% each month.

Over the summer an unprecedented number of 999 calls were received which is reflected nationally across all emergency services.

- The daily average volume July to December 2017 is 234 calls per day compared to the previous six months which was 185 calls (Daily rate 1 Jan – 30 June 2017)
- The highest daily rate was 376 calls on 1 July and 399 calls on 11 August
- 60% are answered in under 4 seconds

- New Year's Eve between midnight and 07.00 NYP received 241 x 999 calls which is higher than a normal full day's volume being received in 7 hours.
- Over the Christmas period 2017, NYP have received 105 more 999 calls, 555 more 101 calls via option 1 and 585 more operator calls compared to the same period in 2016. (the last Friday before Christmas, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day)
- Since June 2017, BT 999 liaison report 999 calls for all emergency services rising from 80,000 per day to 101,000 per day.
- August saw the highest volumes received in any month since 2009
- 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 2015/16/17

	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
Oct	6007	6084	6950	193	202	224	06 seconds	09 seconds	09 seconds
Nov	5468	5547	6172	182	184	205	08 seconds	10 seconds	07 seconds
Dec	6229	5849	6585	201	188	212	06 seconds	08 seconds	09 seconds

Other Forces

All forces have experienced the same pressures over the summer of 2017.

- 15 forces who responded to a national survey 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 average time for the Police Service nationally to answer is 12 seconds.

101 calls - performance

Volumes

Table 3: 101 volumes and answer times

		May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Volume	2015	21656	23101	24616	24214	22585	22827	216555	19189
	2016	25551	26701	27265	28001	25957	24264	22878	21210
	2017	25387	26115	26896	24017	19997*	20932*	19656*	17908*
Average time to answer (seconds)	2015	44	59	69	69	71	57	64	52
	2016	76	61	97	99	100	114	131	91
	2017	138	225	253	205	139	144	92	112
Abandoned percentage	2015	8.20	9.32	11.26	9.83	11.65	9.36	11.94	18.71
	2016	15.97	23.37	15.44	19.02	18.63	20.96	22.70	17.58
	2017	21.52	32.46	34.72	29.29	22.71	22.38	16.65	19.36
Average abandon time (seconds)	2015	98	106	114	108	124	109	177	104
	2016	124	102	135	123	133	169	157	163
	2017	164	210	242	215	166	166	169	163
Average call duration (minutes: seconds)	2015	3:54	3:50	3:47	3:51	3:55	3:54	3:46	3:44
	2016	3:46	3:52	3:49	3:43	3:58	4:08	4:18	4:15
	2017	4:22	4:25	4:33	4:15	4:10	4:07	4:19	4:29

In the above table the volumes which are annotated with * indicates a reduction in 101 calls coming into the FCR via option 1. The reduction is attributed to the introduction of two new telephone facilities and a process change:-

- Hold for Operator – previously without this option, where the automated system did not present the caller with an option relevant for their needs, the caller would tend to select Option 1, creating unnecessary call volume for this Option
- Call Back facility (Queue Buster) - this allows the customer to request a call back rather than waiting themselves in a queue, or abandoning the call and making a further call to 101 or 999
- Abstraction of Crime Recording and Occurrence Management tasks

Each of these functions are explained below.

Hold for Operator

Following public feedback, 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 automated 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. The volumes being handled through this service are indicated in the following table: -

Table 4:

Hold for Operator		
Month 2017	Volume	Average time to answer (seconds)
August	9689	31
September	10122	30
October	9665	26
November	9181	11
December	8301	10

Operator calls have presented additional volumes of calls to the FCR. It has been necessary to recruit 7 staff from an agency on a temporary basis to handle these calls to enable the trained 999 and 101 operators to be freed up to take Option 1 and 999 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 8%
- Callers speak to a person rather than attempting to negotiate the automation
- Calls which are transferred on to FCR operators have already been triaged and are being correctly transferred

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%)

Call back facility – (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. The following table indicates the volume of call backs being requested and made and the average length of time customers are waiting for FCR staff to call them back. The reduction in 101 calls reported in table 3 above can also be attributed to the call back facility.

Table 5: Call backs

Month 2017	Volume	Average time to call back
Sept	3517	8:53
October	4349	10:15
November	2600	12:14
December	2816	11:29

Crime Recording and Occurrence Management

Crime Recording and Occurrence Management (CROM) administration tasks have been abstracted from FCR since 5th September 2017. This is in line with recommendations from an external review commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner¹, as well as a peer review by Police Service Northern Ireland, and an internal review by the Nexus team.

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. Since CROM has been removed from the FCR, the time to input information by the staff remaining in the FCR has reduced to 33%, thus allowing staff to have a higher level of availability to pick up calls.

The pilot is about to reach its conclusion with a recommendation to separate management of crime and occurrence management tasks.

The combination of the above three factors has had positive impacts: -

- Reduction in volumes of calls being presented
- Reduction in abandonment rate
- Improvement in answer times on 999
- Reduction in the amount of time to input incidents

Incidents reports and response

In the last 6 months 17259 incidents per month have been 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 6: 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

There are other ‘miscellaneous’ calls not included in the above because they are not logged as ‘incidents’. (Miscellaneous calls include enquiries about civil matters, other agencies, general advice and requesting updates on progress of incidents)

In the last 6 months, 4610 incidents have been recorded where mental health is a factor. This is 4.45% of the total incidents logged. There have been 1348 mental health referrals to the NHS triage nurses situated in FCR.

¹ A Bowan and W Redding, A Review of First Contact Customer Experience Provided by North Yorkshire, September 2105

THRIVE

- Since the introduction of THRIVE the additional telephone resolution has reduced the number of Priority grade incidents by 7000 a year and has thereby 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 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 Priority grade attendance times.

Table 7: Priority grade attendance times (minutes)

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (to date)
Priority (P)	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.

Recruitment and training

An intensive recruitment and training programme is in place.

The Police and Crime Commissioner recently committed to funding an increase of 42.14 budgeted FTE staff resource for the FCR and Crime and Occurrence Management Unit (CROMU) (a further recruitment of 32.14 FTE staff).

In the last 6 months FCR have welcomed the following numbers of staff into the department

Communications Officer: -

12 have been recruited. All are now trained and accredited to perform their role.

A further 16 Communications Officers will start in training on 8th January 2018 and will be accredited to carry out their role fully by 23 March 2018.

Dispatchers:-

14 have been recruited. Six of these are currently in tutorship and will be accredited to carry out their role by 2nd February. A further six will be trained at the end of February and will be fully accredited by 27th April 2018. Dispatchers are also trained and accredited to take calls.

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 particularly 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.

Six Police Constables have already been trained to take 999 calls to assist with future increases in calls. Further courses are scheduled to take place after Operation Kingfisher (Fracking) has ended. This will assist us in sustaining staffing levels to match seasonal demand.

Table 4: FCR training schedule next 6 months

Course start date	Number of staff	Role	Anticipated accreditation date
4 December 2017	6	Dispatch and 999	2 February 2018
8 January 2018	16	Comms 999 and 101	23 March 2018
8 January 2018	6	Dispatch and 999	27 April 2018
9 April 2018	9	Comms 999 and 101	8 June 2018
4 June 2018	3	Dispatch and 999	27 July 2018

The numbers of recruits for intakes in August, October, and January 2019 courses will be confirmed during the next quarter. Attrition levels are being taken into consideration and are being backfilled. It is expected that 15 dispatchers and 12 communications officers will move to be student officers, to other internal roles within the force and to external roles. This is based on the last 18 months' attrition levels.

The number of posts for each course will also be determined following the submission of a business case to request an increase in staffing levels within FCR to 85 dispatchers with the possibility of over recruitment to 90 posts.

For communications officers the request is for 100 communications officer posts with over recruitment to 110 posts to cover for attrition levels and to avoid gaps in recruitment and training.

Information technology

The storage area network issues experienced during summer and autumn have now been resolved. The command and control system and the automatic distribution of calls are now stable.

The introduction of mobile data will potentially remove 30,000 Police National Computer (PNC) checks from the FCR as Police 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.

The delivery of new call handling wallboards is imminent. These will be bespoke call centre wallboards which will provide stability of the presentation of data on to the boards and an audible alert for 999 calls which will sound continuously until the queuing 999 call is taken.

Future requirements

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. Demonstrations by reputable companies of this software have been provided to the Deputy Chief Constable and FCR Management. A project manager has been appointed and a business case with statement of requirements is currently being compiled.

Switchboard

To further enhance customer service, a full switchboard facility could be reintroduced. This will eliminate customers' frustrations in relation to automation. The operator function has already proved popular with the public so a full switchboard would be an easy transition.

Conclusion

The combined initiatives outlined in this report are intended to improve service to the public. A table of anticipated benefits is provided below. Progress will continue to be monitored and will be reported on a regular basis.

Table 5: 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 and to end March 2019	By end April 2018
Revised training and tutorship	31 July 2017	By end April 2018
Reduction in 999 volumes	End September 2017	End October 2017
Wallboard implementation	November 2017	January 2018
Mobile data – reduce checks	January 2018	January 2018