



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Deputy Chief Constable – Cambridgeshire

Date: 21 January 2013

PERFORMANCE IN HANDLING EMERGENCY AND NON EMERGENCY CALLS

1. Background

- 1.1 Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited the DCC to attend a meeting on 13th September 2012 where a further number of questions on call handling performance were raised.
- 1.2 These were answered in a report which was presented to the following meeting of the Committee - 18th December. This report contains broadly the same data which was presented to the Committee in December.
- 1.3 This report also articulates the work which has been put in place to address the performance issues which were prevalent in 2011 and explain the substantial improvement since.

2. Call handling performance for emergency and non emergency calls over the course of 2012.

- 2.1 In each of the last 12 months between 90% and 95% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds – with the average wait time 5 seconds. The abandonment rate for these calls remains below 1%. The Constabulary considers this to be excellent performance.
- 2.2 Initial call handling for non-emergency calls remains at 90% within target (average wait time of 11 seconds).
- 2.3 Recent scrutiny of secondary call handling of non-emergency calls has taken place.

3. Abandonment rate for secondary call handling over the course of 2012

- 3.1 Calls classified as 'secondary' are non-emergency calls transferred from SMILE (the switchboard system in the Police Service Centre) which require a crime or incident to be raised.

- 3.2 Abandonment rates are monitored internally. Although the acceptable waiting time is subjective (and likely to be dependent on the circumstances) the abandonment rate gives an indication of satisfaction with service levels. The Constabulary strives to minimise the abandonment rate regardless of average wait length.
- 3.3 Most recent data shows a notable improvement in abandonment rates for these calls:
- June 10%
 - July 6%
 - August 9%
 - September 7%
 - October 5%
 - November 3.4%

4. Key indicators / procedures used to measure and manage call handling performance

- 4.1 The Constabulary has in place a monthly Performance Board (FPB) supported by a monthly performance pack which looks across a range of data to ascertain levels of satisfaction with the service. The level of detail which is scrutinised is as illustrated in Appendix A.
- 4.2 Routine updates (quarterly) are submitted to the FPB by the strategic leads, which include an update from the Head of Contact Management who is responsible for this area of work.
- 4.3 The Constabulary internally monitors initial call handling and abandonment rates and prior to the dissolution of the Police Authorities graphs on call handling were included in the performance packs and monitored through the Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.4 Victim satisfaction rates are monitored routinely by the Constabulary's market research team and 'ease of contact' is an area which is part of the survey. Current rates suggest 96% satisfaction with 'ease of contact'.

5. Commentary about any periods of underperformance and the measures taken or being taken to address these

- 5.1 For the last year monitoring has been undertaken to fully understand the abandonment rates for secondary call handling as these have been problematic. By way of a response, during May/June a number of new police officer operators joined the Police Service Centre. As these officers were not trained call takers a significant of training was required especially with regard to the call taking technology. This gave the teams challenge in meeting threshold times. Since training has been complete the figures have improved significantly.
- 5.2 Further data has been analysed as a result of requests from the Overview Committee. The Constabulary has been able to draw out data for the last six

months to indicate the length of time callers stay on the line before they hang up. This data is represented at Appendix B. The profile of how long people seem prepared to wait is as would be expected. Most callers who hang up do so within the first two minutes. There have been a small number of callers who have had to wait much too long.

- 5.3 We have pulled forward data for the third week in November which is attached at Appendix C. Members will note that not only are abandonment rates very low, but timeliness is much improved.
- 5.4 Furthermore, in early 2013, the Constabulary will introduce a new process to allow callers who are waiting to opt to be called back. This will further improve performance.
- 5.5 Improvements with regard to call handling have also been achieved as a result of training delivery to staff (multi skilled call takers are now able to resolve incidents without the need to transfer) – in addition all vacant positions within the Police Service Centre have been filled.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The call handling performance by Cambridgeshire Constabulary fell substantially during 2011. The following year saw considerable effort and investment to recover that position. The Policy Authority heavily scrutinised the activity of the Constabulary during this time.
- 6.2 The most recent call handling performance can be considered in two parts: firstly, 999 and 101 call handling is excellent; all emergency incidents are therefore responded to correctly. Secondary, call handling is much improved, but still has some room for improvement and further investment from within the capital programme is planned, should this be considered effective and necessary.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	Contact Officer	Location
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