



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

ITEM 8
REPORT TO : STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
DATE : 4 JULY 2017
REPORT BY: T/CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT PETER LAWSON
TITLE: UPDATE ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the update on Contact Management of the Constabulary for the reporting period up to 31st March 2017.

2. Decision Required

- 2.1 The Commissioner is requested to review the report and make comments as appropriate.

3. Information

- 3.1 This report advises the Commissioning of the quality of service (Contact Management) against the performance indicators agreed.

3.2 OVERVIEW

The report seeks to develop the format of previous versions by offering commentary and analysis about the key themes of Demand, Capability, Capacity, and Systems that collectively determine how effectively Contact Management achieves its purpose. The demand analysis review work undertaken in the control room is enabling an enhanced understanding of the factors that contribute to performance and informing development of a set of measures that will better describe and diagnose this.

- **Demand** – Improved analysis based on access to raw telephony data not previously available is permitting us to give the most detailed picture ever of our true demand. From detailed analysis of the raw call data we are beginning to better understand true volumes with avoidable repeat calls stripped from the data (NB. Gross volumes are also presented in this report for transparency).

- **Capability** – The paper reports on development of the skills, abilities and efficiency of our staff. Measures here will include staff compliance data, an overview of the skills across the centre and the experience and turnover in the department.
- **Capacity** – The report will describe how the picture of demand reconciles with the levels of staffing currently in the room. This will enable an enhanced understanding of performance in the room. Looking forward we can project a model of anticipated demand against planned recruitment to try and forecast capacity in the future, together with modelling required establishment against desired performance levels.
- **Systems** – IT systems are fundamental to performance in the control room; either enabling or at times of instability inhibiting the ability of staff to deal with calls for service. The report will also describe future developments.

3.3 CALL HANDLING – MEASURES

DEMAND

Emergency Calls - Context

- The average daily volume of emergency calls over the last 3 years is 573.5 calls offered per day.
- The nationally agreed target is to answer 90% of calls within 10 seconds.
- The chart below shows the monthly volumes offered, answered within target (Achieved), service level, average speed to answer and our abandonment rates.

Table 1: 999 Service Levels

	999				
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer (s)	Abandonment Rate
JAN '17	16396	13770	83.98%	5.52	0.8%
FEB '17	15872	12397	78.11%	6.58	0.6%
MAR '17	18770	13573	72.31%	8.21	0.5%
JAN '16	15009	13813	92.03%	3.29	0.6%
FEB '16	14918	13235	88.72%	4.40	0.9%
MAR '16	16683	14786	88.63%	4.39	0.5%

To put this into some context, the total monthly volume of emergency calls offered since 2014 has been mapped onto a control chart.

Table 2: 999 Volume over Time

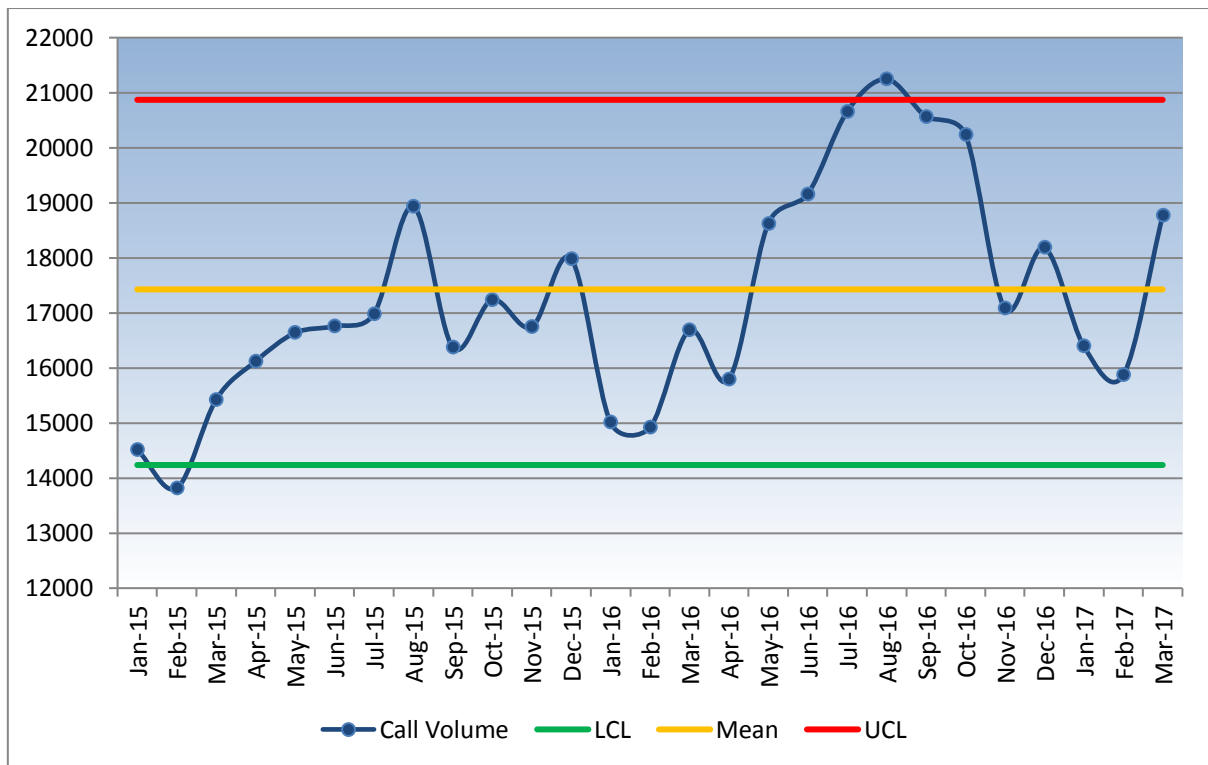
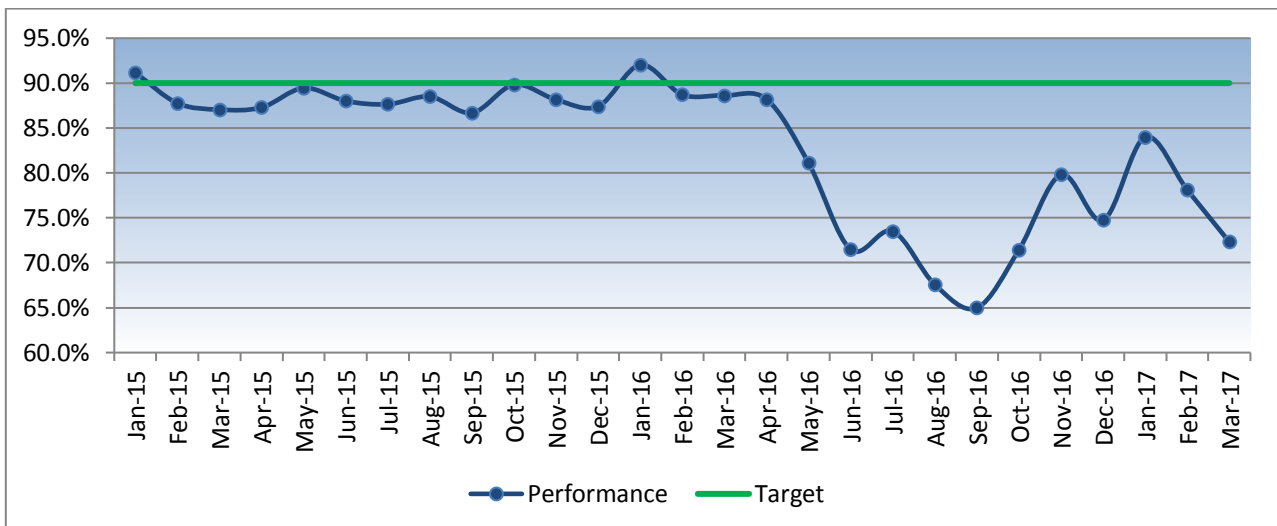


Table 3: 999 Performance over Time



The demand offered during the January to March period is not exceptional when compared to the long term pattern. However each month's volume is higher than last year and higher than the previous three years average for those particular months. January saw a 15.6% rise on the previous three year average, February a 8.5% rise and March a 12.5% rise.

It is not clear at this point if this is an actual increase in the volume of calls we are being offered or whether more repeat calls are presenting due to a drop in performance on the 101 calls. Improved

understanding of true call volumes on the 101 and 999 lines will enable a better understanding of demand in the future.

A recent circulation from the National Contact Management Steering group detailed 999 call exceptions reported by British Telecom. 31 forces were listed in the report and showed significant issues with call handling performance across the board in England and Wales.

Non-Emergency Calls - Context

- The average daily volume of non-emergency calls over the last 3 years is 2256.7 calls offered per day.
- There is no nationally agreed target for non-emergency calls, but call handling is measured against a desired level of 80% of calls being answered within 40 seconds.
- The chart below shows the monthly volumes offered, answered within target (Achieved), service level, average speed to answer and our abandonment rate.

Table 4: Non-Emergency Service Levels

	101				
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer (s)	Abandonment Rate
JAN '17	58949	39517	67.04%	47.21	12.0%
FEB '17	57649	29588	51.32%	84.14	21.4%
MAR '17	69744	30296	43.44%	119.22	27.6%
JAN '16	57724	50136	86.85%	15.77	4.6%
FEB '16	58404	48085	82.33%	21.13	6.2%
MAR '16	61877	50211	81.15%	22.85	9.3%

Putting the calls offered data into a control chart gives the following:

Table 5: Non-Emergency Volume Over Time

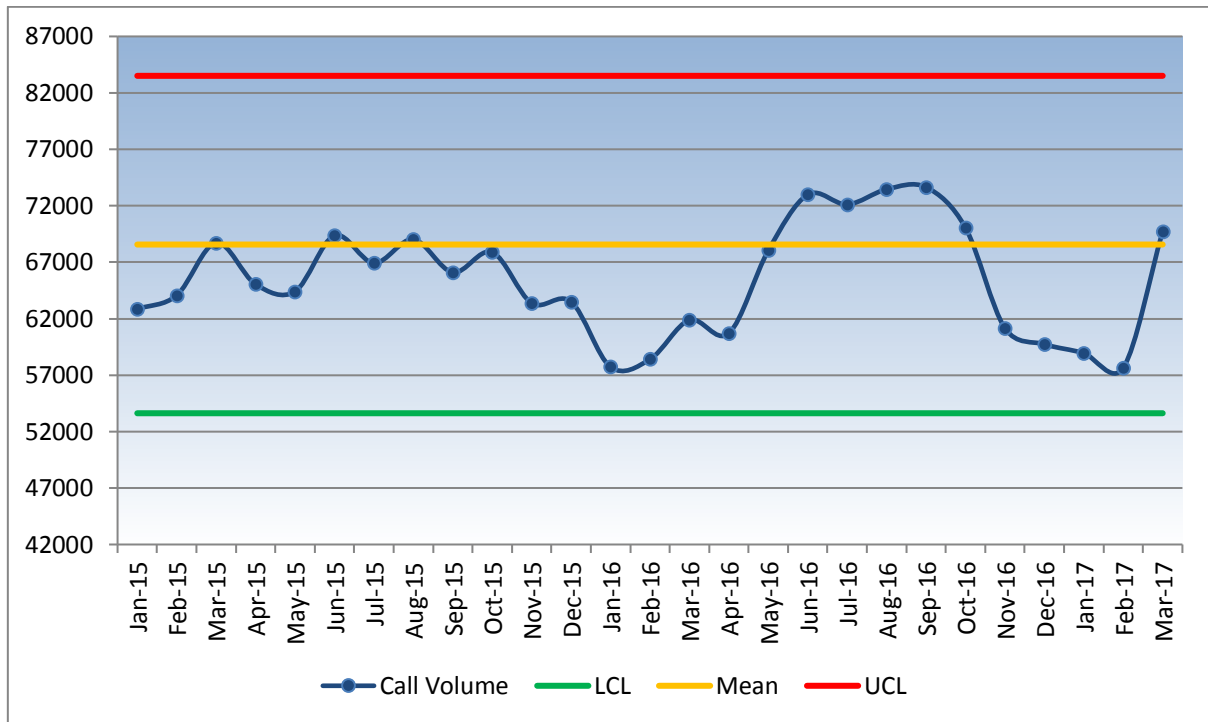
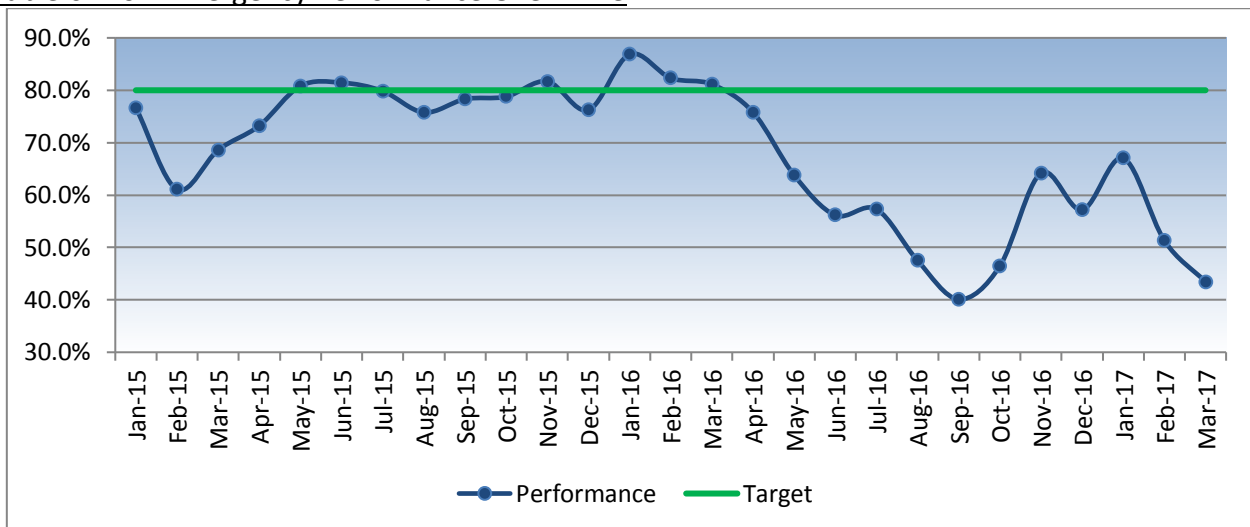


Table 6: Non-Emergency Performance Over Time



Again, the demand offered during the January to March period is not exceptional when against the long term pattern. January and March’s figures are higher than last year but all three months are lower than the previous three year averages. January saw a 14.9% reduction, February a 12.0% reduction and March a 3.5% reduction.

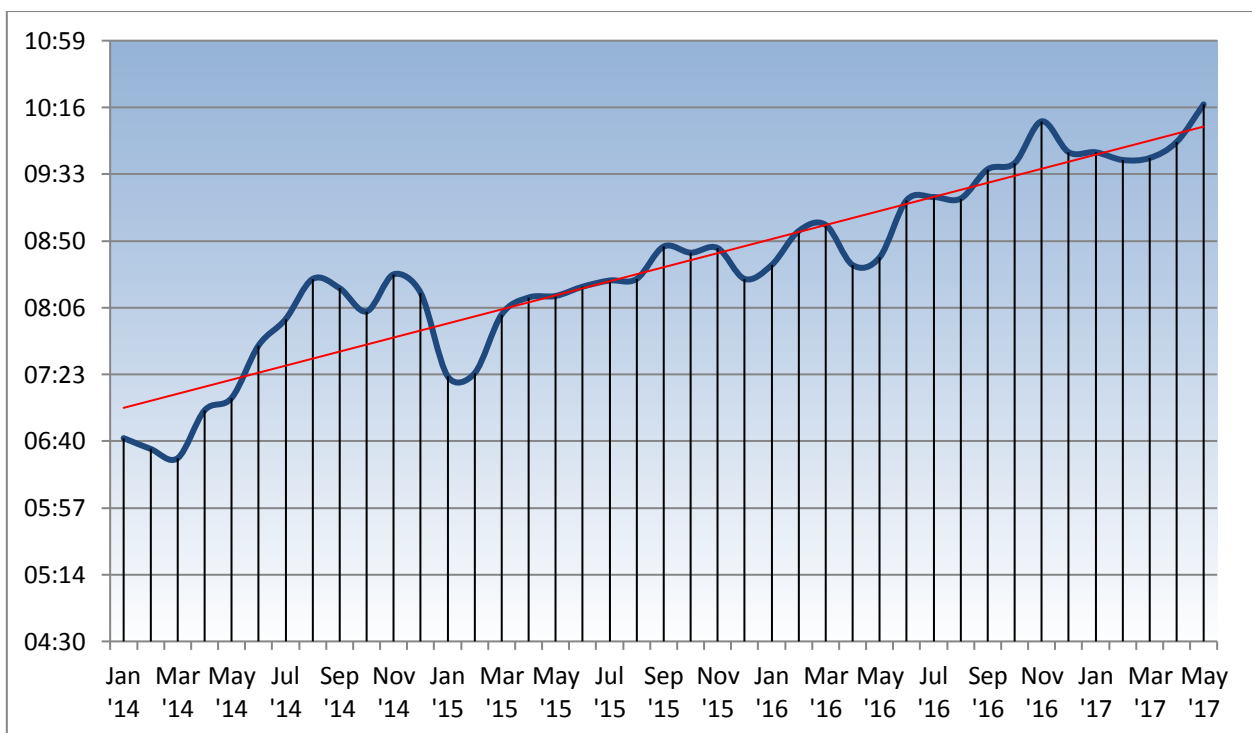
It is intended that in future reports to Scrutiny there will be online reporting data and email volume data included.

Average Handle Time

Table 7 below shows the Average Handle Time (a combination of talk time and wrap-up time). As has been previously reported, this time has been steadily increasing. When looked at in detail it is the wrap-up time element (or the time an operator takes after each call) which has risen most when compared to the time spent on the phone. This is due to several factors:

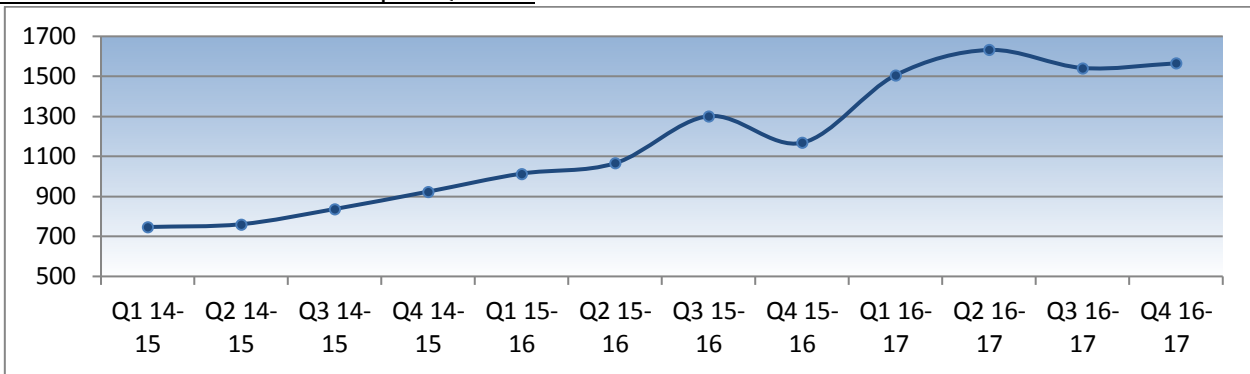
- Balance between quality verses quantity – i.e. do we choose to deal with lots of calls very quickly but in doing so obtain poor quality information and resolve relatively few at the first contact. Alternatively we can take a little longer on the call to obtain information that is capable of making a better quality decision and resolving more at first contact.
- Correctly documenting the incident, complete all necessary risk, threat and harm checks and documenting a NDM assessment.
- The changing natures of demand – especially public safety incidents – tend to be complex and take more time to deal with.
- The introduction of PCRO’s completing the first page crime report on incidents.
- Inexperienced operators take longer to deal with calls.

Table 7: Average Call Handling Time (Jan ‘14 – May ‘17)



Part of our demand is made up of hoax calls to the emergency services. They have always formed a part of our demand but over the past four quarters there has been a significant increase in their volume, almost doubling.

Table 8: Volume of Hoax Calls per Quarter



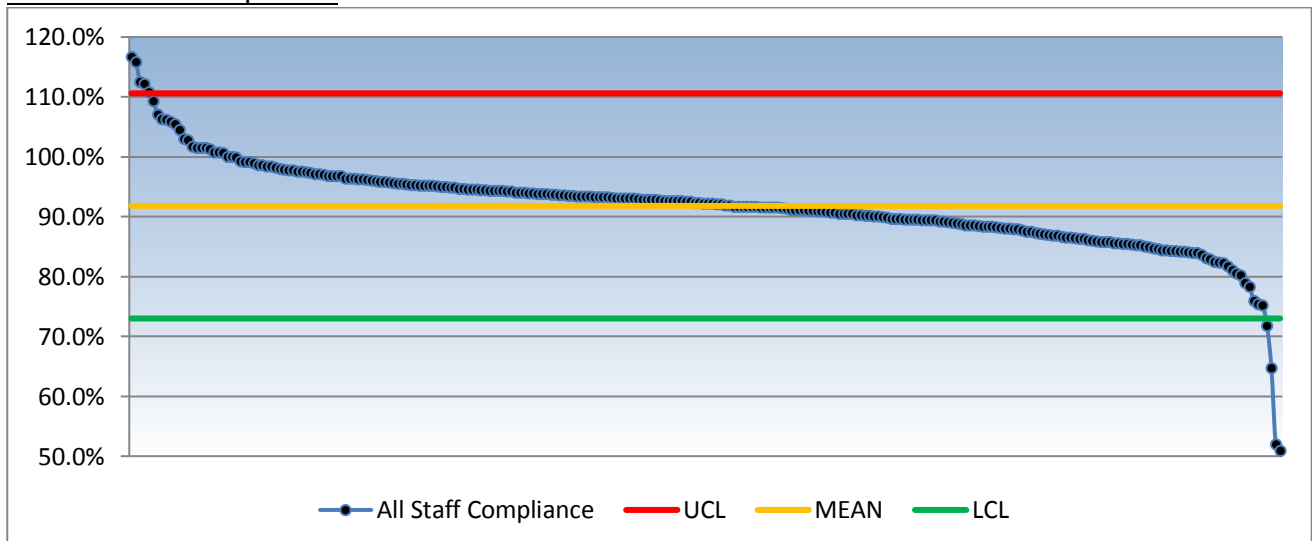
Whilst they do not take up a significant proportion of our overall call volume, they tend to take a disproportionate amount of time to resolve due to all the necessary safeguarding checks and if made at peak times can impact severely to the detriment of call performance.

CAPABILITY

The department has recently looked in detail at the working practice compliance of staff. Compliance is a comparison of the amount of time we have planned for a staff member to be call taking (101 or 999) compared to what they were actually logged in for, presented as a percentage.

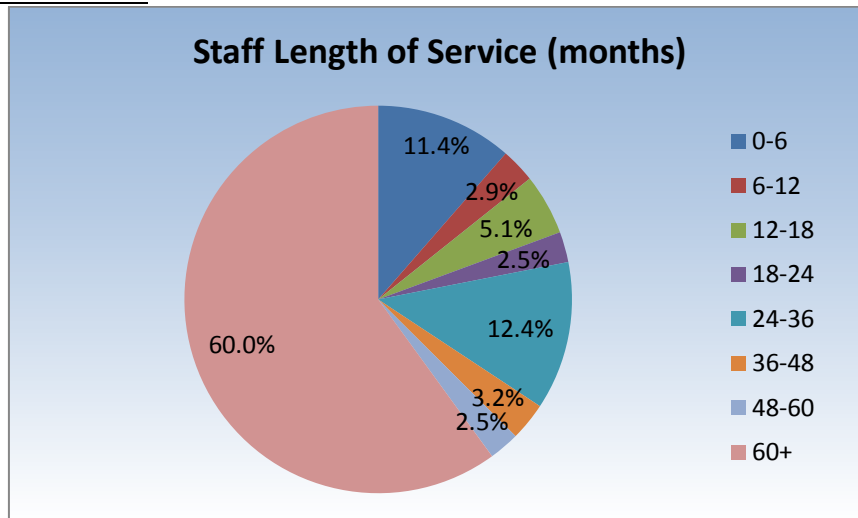
The mean (average) percentage for the room is **91.8%** compliant, which is very good. This figure is slightly above the last time the whole room compliance figure was charted. To provide some understanding on that figure, with our current configuration and working practices, staff are very unlikely to achieve 100% compliance. Every time they are required to move positions, time is lost. This generally means the more skilled a staff member is, and the more varied positions they work, they change more often and therefore limit their opportunity for a high compliance figure. The data is shown below:

Table 9: Staff Compliance



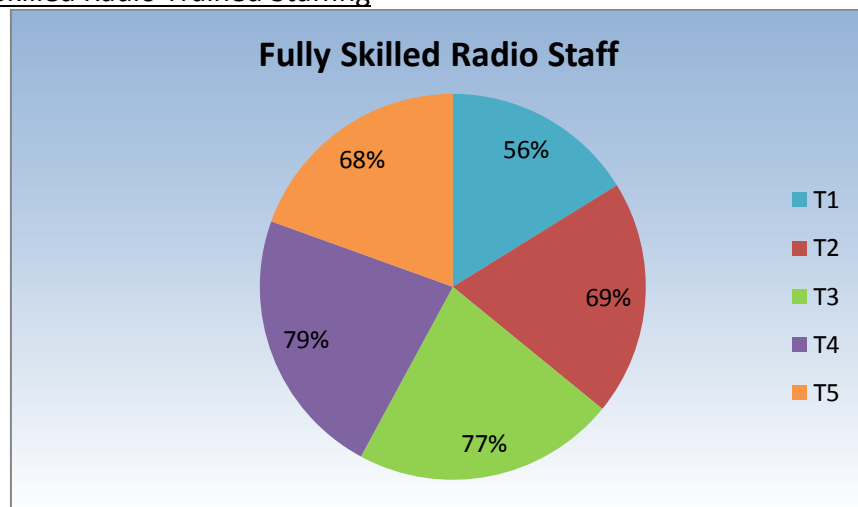
We have also recently looked at the overall skills our staff have in the room. This is vital to ensure we have resilience and will play a large part in the anticipated move to the BCU pods model which is shortly being trailed.

Table 10: Length of Service



As can be seen by Table 10, the room experiences a relatively high turn-over of staff. Therefore we have a relatively large percentage of our staff with only a short amount of experience in the room. 34.3% of staff have less than three years' experience, 21.9% have less than two years and 14.3% have less than a year. Recent developments with permanent (as opposed to temporary) contracts and restrictions on internal movement within the first 2 years after appointment are expected to stabilise the establishment and increase experience.

Table 11: Fully Skilled Radio Trained Staffing



Despite the relative inexperience in the centre the levels shown in Table 11 demonstrate the excellent work which is being done in training staff in the room. It is clear that the new staff are being progressed by their Supervisors with training from the team mentors as soon as possible to maintain skills at a high level in the contact centre.

Recruitment

The new recruitment programme continues. Recently 37 individuals on permanent contracts were recruited. Looking forward plans are in place to increase the number of intakes and recruit more new staff this year to maintain the department slightly over-strength for the peak demand period over the summer.

As detailed in previous reports, structured exit interviews with staff are completed to understand the factors influencing staff to depart. The main cause of this attrition is recruitment as Police Officers either within Lancashire or neighbouring forces. There are currently 15 staff that have been successful in applying for Lancashire Constabulary. The second biggest factor for staff is the shift work involved and the loss of time with family.

CAPACITY

A significant piece of work has been completed over the last few months to allow us to better understand our demand. This has culminated in the developed of a process to where we can accurately assess the staffing requirements of the room. This process uses sophisticated industry recognised methodology and formulas to reach some very accurate conclusions. It has modelled staffing requirements given our existing working practices. This process is also flexible in that it will allow us for the first time to scenario plan and then accurately assess the impact on staffing requirements.

Using current parameters:

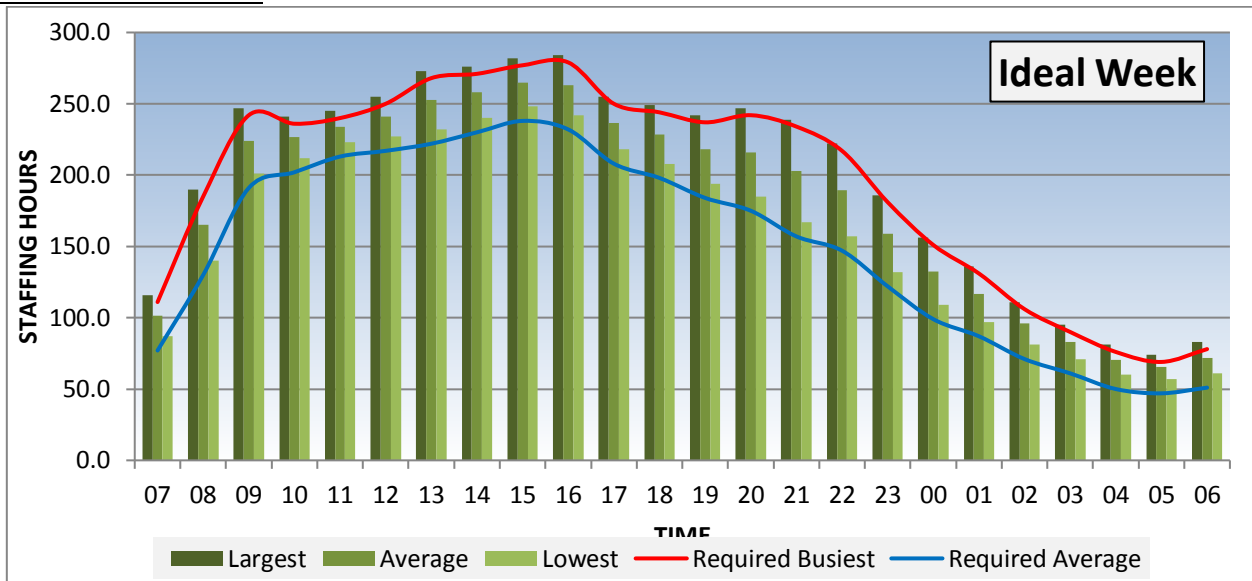
- True call volumes (removing repeat calls which are due to current performance issues)
- Our most recent call Handle Time
- Our current SLA, 999 = 90% in 10 secs, 101 = 80% in 40 secs

We are able to precisely calculate the staffing requirements for call handling for each hour of the week. That allows a comparison of the staffing available with the staffing levels required to meet demand to a desired level of performance.

Table 12 and 13 below are a comparison between our current staffing levels, and the levels we require to meet our current performance targets. The hourly green bars show the actual maximum, average and lowest recorded staffing levels between January '17 and March'17. The Blue line shows staffing needed to meet an average day; the Red line shows the levels required to meet our busiest day.

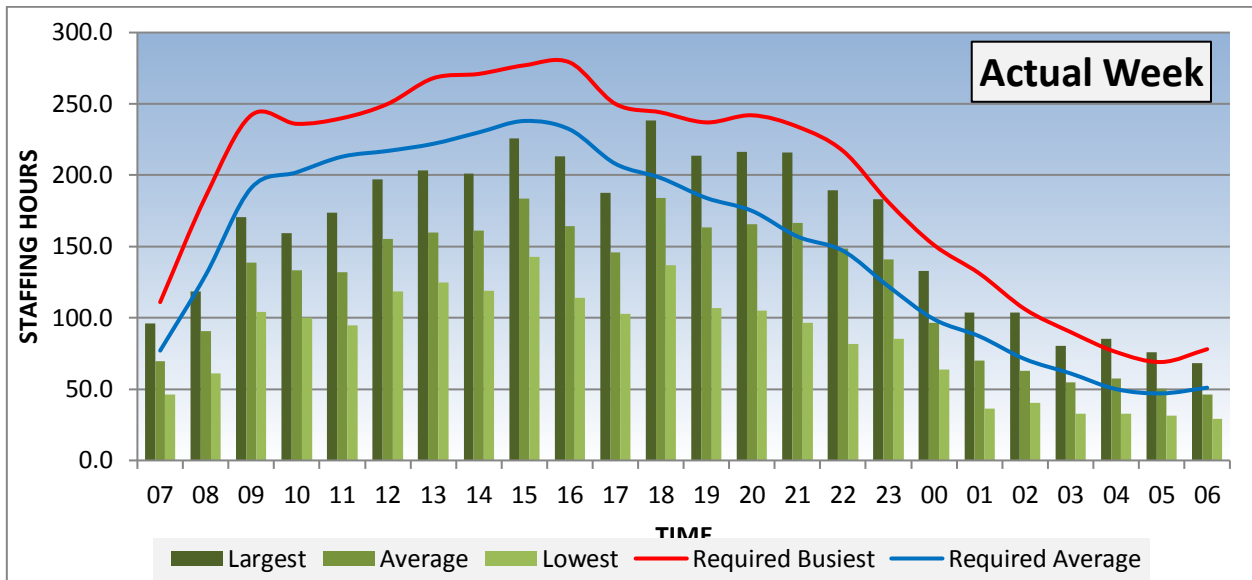
Table 12 indicates a desired staffing level to achieve current 999 and 101 targets. The variation between our maximum staffing and minimum staffing is small and all three staffing measures are at least above the average requirement.

Table 12: Ideal Week



The real data for the week for the Jan '17 to Mar '17 period is as follows:

Table 13: Actual Week



As can be seen even the best resourced days struggle to meet just the average requirement. Average staffing levels are well below where they need to be to achieve targets. Often the lowest performance in the room comes where lowest staffing levels coincide with a busy day. When this occurs we can be 20 to 30 staff short of what would be required to hit targets.

The staffing requirements for the call handling side of the room have been combined with the rest of the staffing requirements across the room, radio staffing, annual leave, sickness etc. This informs an overall staffing requirement for the control room. This work has modelled that to meet the current performance targets, our FTE would need to be 357 staff. This would be a substantial rise in the establishment, by 62 staff. Based on an average cost of a PCRO, (LC5 at £34 849.66) this would equate to an additional costs of £2.16 million.

An increase in staffing of this magnitude could not be accommodated in the current centre. At peak times more desks than are available would be needed for call handling. The cost and logistical constraints that are self-evident mean that it is vital that the department aggressively develops channel shift, reduction of waste and failure demand, and improves IT systems.

SYSTEMS

There have been a number of ICT challenges which have affected our systems over the period covered by this report. The faults include, but are not restricted to, the following systems:

- AVAYA ACD
- ICCS
- General Telephone Lines
- Networks
- Wallboards
- NICE audio recording

As an example, during March '17 there were 11 instances of technical instability which resulted in approximately 15 hours of fall-back working. This will have a significantly detrimental effect on room performance.

Looking forward there are a number of changes on the horizon to various systems within the room which have the potential to improve performance:

- ICCS configuration to accommodate the South Pod Trial
- Geographic call routing
- Smart STORM
- Planet replacement project
- Increased focus on Voiceless Deployment and Samsung / Status messaging usage

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

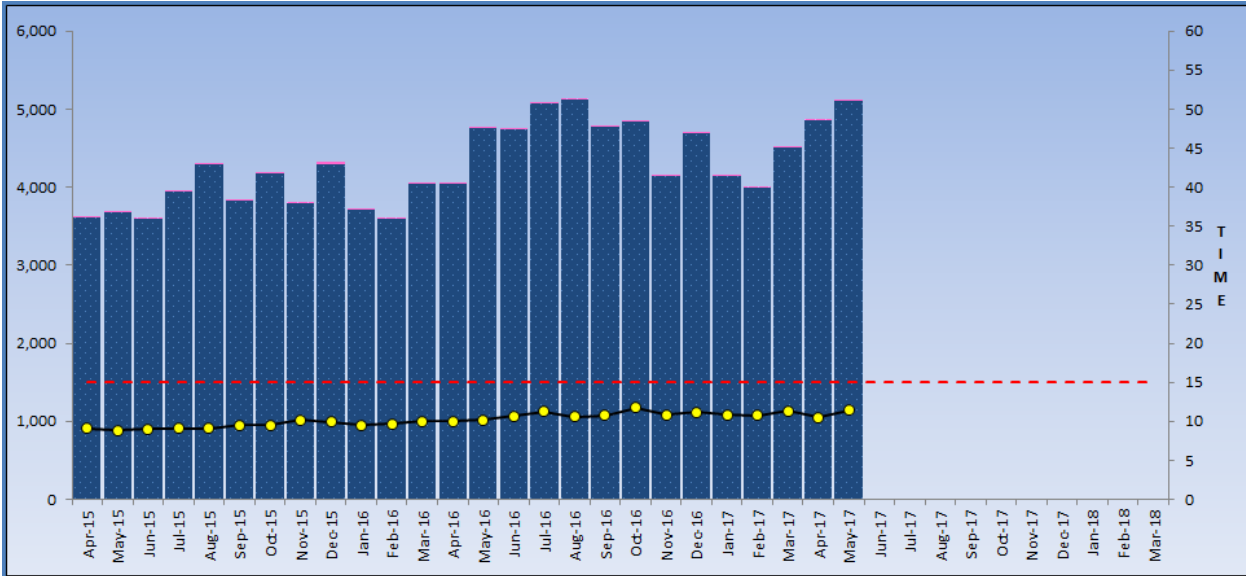
- **Demand** – Whilst overall call demand remains steady, the time it takes us to deal with this is still rising. This means our actual volume of work is still increasing.
- **Capability** – Overall working practices compliance within the room is good. There is a significant percentage of inexperienced staff in the centre but they are being progressed in a swift development process to increase resilience.
- **Capacity** – The volume of call handling staff available is not sufficient to service our performance targets. When the overall FTE figures for the centre are compared to the desired performance level there is a significant shortfall. Based on current trends and complexity of risk and threat it is likely this shortfall will always be felt in the call handling side of the room and the answers are much more complex than simply increasing the establishment. Indeed other improvements around IT systems, waste demand, and staff experience profile should be sought before any increase in establishment is recommended.
- **Systems** – There are clearly still some significant instabilities with several of our core systems which negatively affect performance and are not compatible with the demands of an emergency 24x7 control room environment. However work is on-going to develop existing systems and introduce new products and processes to support staff.

3.5 ANCILLARY DATA

Emergency Response Times

The Constabulary has continued to respond to emergency incidents well within the 15 minute measure that is considered good performance.

Table 14: Emergency Calls: Response Times



Attendance

The department has continued to show strong performance in effective attendance management and long term reduction in sickness.

Table 15: Contact Management Attendance 2015 - Apr 2016

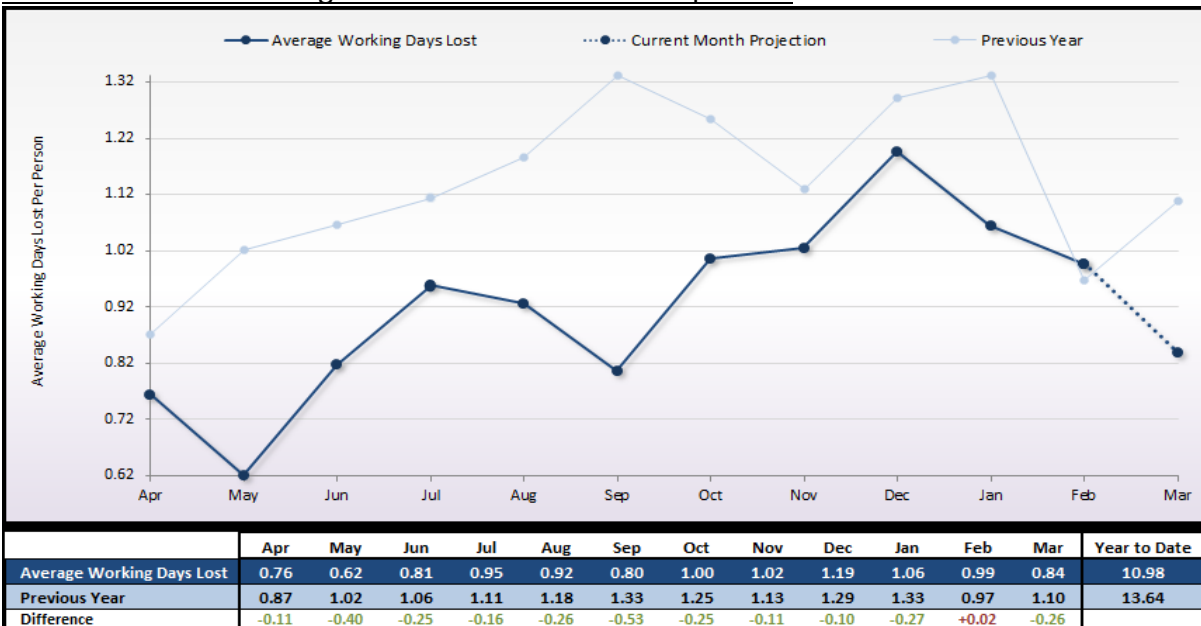


Table 16: Contact Management Attendance Apr 2016 – Current

