



REPORT TO:	STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
DATE:	21ST NOVEMBER 2019
TITLE:	CONTACT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT
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1. Issue for Consideration

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to the performance of the Contact Management Department of Lancashire Constabulary for the period July to September 2019.

2. Recommendation

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

3. Background

This report will provide an update on the latest call performance and significant organisational developments in Contact Management for the quarter July – September 2019.

Section 4 provides an update on significant programmes of work within the Force Control Room (FCR). Most notably, this will include the status of the planned decant and refurbishment of the FCR in 2020/21; plus an update on planned Police Communications Room Operator (PCRO) recruitment scheduled for 2019-20

Section 5 provides an update on the performance within the FCR across a number of key 999 and 101 call performance metrics.

Section 6 provides a brief overview of a number of other important, predominantly Information Communications Technology (ICT) work streams that will have significant current, or future impact on the FCR.

4. Overview of Key Developments

a. Refurbishment of the FCR during 2020/21

Since the last Strategic Scrutiny meeting, work has intensified to complete the preparatory work required to decant and refurbish the FCR during 2020/21. The key developments during this quarter are as follows:

- The Decant Governance Board chaired by Chief Superintendent Procter has met on a number of occasions, facilitated by the dedicated British Telecom Lancashire Services (BTLS) decant project manager. A representative of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a standing invitation to the board to monitor progress. Given the high profile nature of the decant and wider force impact it has been agreed that Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Lawson will chair future board meetings approaching and during the decant phase.
- The high-level timeline for the refurbishment is that the decant of the vast majority of staff from the main FCR to the temporary communications rooms (Burnley, Preston and HQ) will commence in January 2020, with staff returning to the refurbished FCR in early 2021.
- Under the direction of the Decant Governance Board, the project delivery team are currently undertaking a considerable amount of structured engagement and consultation work with FCR staff. The focus of this engagement is centred on a number of issues including:
 - Finalising which of the temporary communications rooms (Burnley, Preston and HQ) staff will work from during the decant. This includes managing a wide range of staff welfare / wellbeing considerations combined with the operational requirement for an even distribution of staff skill sets; ensuring each location is largely self-sufficient during decant.
 - The technical sequencing of the decant, including ensuring there is appropriate business continuity and technical resilience within the core ICT infrastructure that supports Contact Management throughout all stages of the phased decant.
 - Extensive testing of all the ICT equipment (mainly telephony and replacement desktop computers) in the decant locations.
 - Mapping and understanding the interdependencies that the decant has with other Contact Management and wider organisational ICT change programmes of work.

The summary position is that although a challenging and complex undertaking, the decant remains on track to commence in December. The high level plan is that certain support functions will move out of the FCR to their decant locations prior to Christmas, with the main groups of staff leaving the FCR from late January onwards.

b. Force Control Room PCRO Staffing, training and recruitment 2019/20 / Management restructure / Job Evaluation of Contact Management roles

The FCR continues to recruit PCROs to maintain a staff establishment of 345 PCRO Full-time Equivalent (FTE). In order to maintain this level there has been an intake of 40 PCROs in September 2019, initially taking the staffing establishment slightly over strength to 353 PCRO FTEs. However, the staffing projections indicate that by the time the new intake complete their training and commence working in the FCR in November the PCRO strength will be approximately 345 FTEs. This is due to turnover of the staff within the department. This is a positive position as it means that the department is commencing decant with a full staffing establishment.

Whilst the FCR is split across three sites the decant operating model is finely balanced in terms of the required skill sets (call taking, facilitating and radio dispatching) in each location. There have been discussions between Contact Management SMT and the Chief Officer Team regarding staffing resilience across the decant locations and it has been agreed that so far as is practicable in the circumstances the FCR will aim to maintain an available for duty operational strength of 345 FTE throughout decant.

At present, the intention is to recruit an intake of 30 PCROs in April 2020, followed by two smaller intakes of around 20 PCROs later in the year. The size of these intakes will be adjusted to take account of predicted versus actual turnover of PCROs over the coming months.

5. **Performance Update**

A number of factors have had an impact on the performance of the FCR during this quarter for both 999 and 101 performance. This most significant being:

- During September and early October during the first phase of a planned upgrade to the ICCS (Integrated Communications Control System) the FCR suffered from significant levels technical instability. This instability resulted in a number of periods of unplanned disruption, during which 'fall back' procedures were implemented. Following lengthy collaborative investigation between Lancashire and the ICCS supplier Capita, the root cause of the instability was identified and addressed.

Whilst it is difficult to precisely quantify the impact on performance this instability created, it undoubtedly adversely impacted Septembers 999 and 101 performance. This is predominantly due to the limited telephony functionality available to staff when the ICCS is unavailable, hindering their ability to efficiently manage call demand in the FCR. Positively the first phase of the ICCS upgrade has now been successfully completed and this has resulted in improved levels of stability and resilience, which positions the FCR well for decant in 2020.

- PCRO staffing levels in the FCR have been challenging during this quarter as the department was carrying a significant number of PCRO vacancies during the high demand summer months. The recent intake of 40 PCROs in September will address this issue when these staff complete their initial training in November and become operational in the FCR.

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- Sustained high levels of demand during 2019, combined with the department carrying PCRO vacancies throughout the majority of the year has resulted in continued significant monthly overtime spend. For the financial year 2019/20, this has averaged £34K p/m. When broken down this equates to an average of £18K p/m spend on PCROs and £16K p/m to police officers who have been trained to use FCR systems and 'guest' to cover staffing gaps. This spend is highly scrutinised to ensure that it represents value for money, the focus being on ensuring all opportunities are being taken to cover staffing shortages via other means prior to the payment of overtime. However, as has always been the case in the FCR the payment of overtime is a critical way of ensuring that acceptable levels of service are maintained.
- Preparing the department for decant in early 2020 has created significant pressure on the staffing model as the department has needed to accelerate its programme of upskilling PCROs to undertake the radio dispatch and facilitator role. The main driver for this process being the need for each decant location to be self-sufficient in all the skill sets as the ability to move staff between the three PODs during a shift is not available during decant.
- Alongside the upskilling process, ensuring the three decant communications rooms and the supporting Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure is resilient and fit for purpose is requiring a comprehensive programme of testing. In order to facilitate this testing it has been necessary to abstract a significant number of PCROs over the last few months. The testing has been scheduled in such a way that it is done during lower demand to minimise the impact on 999 and 101 service levels. Whilst it would clearly be preferable to use Constabulary staff who are not performing key roles in the FCR, it is unfortunately the case that the nature of the testing means that only experienced PCROs have the necessary skill set to ensure this essential work is completed to the required standard.

Call Performance – 999 Emergency Calls

Emergency calls remain a primary focus for the FCR. Whilst it is recognised that there is a correlation between 101-call performance and the demand on the 999 service, the FCR understandably continues to prioritise answering 999 emergency calls above any other type of demand.

Previous scrutiny reports have included a breakdown supplied by BT on the number of 'long wait' 999 calls (these being 999 calls presented to the FCR and not answered within 2 minutes) of both Lancashire Constabulary and police forces of a similar size. Unfortunately BT have advised the force that it will no longer be supplying performance data that relates to other police forces. This section is therefore not be included in this and future scrutiny reports.

Key Points: 999 demand and service levels

- As the Commissioner will recall the Constabulary reported in previous Strategic Scrutiny meetings that Lancashire 999 demand continues to rise. This reflects anecdotal feedback that the same trend is being seen in many other police forces

- As per the trend we have experienced all year, this year has a higher volume than last year. Overall since Jan – Sept we have been presented with 12.6% more calls than the same period last year, this equates to 23,158 actual 999 calls. In September we had an extra 22% of demand presented than the previous September. For the 3-month period July to Sept, it equates to 15% more demand than the same period last year, this equates to 10,472 actual 999 calls.
- It continues to be that at present no single underlying reason for this trend of increasing 999 demand has been identified. At present Contact Management and Corporate Development are working in partnership with HPE (Hewlett Packard Enterprise) on a review of telephony demand into the FCR. This study has already produced some interesting insights into current demand patterns and trends (both 999 and 101); particularly around ‘unlogged’ demand that consumes a considerable amount of PCRO time. The strategy to operationalise the key findings of this innovative research will be outlined in future scrutiny papers.
- Throughout the scrutiny period 999 abandonment rate has averaged approximately 1.0% of all emergency calls for service. This level of abandonment rate represents good performance for a critical area of FCR business. As per the commentary at the start of this section a number of factors have impacted on September performance levels in this area.
 - Performance for 999 service levels (calls answered in less than 10 seconds) are broadly similar to the corresponding quarter in 2018. The exact breakdown with 74.9% answered within target in 2019 versus 75.6% in 2018. For the quarter the average time to answer a 999 is also marginally higher at 8.8 seconds in 2019 versus 8.5 seconds in 2018.

a. Call Performance - Non Emergency 101 Calls

Non-emergency calls remain a priority for the FCR. As has been reported previously, achieving the locally agreed target of answering 101s within 40 seconds remains extremely challenging. As with 999-call performance, a proportion of these difficulties can be attributed to the changing nature of demand entering the FCR.

The issues leading to increases in call handling times are a combination of a number of factors. Firstly, as is the case for the police service nationally the complexity of the demand within calls for service has been increasing for a number of years, e.g. more calls with mental health considerations. Secondly, in 2017/18 the Constabulary had challenging Child Protection and Crime and Data Integrity inspections by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This led to a greater emphasis on recording and risk assessing vulnerability on a significant number of incident logs. Thirdly, in November 2018 the transition to the Northgate Connect system for crime and investigations led to significantly longer average call handling times. However, positively the increase in call handling times post implementation of the Connect crime and investigation modules now appears to have reversed, with average call handling times returning to pre November 2018

levels. It is felt this reduction can largely be attributable to staff becoming familiar with the system.

It should be noted that call-handling time is the total time it takes to deal with a call, not just the 'talk time'. It is often the case that after a call has concluded additional checks must be made and updates will be added to the incident log before a PCRO is free to take their next call; this is known as 'wrap up', or 'not ready' time. The inevitable impact of longer call handling times is a reduction in available capacity in the FCR to answer new 999 / 101 calls for service.

101 service levels during this quarter have been challenging for the many of the same reasons articulated earlier in this section. The following are additional factors that have impacted on 101 performance during this quarter:

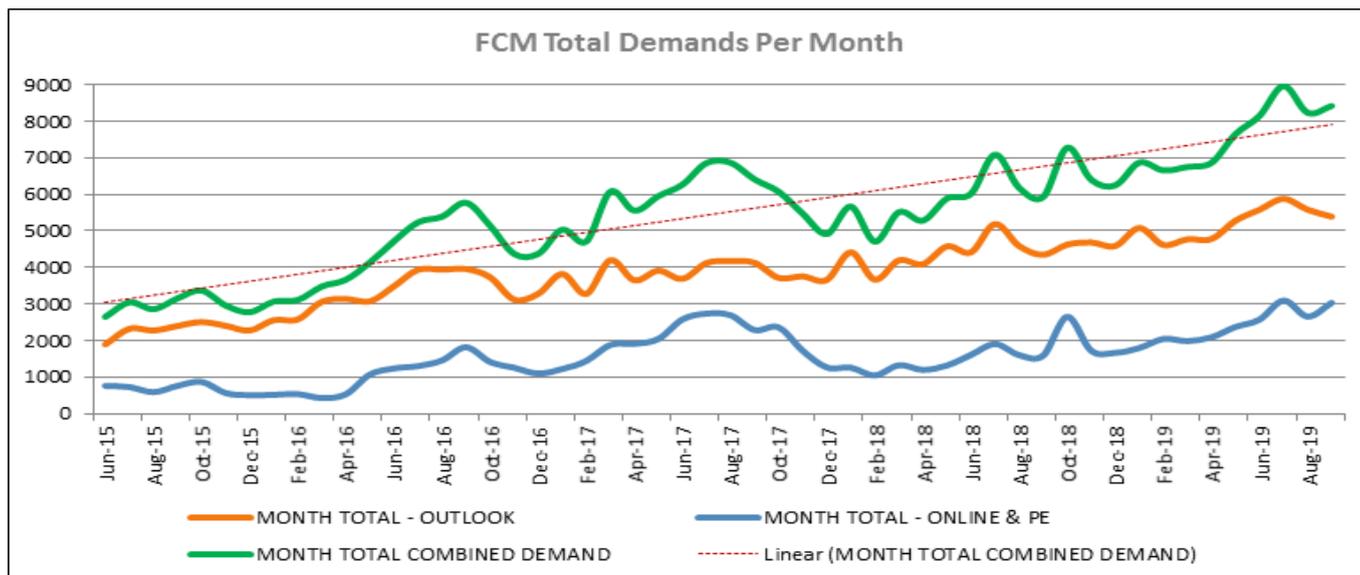
- PCRO experience levels – as was highlighted in the last report the levels of inexperience in the FCR remain a significant issue. At present 37.6% of the operational PCRO establishment have under 2 years' service. 45.9% have under 3 years' service. This position of high levels of inexperience in the FCR will not be improved when the 40 PCROs who started training in September become operational in mid-November. The operational need to constantly upskill new PCROs in facilitating and radio dispatch, to allow the FCR to deliver all of its critical functions is a resource intensive process in terms of the level of abstractions required during the training process for these highly skilled roles.
- POD Overflow – Since pod go-live in September 2018, 101 calls have been deliberately held within the geographic pod where the call originated. The intention being that a localised service is provided to the caller, rather than the previous more generic approach. Following a period of evaluation the current overflow time has been set at 7 minutes, i.e. if a 101 call is not answered within its originating pod within 7 minutes, it will then become available to the two other pods. The FCR management team feel this is the optimum time to deliver a local service, whilst still providing the benefits of a centralised FCR. Clearly, at periods of high demand this approach will on occasion lead to an increase in 101 waiting times.

Key Points 101 performance

- During this quarter 101 performance has been challenging, the context is as per the earlier commentary on issues hindering delivery of both 101 and 999 performance at the start of this section.
- Overall demand levels for 101 in this quarter are a similar volume to the corresponding quarter in last year. The total calls in 2019 being 220,652 Vs 225,778 in 2018. This represents a change of -2.3%
- The abandonment rate for 101 in this quarter was also similar to the corresponding quarter in 2018 (40.1% in 2018 Vs 43.6% in 2019)

- The 101 service level (answering calls within 40 seconds) for this quarter was lower than the same quarter in 2019 (38.4% Vs 42.3%).
- The average time to answer 101 calls was significantly higher in this quarter at 204 seconds in 2019 Vs 157 seconds in 2018.

b. Online Demand



Key Points: On-line demand

As has been reported at previous Strategic Scrutiny meetings, online demand continues to rise on a monthly basis; this mirrors the trend being reported by many other police forces.

The current approach to online demand is reactive, as opposed to proactive. With the exception of recorded messages, where members of the public are waiting on 101 explaining the option to report crimes and incidents online, there has been minimal marketing of our digital services.

Dealing with online demand is not factored into the staffing establishment of the FCR. At present, the demand is dealt with via daily abstraction of PCROs from the FCR. The requirement for a significant number of staff on a daily basis to service digital demand is having an adverse impact on other areas of core business, most notably call taking.

Maintaining the current approach to managing online demand reactively and via the use of staff abstracted from the call taking PCRO establishment is not desirable in the medium to long term given a number of factors, the most significant being:

- The growth of online contact as a preferred channel of communication with Lancashire Constabulary
- The implication of managing anticipated increases in online contact the Constabulary's

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planned migration to the national 'Single Online Home' website in 2020/21 will create

- The impact of implementing the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Policing Vision 2025, which strongly advocates the police service increasing its capability and capacity to provide digital channels of communication
- Providing capacity to implement the NPCC decision to adopt recent European Union legislation that from 2021 online requests for emergency police assistance must be prioritised to the same level as telephony requests for assistance, in effect all police forces must be capable of providing an online 999 service

Having reviewed the current arrangement it has been agreed with the Chief Officer Team that a business case for establishing a permanent dedicated Digital Team based in the FCR will be prepared. Once completed this will be presented to the Chief Officer Team for consideration.

c. Activity being taken to address 999 / 101 performance

Delivering high levels of performance for 999s and 101 calls against the agreed targets remains a high priority for the FCR. The following activity is taking place or is planned to improve performance:-

i. Short term

- Payment of overtime to FCR staff and 'contingency list' police officers (police officers who have received call taking training) to cover staff gaps during the peak leave period.
- Daily scrutiny by SMT of staffing levels in the FCR to ensure that most effective use is made of available staff.
- Dedicated 999 agents to ensure acceptable service levels of maintained during peak periods of demand.
- Minimising non-essential PCRO staffing abstractions from the FCR during the peak leave period.
- Collaborative work with Divisions and Departments to deal with demand in the most efficient manner.

ii. Medium term

- Recent recruitment of 40 PCROs in September, this will be followed by a further intake of 30 PCROs in spring 2020.
- Complete review of the PCRO recruitment process. The terms of reference being; to ensure workforce representation is inbuilt into the process and streamlining the process without a loss of quality. Work is currently ongoing with Human Resources and Workforce Representation to make significant changes for the forthcoming process that will support the April 2020 PCRO intake.
- Ongoing review of management / supervisory structures to ensure that there is clear alignment with FCR purpose and objectives. A systems thinking methodology has been followed throughout this process.
- Continued review of best practice in other police forces to assess whether there are opportunities for improved demand management in the FCR.
- Phased introduction of EBIT (Evidence Based Investigation Tool) to facilitate an evidence based approach to the allocation of police resources to the investigation of crime in the FCR.
- A well governed sustainable structured approach to upskilling training in

the department that reduces the lead time for staff to be trained in facilitating and dispatching.

iii. Long term

- Rebuilding of the FCR in 2020/21 to maximise the benefits of POD working and create opportunities for improved collaborative working both within Lancashire Constabulary and other agencies.
- Upgrading of key ICT systems including ICCS, Storm and Connect to facilitate improved service to the public and more efficient and user friendly core ICT systems for FCR staff.
- Implementation of a sustainable and fit for purpose model for resourcing increased levels of digital demand.
- Operationalising the recommendations of the ongoing Hewlett Packard voice analytics review of demand in the FCR to ensure that inappropriate/unlogged demand is significantly reduced. This will involve the introduction of greater levels of automation prior to calls being answered by PCROs. Scoping work for how this can be technically achieved has recently commenced, future scrutiny reports will provide updates on progress. Additionally Ch Supt Ian Dawson has used the initial findings of the Hewlett Packard review to inform ongoing national discussions around the retendering of the 101 service to include an enhanced 'digital 101' offer.

6. **FCR key ICT work streams update**

The FCR is now at a critical point in relation to a number of significant ICT updates that are required for decant, or will enhance current working practices. The most significant updates are:

Preston fall back communications room / remedial work at Burnley and 'Old Southern' communications rooms

All three sites are required as part of the decant of the FCR in 2020. Preston is a brand new control room and in the long term will become the force fall back facility in the event of the HQ FCR being unavailable; it will also double up as the Constabulary's silver room. Burnley and 'Old Southern Communications Room' have always remained communications rooms and require remedial work to make them fit for purpose for decant.

The current position is that work on all three sites is progressing in line with the agreed timeline. It is anticipated that all locations will be complete prior Christmas and be available for decant in early 2020.

SMARTSTORM upgrade

This is the upgrade of our current command and control system, Storm. The upgrade has been subject to careful planning over the last 12 months and offers a number of opportunities for improved service delivery and management of vulnerability due to the integration of the THRIVE (Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability) policing model for managing vulnerability.

Good progress has been made since the last scrutiny update and an incremental roll out of Smart Storm is now underway in the FCR, this is accompanied by a training programme that will allow staff to maximise the opportunities the upgraded system facilitates.

Capita ICCS (Integrated Command and Control System) upgrade

This is a major project for the FCR in 2019/20, with successful completion of the significant upgrade being a prerequisite for the decant of the FCR in 2020-21. The delivery of the upgrade is a significant programme of work and is governed by the 'ICCS board'. The main benefits the FCR and the public of Lancashire will be:

- Implementation of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) this allows 101 callers to know their place in the queue and estimated wait time. This is scheduled to be available in the first quarter of 2020.

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- Ability for members of the public calling from outside Lancashire to select the geographic areas their call relates too. This will then route the call to the relevant pod in the FCR.
- Improved stability and resilience of the ICCS and telephony system in the FCR on a day-to-day basis (this has been an issue in the FCR since the move to the new single contact centre in 2013). In addition there will be a fully mirrored hot standby ICCS at the force Disaster Recovery, significantly improving the current arrangements.
- The upgraded ICCS will allow the constabulary to meet its national obligations around control room readiness for the transition from Airwave to ESN that is scheduled to take place in the coming years (no date for the Lancs transition is available).