REPORT TO : SCRUTINY MEETING
REPORT BY: SUPERINTENDENT RICHARD ROBERTSHAW
TITLE: UPDATE ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT

Summary

This report sets out the update on the Contact Management Department of the Constabulary for the reporting period October 2018 to December 2018.

Decision Required

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

Contact Management Update to the PCC Scrutiny Committee

This report will provide an update on the latest call performance and significant organisational developments in Contact Management for the quarter October 2018 – December 2018

Section 1 of the report provides an overview on the recent developments in the FCR (Force Control Room) structure to POD working. The section also includes an update on the current PCRO staffing levels in Contact Management.

Section 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of performance within the FCR across a number of key call performance metrics. Also explained in this section is an update on how Lancashire Constabulary compares to other police forces nationally for British Telecom 999 long wait times (these are emergency calls that BT have not been able to transfer to police forces for in excess of 2 minutes).

Section 3 of the report provides a brief overview / update of a number of other important – predominantly ICT - work streams that will have a significant future impact on the FCR over the coming 18 months.

Section 1 - Overview of key developments

POD Working Trial in FCR

The transition to temporary PODs took place on the 25th September in the FCR. There were many changes associated with the transition to POD working. However, the most significant change that occurred on the day was the change from global routing of 999 and 101 calls, to geographical routing of 999 and 101 calls into the three divisional areas within Lancashire. As was reported in the last scrutiny report implementing these changes had no initial negative impact on service delivery to the public, with service levels for 101s and 999s remaining static at pre POD levels. Given the scale of the change in the FCR to implement POD working this was an encouraging start. Positively in the intervening period since go live there have been improvements across a range of metrics, particularly in relation to 999 call performance.

A full POD evaluation will be completed in March 2019, which will evaluate 6 months' worth of data. The evaluation will also make a recommendation on whether the POD working approach has delivered sufficient benefits in pilot form (within the constraints of the current FCRs physical layout) to warrant the disruption and expense of rebuilding the FCR in 2019/20. This evaluation will be accompanied by POD trial briefings to both the Chief Officer Team and the PCC, these are scheduled to take place in mid February.
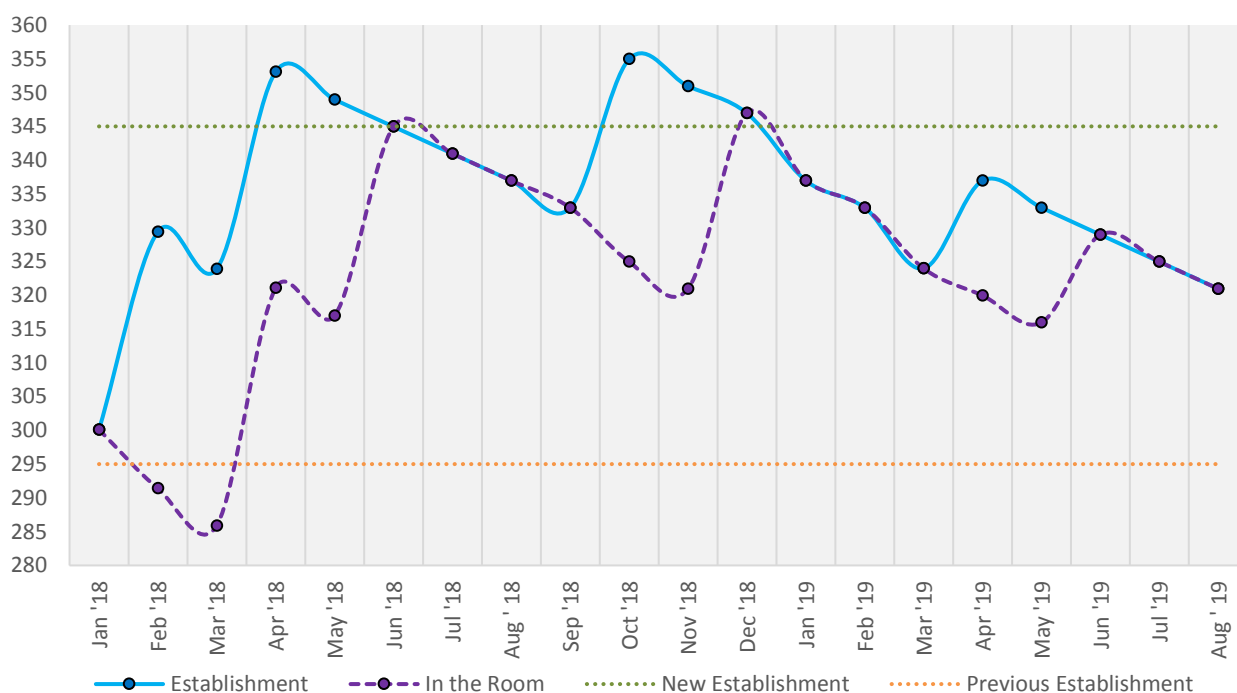
Force Control Room PCRO Staffing Levels / Recruitment

Recruitment of PCROs (Police Control Room Operators) continues to be a priority area for Contact Management. In 2017 as part of the investment in front line-policing services, the PCC approved an uplift in Contact Management; this increased the PCRO establishment by 50 from 295 to 345FTEs. In order to achieve

this new budgeted establishment it has been necessary to recruit several large intakes (between 30 and 40 per intake) of PCROs in 2017/18. The most recent intake of 30 PCROs started training in September 2018; they have been operational in the room from early / mid-December. This has been the first time the actual establishment of PCROs in the FCR has reached the new 345FTE level.

However, it should be noted that it takes a new PCRO approximately two and a half years to be fully competent in the role (call taking, facilitating and dispatching). Therefore, whilst the increase in staffing is greatly assisting in managing the demand on the FCR, there is currently a large amount of departmental effort going into training and mentoring a considerable proportion of FCR staff, many of whom have less than two years' service with Lancashire Constabulary. Due to this training requirement, it will be a considerable length of time before the full benefits of the increased staffing establishment are fully realised.

The below chart provides an overview of how the PCRO staffing in the FCR has been incrementally increased since September 2017.

Aligning the new staff onto teams within PODs has been achieved by a combination of gap analysis, staff preferences and local knowledge of the POD geographic areas (as was the case with existing staff when they were separated into PODs). Pleasingly the departmental strategy of positive action and targeted recruitment from different geographic areas (particularly east Lancashire), has resulted in the recent intakes being broadly representative of the general population of Lancashire.
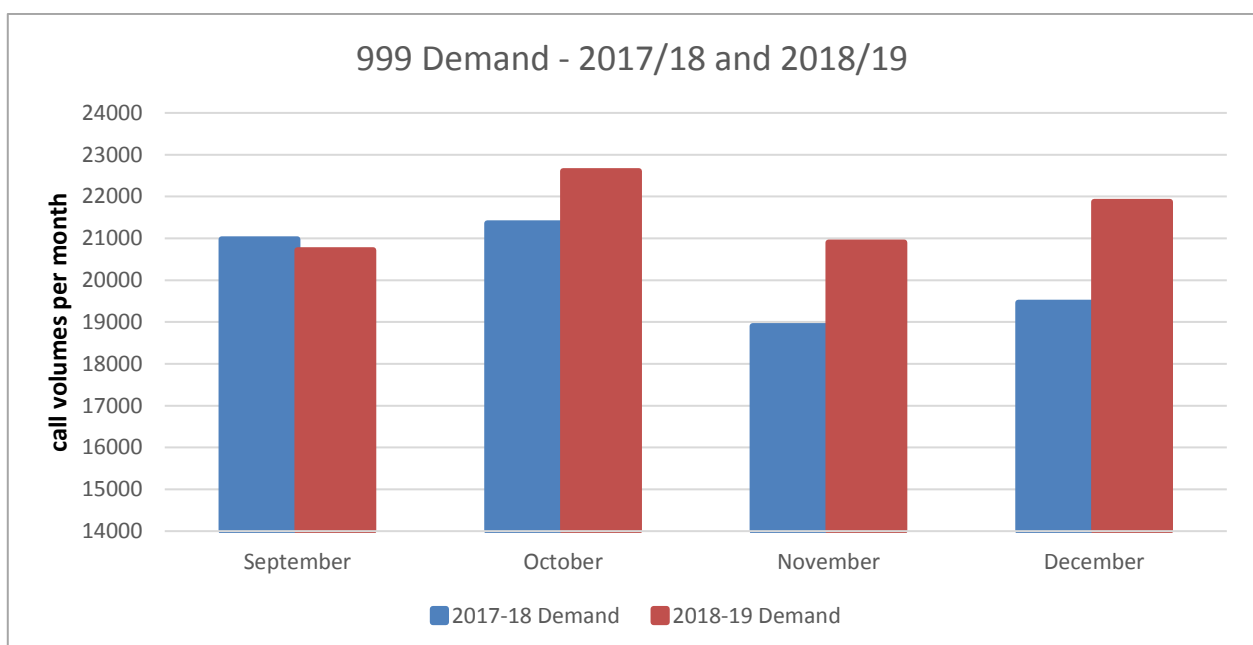
Two new recruit intakes are planned in 2019, the first course is planned in April with the second course commencing late Autumn. At this time the planning assumption for both intakes is that they will be 20 PCROs. This level of recruitment has been calculated as sufficient to keep the FCR at full establishment. Recruitment of PCRO intakes in 2020 will be challenging due to the lack of a training facility if the full decant is agreed during 2019/20. However, contingency planning is taking place to ensure that appropriate training facilities are available during the decant as not recruiting PCROs for in excess of a year would be problematic in terms of maintaining a staffing establishment capable of meeting FCR demand.

Section 2 - FCR performance update

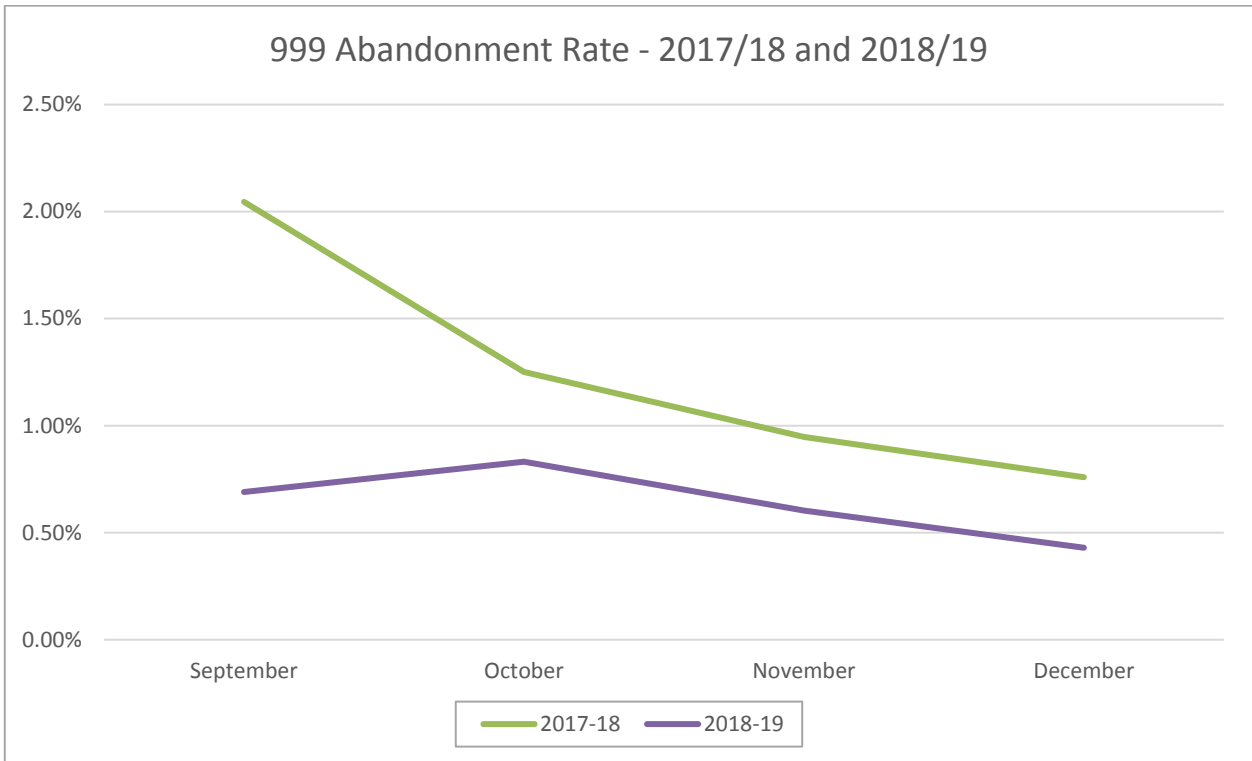## Call Performance - Emergency Calls Summary

Emergency calls remain one of the 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 continues to prioritise answering 999 emergency calls above any other type of demand.

The following graphs provide a comparison of how FCR has performed across a range of metrics for this scrutiny period (Oct 2018 – Dec 2018) versus the same period in 2017. September data has also been included as this was the month[1] that the FCR transitioned to POD working. Positively all the data in the following graphs for this scrutiny period show improvement in 999 performance across a range of metrics.
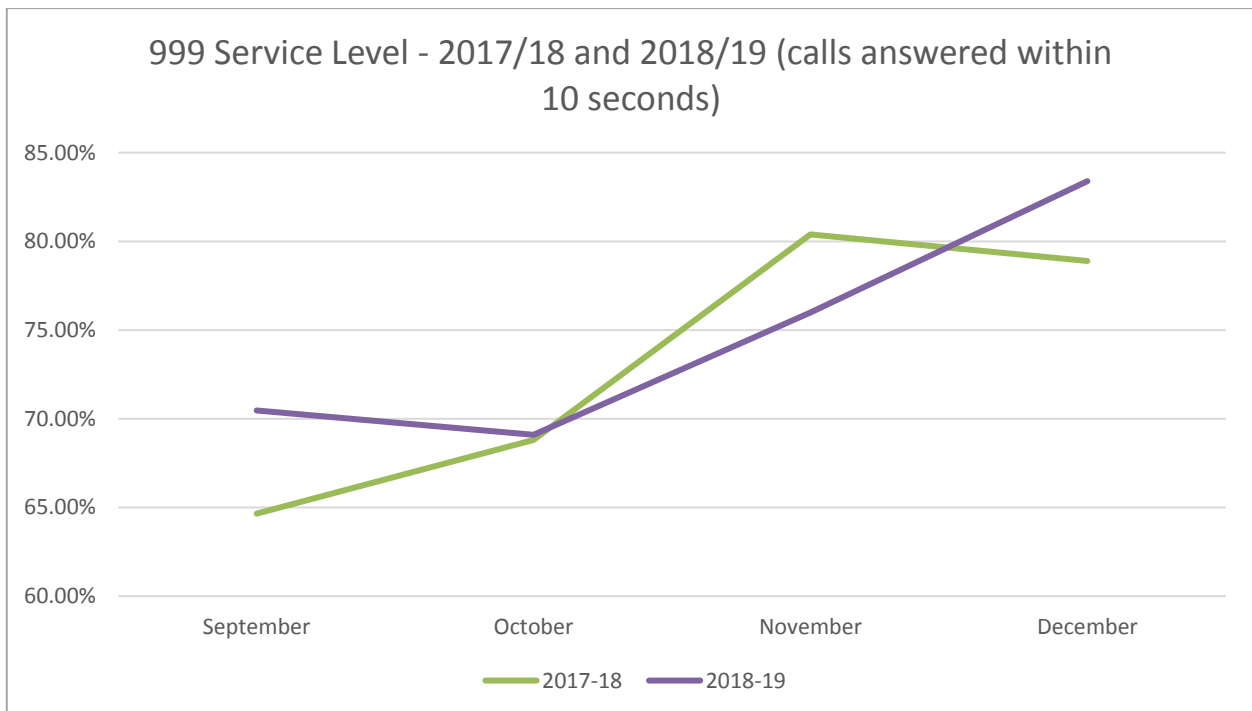

- o The last quarter of 2018 has seen the FCR dealing with a larger amount of 999 calls compared to the previous year this trend is continuing into 2019. There has been an 11.6% rise in demand overall across the quarter.
- o From October onwards, the 999 demand has been increasing month-by-month (rising from a 5.84% increase in October up to a 12.40% increase for the month of December 2018).
- o A high-level review of the increases in 999 calls has not identified a single cause of the increase in 999 calls across the period.
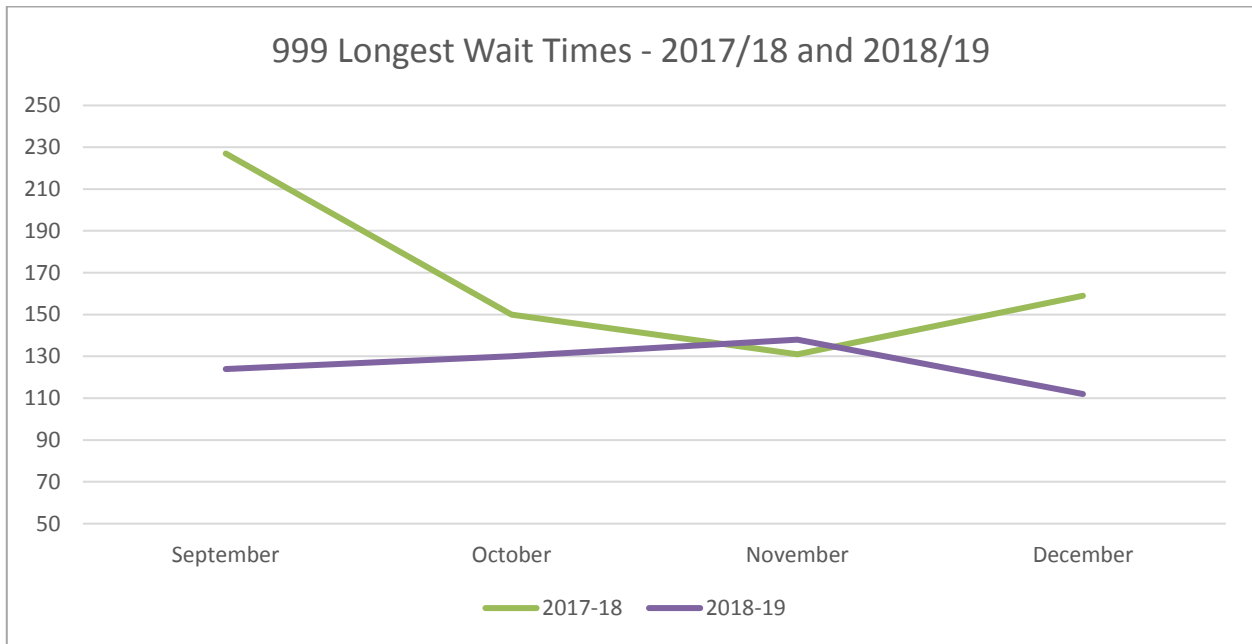
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[1] POD transition took place on the 25th of September 2018

999 Abandonment Rate - 2017/18 and 2018/19

- o Despite the increase in 999 demand the abandonment on remains very low, and is consistently lower than last year.
- o The abandonment rate was extremely variable in 2017-18. With the introduction of PODs and the increase in PCROs it has proven to be more stable and consistent with far less significant variations on a day to day basis.
- o It is important to note that for the majority of the reporting period this improved performance has been delivered with below establishment level, with the 345 PCRO FTE being achieved in early / mid-December when the final large intake of 30 PCROs transitioned from training into the FCR.

999 Service Level - 2017/18 and 2018/19 (calls answered within 10 seconds)

- o Our 999 service level was on a downward trend prior to POD go-live, since then it has climbed or maintained each month. The FCRs average service level prior to PODs was around 70%, it is now averaging around 85% and stable. Our service level in the reporting period has improved in three of the four months when compared to last year.
- o This is despite the increase in demand. For example in December 2018 performance was 4.5% higher than the previous year, despite a 12.4% rise in demand.

999 Longest Wait Times - 2017/18 and 2018/19

Legend: 2017-18, 2018-19

- o This is not the average wait time, but the longest 'length of time' in seconds that a call waited to be answered during each month.
- o Our longest wait times on 999s (in seconds) are lower this year and have remained stable since PODs, despite dealing with the increase in 999 demand.
- o Set against the national context our performance in the number of calls that are categorised as a 'long wait call' is also extremely favourable (See below).

National Context

Detailed here is the number of BT longest wait time for 999 performance (any 999-call waiting over two minutes before it is transferred). The data below focuses on comparable sized forces with similar levels of demand. BT do not provide figures when the long waits have not exceeded 50 calls in a month, these months are represented by a white box in the below table.

Focusing on comparably sized forces gives the following data:

999 > 2 minutes	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
DEVON & CORNWALL	122	285	316	255	381	204	124	136	59
ESSEX	225	363	569	441	373	204	261	167	87
HAMPSHIRE	66	68	172	193	129	117	104	165	
HUMBERSIDE	86	177	156	85		52	50	69	75
KENT	98	60	63			59	79	73	165
LANCASHIRE	**64**	**54**	**87**	**84**		**177**			
LEICESTER	118	157	147	131	103	73	63	60	75
MERSEYSIDE	175	182	143	182	203	309	277	268	114
NORTHUMBRIA	266	459	686	416	549	508	344	203	244
SOUTH WALES	85	87	61						
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	82	242	272	129	68	51	477	604	136
THAMES VALLEY		53	224	179	131	148	131	158	

Overall Lancashire continues to perform extremely favourable in comparison with other forces in relation to the number of long wait 999's.

Call Performance - Non Emergency 101 Calls

Non-emergency calls also remain a priority for the FCR, as has been reported in previous reports achieving the current challenge of answering within 40 seconds remains an extremely challenging target. As with 999-call performance, a proportion of these difficulties can be attributed to the changing nature of demand coming into the FCR. The main issues is the complexity of the demand within the calls. This when combined with the additional safeguarding / vulnerability checks done by FCR staff (following adverse Child Protection and Crime and Data Integrity HMICFRS inspections) has led to significantly longer average call handling times. 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 will be made and updates will be added to the incident log before a PCRO is free to take their next call. The inevitable impact of longer call handling times is a reduction in available capacity in the FCR to answer new calls for service.
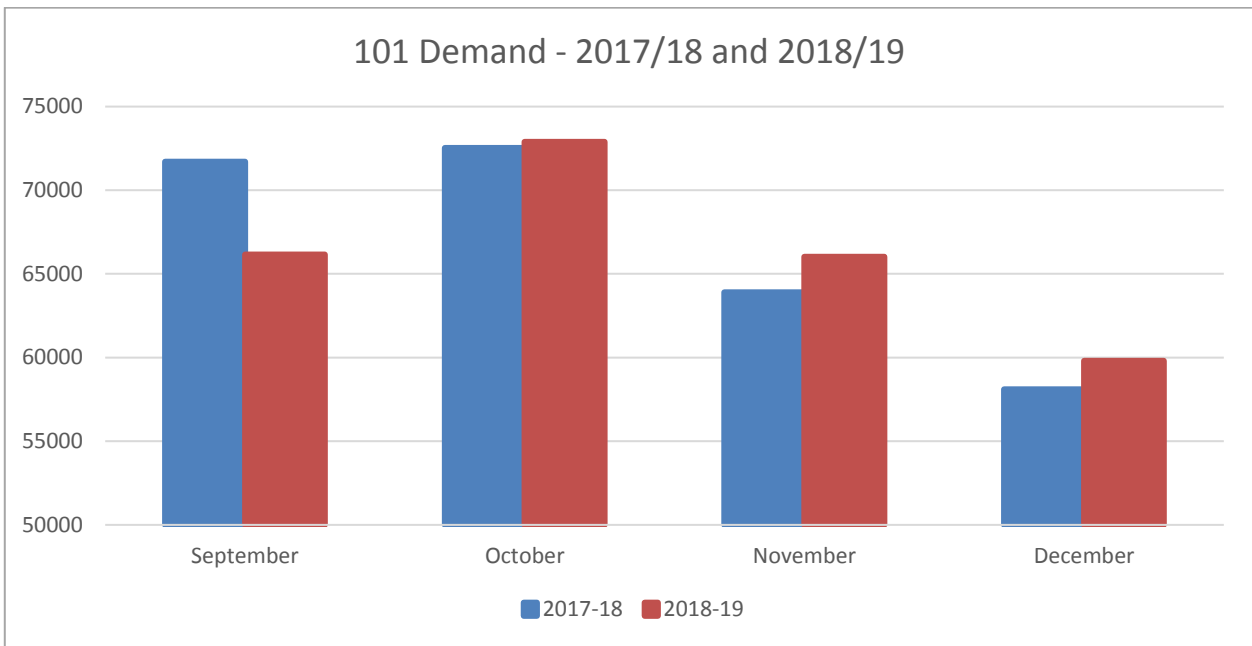
Although as has been previously reported 999s performance is an improving picture there are a number of reasons why this improved performance has not been replicated in the 101 performance metrics.

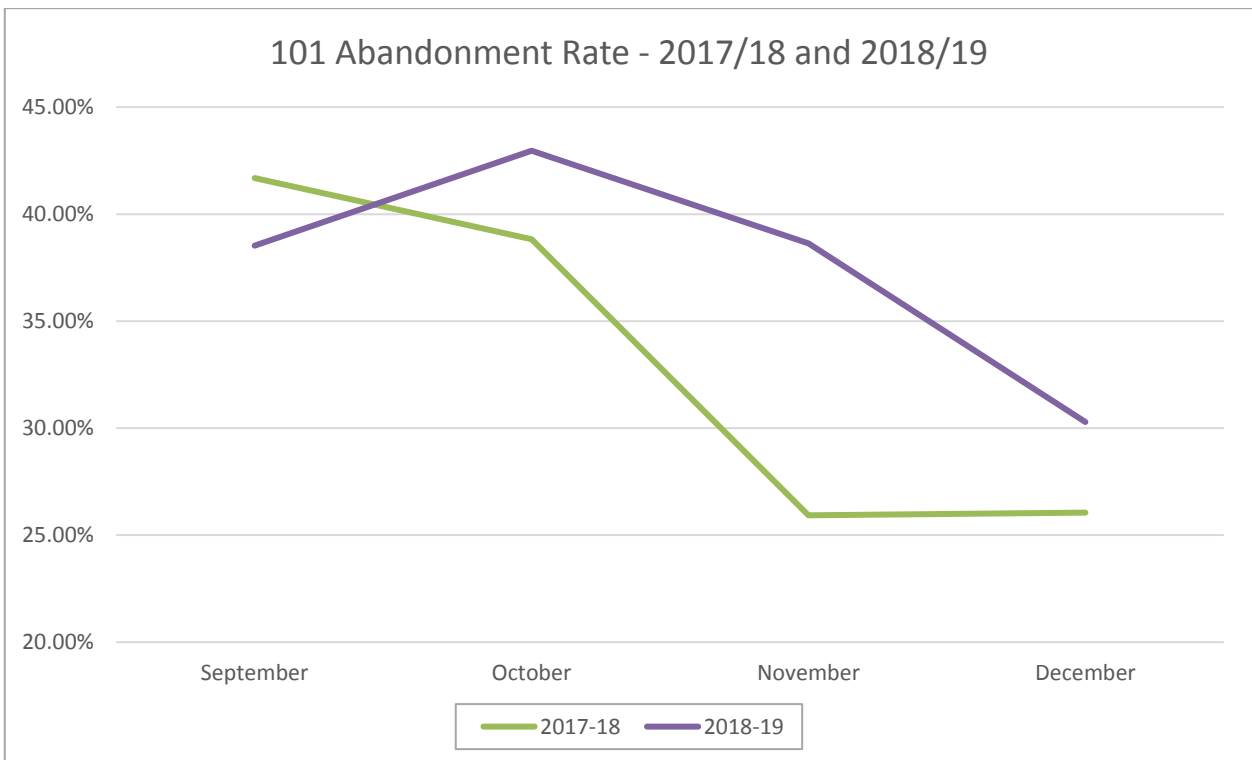The key factors limiting 101 performances are as below:

- o **Similar to 999s there has been an overall increase in 101 demand** than the previous year for the same reporting period in 2017.
- o **101 Talk Time** has increased by 11.23% (34 seconds) for this quarter. The following points provide some explanation for this increase.

- **Criming of Grade 3 and 4s** – From approximately August 2018 it has become standard practice for PCROs to enter 'Quick Crimes'[2] for all Grade 3 and Grade 4 crime-related incidents. Compliance with this requirement was driven throughout 2018 where prior to Connect go live in November 2018, over 50% of applicable crime categories were being crimed at first point of contact by the PCRO. A natural consequence of this additional work was an increase in call-handling times whilst the PCRO fully managed the caller's requirements.

- **Connect** – Phase 2 of Connect (intelligence and investigation) went live on November 25th. Since the introduction of Connect, there has been an increase in call handling time for system searches and crime inputting. We have seen a 4% increase in the average handle time. This roughly equates to approximately 560 extra hours a month (or over 23 days) on the phone per month. The FCR staff have needed to become adept at using a completely different system to the one they had gained familiarity and proficiency with over many years. Encouragingly many of the staff in the FCR are now becoming increasingly confident and adept at using Connect. To improve the position further, work is currently on going with Steria, who supply our command and control system (Storm) and Northgate (the supplier of Connect). The scope of this engagement is to see whether the time to complete a Connect Quick Crime could be considerably reduced via the automatic population of Connect with data already collected by the PCRO in Storm (at present there is a significant amount of 'double keying' of information).

- **Inexperienced Staff** – As has been reported in previous updates in 2018 there has been a large recruitment drive to bring the department up to its budgeted 345 FTE PCRO establishment (this figure being an increase of 50 on the previous 295 FTE PCRO establishment). Positively there are more PCROs in the FCR, however, this also means there are more inexperienced call-handlers who naturally take longer to handle calls. At present 36% of the PCROs have under 2 years' service and 54% have less than 3 years' of service in the FCR. This lack of experience creates a significant resource overhead not just when staff are new to the room, but also when training is scheduled for facilitating and dispatch.

- **Pod Overflow Testing** – Since POD Go-Live there has been on-going testing of the 101 call overflow times. 'Overflow' happens when calls are not answered within a certain time from within the POD the call came into. If this happens, the call will 'overflow' into the other PODs for the first available operator to answer. Initially the overflow time limit was set at 10 minutes; this was done to try to ensure each caller has the maximum chance of being answered by the POD / PCROs for their area to provide them with a localised service. The data for the first 3 months of POD working highlights that this 10-minute overflow may be too high, resulting in an unacceptably high abandonment rate. Going forwards, we will be incrementally reducing the overflow time limit until the optimum balance between a localised service and an acceptable wait time is maximised.
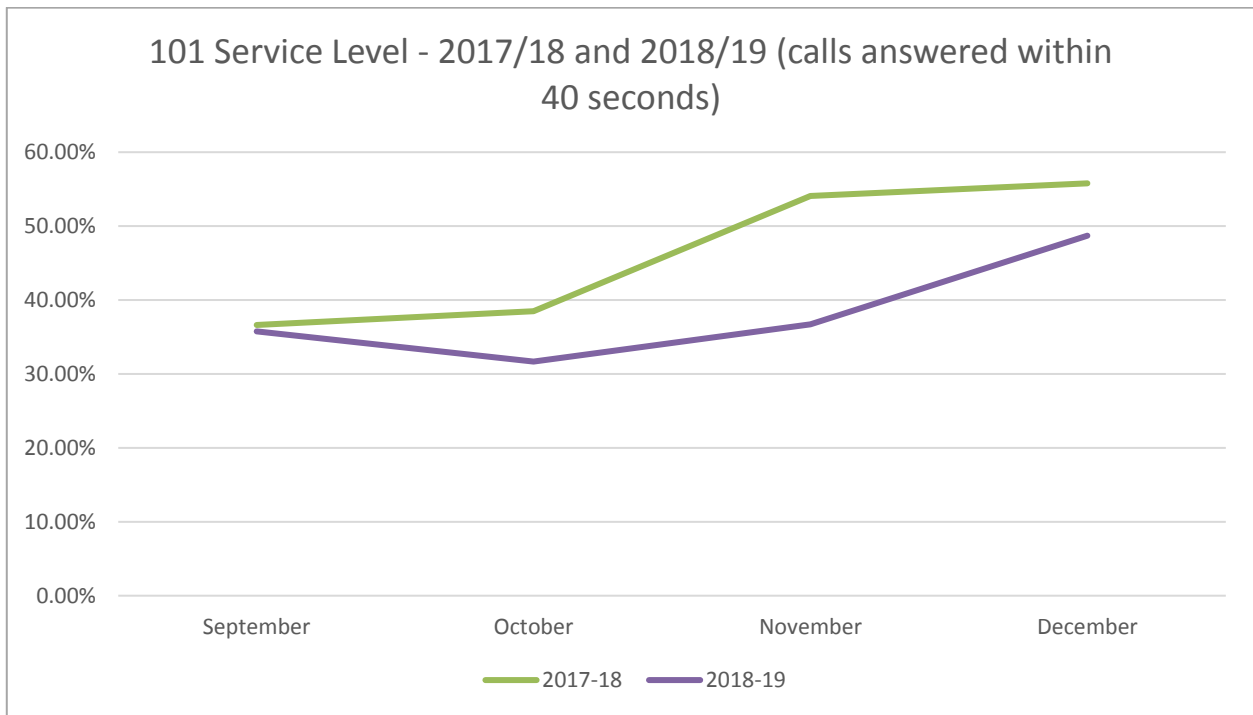
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[2] Quick crimes are an abbreviated crime report that allows the PCRO to input the basic details of a crime report. The advantage to this approach being the member of the public is provided with a crime reference number at the conclusion of their call
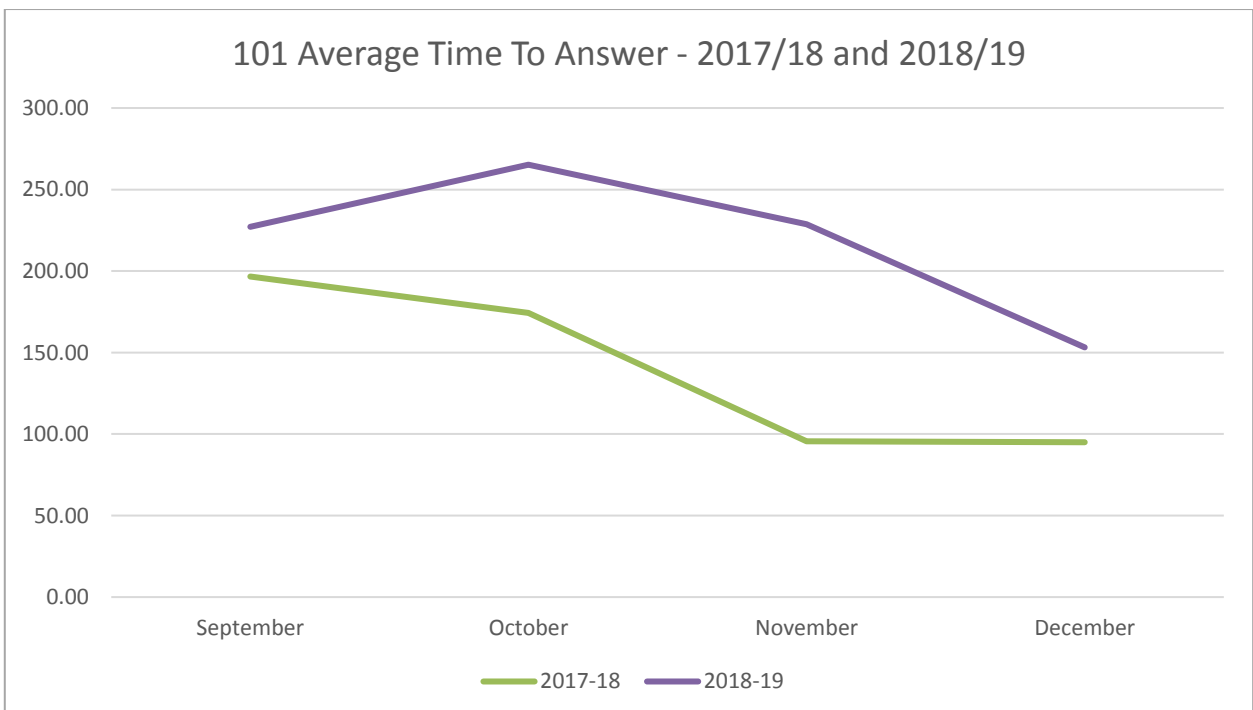
101 Demand - 2017/18 and 2018/19

- o As with 999 demand the FCR is dealing with an increased amount of 101 calls since the previous year. The FCR has experienced a 2.2% rise in 101 demands for the quarter.

101 Abandonment Rate - 2017/18 and 2018/19

- o Regardless of the impacting factors outlined above, since the move to POD working the abandonment rate for 101s has been steadily falling. This has continued month-by-month as we have put scrutiny and governance around how each POD is managing its resource to demand. It is anticipated that over the coming months that the downward trend will continue.
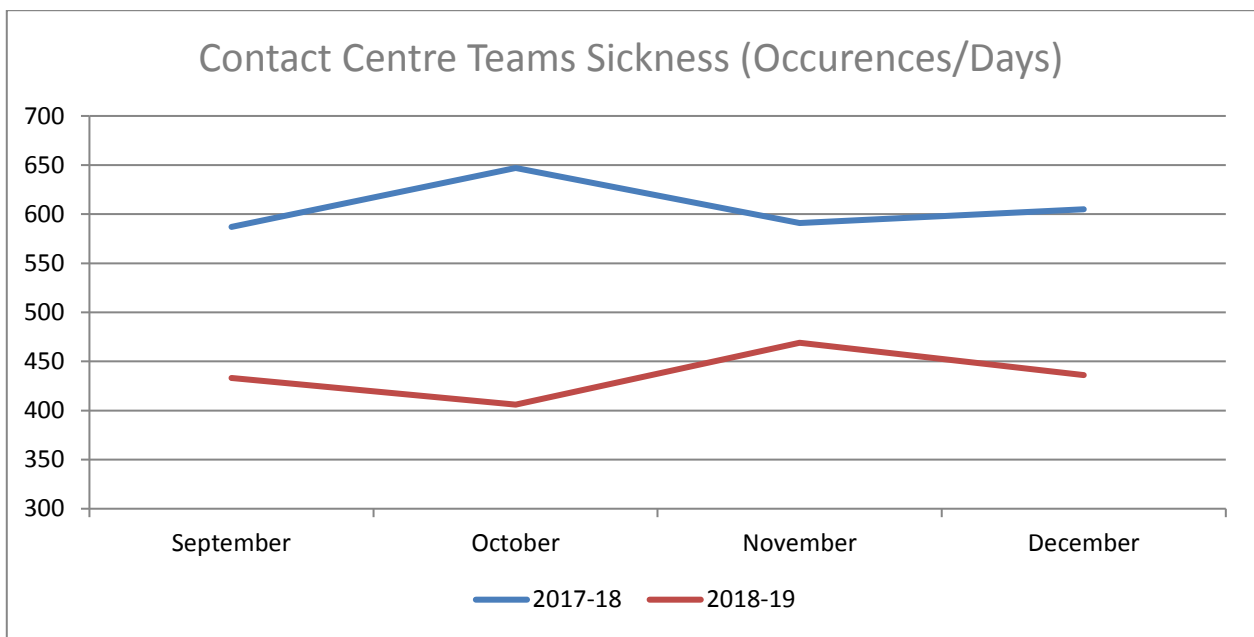
101 Service Level - 2017/18 and 2018/19 (calls answered within 40 seconds)

- o Again, despite the factors listed above, service level for 101s has been climbing since the introduction of PODs, whilst dealing with more demand than the previous year.
- o What can clearly be seen in the data, is that since POD go live the trajectory is an upward one. This has been a large-scale change process, which has needed to bed in and stabilise. As with 999s putting scrutiny and governance around how each POD is managing its resource to demand is steadily improving our performance.
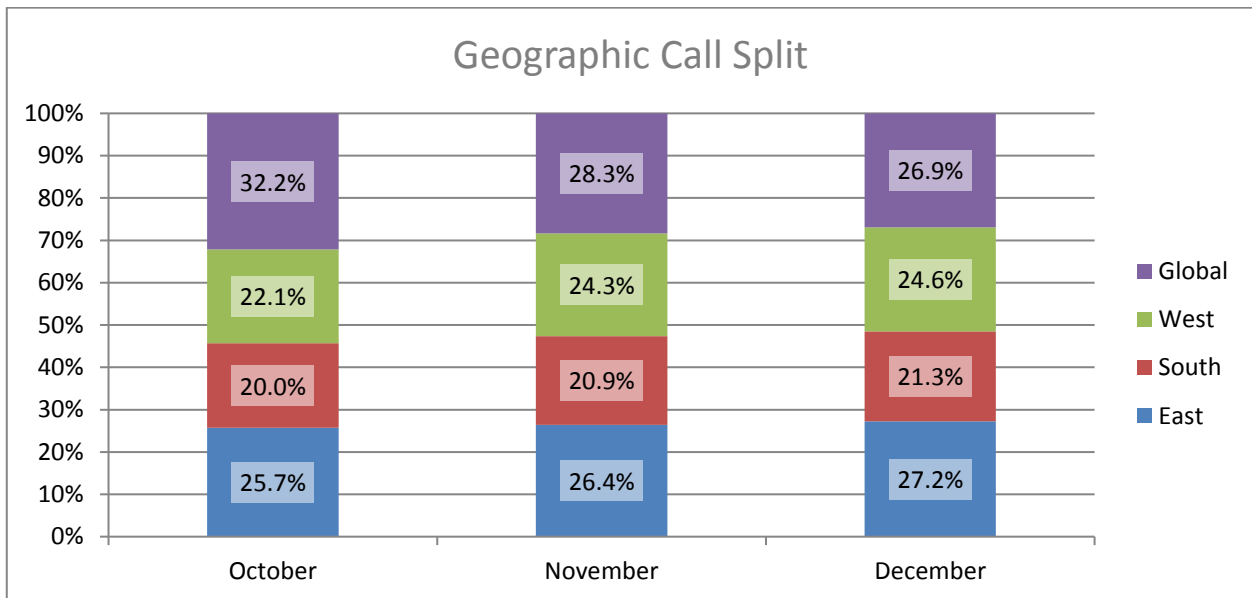

101 Average Time To Answer - 2017/18 and 2018/19

- o   Despite the 10 minute overflow testing mentioned above, 101 answering times have been decreasing since POD go-live, it is anticipated that this trend will continue.

Other performance measures

POD working is not just about traditional performance metrics, it is important to understand other areas of performance were that has been a positive impact. The full evaluation will look at other measures as well as traditional call performance data, such as:

- o   Since PODs went live we are experiencing less days of sickness despite having an increased workforce. This begins to demonstrate some of the benefits of POD working which are not reflected in the previous more traditional measures.
- o   Less days of sickness means, a healthier workforce and more capacity within our FTE to be able manage our demand effectively.

Geographic Call Split

One of the main benefits to the Public of POD working is the localism it provides.

- o Following the introduction of PODs, work is ongoing to increase the accuracy of the geographic calls routing. This includes working with partner agencies and neighbouring forces to direct their calls to the most appropriate POD for them, to provide a more bespoke service.
- o ICT work is also on going to increase the accuracy of call routing, this requirement is incorporated into the requirements for the upgrade of the ICCS telephony platform. It is anticipated this work will reduce the number of 'global' calls presented to the FCR, which are a mix of calls made from outside Lancashire, internet based calls (made either from in or outside Lancashire) and withheld numbers where it is not possible to ascertain where the call originated from.

Month by month since POD go-live there has been a steady improvement in geographic routing and a more localised service to the public:

- o In October 68% of calls were presented to their area Pod to be answered.
- o In November 71% of calls were presented to their area Pod.
- o In December 73% of calls were presented to their area Pod.

Summary of Overall Call Performance

The majority of the above graphs demonstrate that since the introduction of PODs the overall performance of the FCR for 999 and 101 service level, abandonment rates and time to answer has significantly improved on the levels of performance achieved in the same period of 2017.

The reasons for this are: The core principles of POD working enable closer teamwork, leadership in the work, more robust ownership of local issues, a closer understanding of what matters to the public, and a problem solving systematic approach at first point of contact.

- Call Handlers, Radio Dispatchers, Team Supervisors, and Police Officers are now all located together in a single 'POD' for the Divisional area.
- Calls for the Divisional area are geographically routed so they will always be answered by an operator in the that POD unless none are available – in which case the call will be taken by the first available operator in the wider room.
- The close proximity of staff, officers, and supervisors to each other means there is increased knowledge and expertise available at the first point of contact, which results in better decision making by the staff.
- Newer members of staff are much closer to experienced colleagues and supervisors, which bring benefits to their learning, training and skills development. This translates into a better service provision to the public.
- Because staff now work aligned to a 'Place', they are developing enhanced local knowledge, which leads to better interactions with callers and understanding of local policing priorities.
- Because staff and officers sit next to each other, interactions are encouraged and facilitated this has resulted in streamlined processes, reduced waste, and shorter 'end to end' processes – which mean better quality of service for the public.

The focus in 2018 on 'systems thinking' started significantly before the introduction of POD working. The improved processes and empowerment of staff within the FCR is felt to be having a positive effect both in terms of staff morale, but also in enabling the FCR to cope with complex high demand on a daily basis.

The investment in 50 additional PCROs, which increased the PCRO staffing establishment from 295 to 345 FTEs, has provided the FCR with more capacity and resilience to handle the high levels of public demand.

Section 3 - FCR key ICT work streams update

Over the next 12 months there are a number of ICT changes both within the department and wider organisation that are likely to have an impact on the FCR in terms of performance (both positive and negative). The most significant IT changes that it is useful to highlight are:

- Connect Public Engagement was delivered alongside Connect phase 2 in November. Although the vast majority of reports being submitted are being successfully processed, there are a small number that require manual intervention to process through our systems. The root cause of these issues has been identified and the system will be addressed by Northgate in February. When the issue has been resolved it has been agreed that PE will be marketed both internally and externally as a preferred method of reporting crimes and incidents and communicating with victims of crime.

- SMARTSTORM implementation in spring 2019 – This is a significant upgrade to our current Command and Control system, it is anticipated that this will be a low-impact as this is an upgrade to our current system, rather than a new product. However, there will be a significant training requirement to prepare both the FCR and the rest of the force for the transition.

- Workforce Management upgrade scheduled for early 2019 – The upgrading of the Contact Management duty planning and scheduling system is long overdue. Our current legacy vision of Planet is unsupported by the supplier Verint due to its age. The version we are migrating to offers significant opportunities for improved scheduling of staff to ensure the right number of staff with the right skills are doing the right roles at times that will allow the FCR to meet predicted demand.

- Capita Upgrades on ICCS for ESN scheduled to take place incrementally during 2019 – Whilst this upgrade is centrally funded by the Home Office and will allow Lancashire Constabulary to meet its national obligation to be 'ESN ready' in 2019. The main benefits the FCR and the public will notice are:
    - Implementation of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) this allows 101 callers to know their place in the queue and estimated wait time.
    - Ability for members of the public calling from outside to select the geographic areas their call relates to. 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 DR (Disaster Recovery) site that will provide resilience in the event of a technical failure of the HQ ICCS. This mirrored DR ICCS will also minimise downtime in the FCR during future upgrades and mandatory patching.

There are further details on the Consolidated Action Plan below in relation to the systems changes to the FCR.