



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**  
police and communities together

**REPORT TO: Strategic Scrutiny Meeting**

**DATE: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018**

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**SUBJECT: Force Control Room Update**

## **1. Issue for Consideration**

The purpose of this report is to update the Commissioner on the performance of the Force Control Room (FCR) for the period April to June 2018.

## **2. Recommendation**

The Commissioner is requested to comment on the report.

## **3. Background**

Since the last scrutiny report, the business case for Geographical POD working has been to the Chief Officer Team (COT) for consideration. As such the model was approved at the Strategic Management Board and then as the Commissioner will recall agreed at the June Strategic Business meeting. The outcome of this was to move to Geographical POD working late September in the current Force Control Room set up. Once the PODs are in place, a number of measures will be evaluated to assess the outcomes with a view to reconfiguring the room to further develop the operating model.

### **Executive Summary**

In order to sufficiently meet demand a staffing uplift has been agreed for Contact Management, the requirement is to uplift from 295 staff (Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)) to 345 staff (FTE). Recruitment campaigns are on-going with the new recruit intake from April taking live calls in July. The rate of recruitment has doubled over the last 12mths to achieve the uplift. The Police Control Room Operator (PCRO) role is unique in respect of the skills required to risk assess challenging and complex calls. With this in mind,

whilst recruitment is increasing it does take time for new PCRO is to build up their skills and confidence. Significant work continues with recruitment and training plans to increase PCRO numbers, the detail of which is outlined further in this report.

With the business case for POD working agreed, the department is currently working through a change programme to align staff and technology to facilitate this. As outlined in previous Scrutiny reports the benefits of this will be realized through PCRO's gaining more local knowledge, increased knowledge of resolution options at first contact and more efficiencies with a reduction of changes roles.

The Contact Management Department is using Power BI, a Microsoft product to develop improved performance measures. The *dashboards* created will help better understand and present our performance and the different measures, which govern that performance. It will also allow us to intelligently combine different data sources. These should result in dashboards and products, which will produce efficiency improvements and are part of the plan to allow us to deliver a better service to the public.

### Call Performance - Emergency Calls.

Emergency calls are the primary focus of staff within the FCR. Whilst we recognise that there is a correlation between 101 call performance and the demand on the 999 service we remain focussed on answering 999 emergency calls above any other type of demand. What is significant in both types of demand is the increase in average call length and average wrap up time. This constitutes the handle time, which is how long the call taker needs to assess and action calls taken. This increase alongside an increase in demand has a significant impact of staffing required (bearing in mind we have the same issue with 101 calls).

In summary, for the period April – June 2018 when compared to the same period in 2017, for 999 demand:

- An increase of 1069 emergency calls
- An increase in service level consistently for the 3mths
- Average speed to answer for 2018 within 10secs

999 : 2018								
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Overall Handle Time	Average Call Length	Average Wrap Time
<b>APR</b>	19254	14604	75.85%	8.3	0.9%	10:59	04:05	06:54
<b>MAY</b>	22376	18579	83.03%	5.6	0.9%	10:22	04:17	06:05
<b>JUN</b>	23436	17163	73.23%	7.1	1.0%	09:47	04:13	05:34

999 : 2017								
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Overall Handle Time	Average Call Length	Average Wrap Time
<b>APR</b>	19833	13145	66.28%	10.2	1.2%	08:58	03:39	05:18
<b>MAY</b>	21425	13801	64.42%	11.2	1.3%	09:05	03:45	05:20
<b>JUN</b>	22739	11878	52.24%	13.9	2.9%	10:25	04:26	05:59

## Call Performance - Non Emergency Calls

Non-emergency calls remain a challenge for the room. Some of this can be attributed to the nature of demand coming into the FCR, research by the demand analysis team supports the anecdotal view that the complexity of the issues within calls combined with the safeguarding / vulnerability work done by FCR staff has pushed up the average call handling time from that seen in previous years.

In summary for the period April - June 2018 when compared to the same period in 2017, for 101 Demand:

- A reduction of 28974 101 calls (previous increase potentially due to repeat calls but no data to support this at present)
- An increase in service level consistently for the 3mths
- Average speed to answer improvement compared to same time period last year

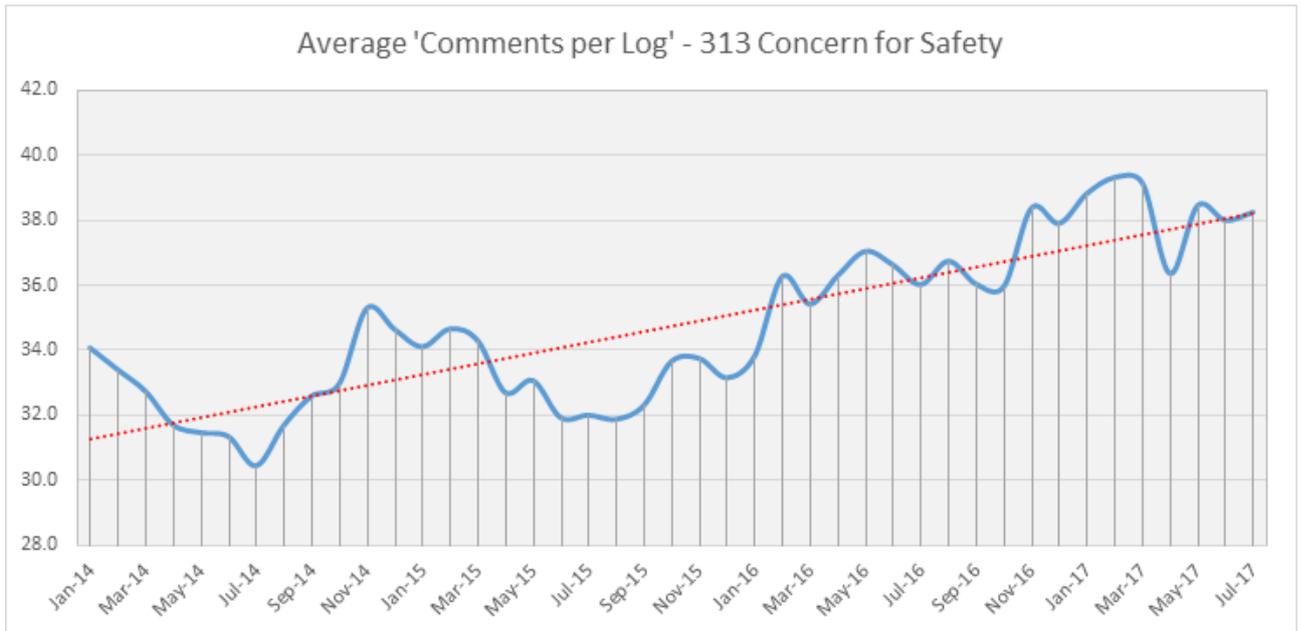
Non-Emergency : 2018								
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Overall Handle Time	Average Call Length	Average Wrap Time
<b>APR</b>	66298	31206	47.07%	129.0	30.3%	11:34	05:13	06:21
<b>MAY</b>	74123	34388	46.39%	127.5	30.6%	10:56	05:04	05:52
<b>JUN</b>	78059	26946	34.52%	187.6	40.4%	11:05	05:06	05:59

Non-Emergency : 2017								
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Overall Handle Time	Average Call Length	Average Wrap Time
<b>APR</b>	71848	27084	37.70%	167.4	39.8%	09:54	04:38	05:16
<b>MAY</b>	89827	38626	43.00%	161.9	45.2%	10:18	04:50	05:28
<b>JUN</b>	85779	20733	24.17%	214.8	37.9%	10:28	04:51	05:37

## Summary of Overall Call Performance

Calls achieved and Handle times have increased, both of which will increase the Control Room workloads significantly. Staffing levels have also risen, but the full benefits of this increase will not be felt in this period. Staffing was not at a sufficient level yet to assess and action calls as efficiently as more experienced staff. Also as the rate of recruitment increases, a greater proportion of the call handling staff are new or inexperienced. Such staff are naturally slower and require increased levels of mentoring and supervisory support in comparison to experienced staff.

In respect of handling times, the chart below illustrates increased numbers of comments per log. This is information the PCRO inputs onto an incident log regarding the information received. Below table represents comments per log in respect of concern for safety calls. It demonstrates a 20% increase in amount of information being inputted onto an incident log.

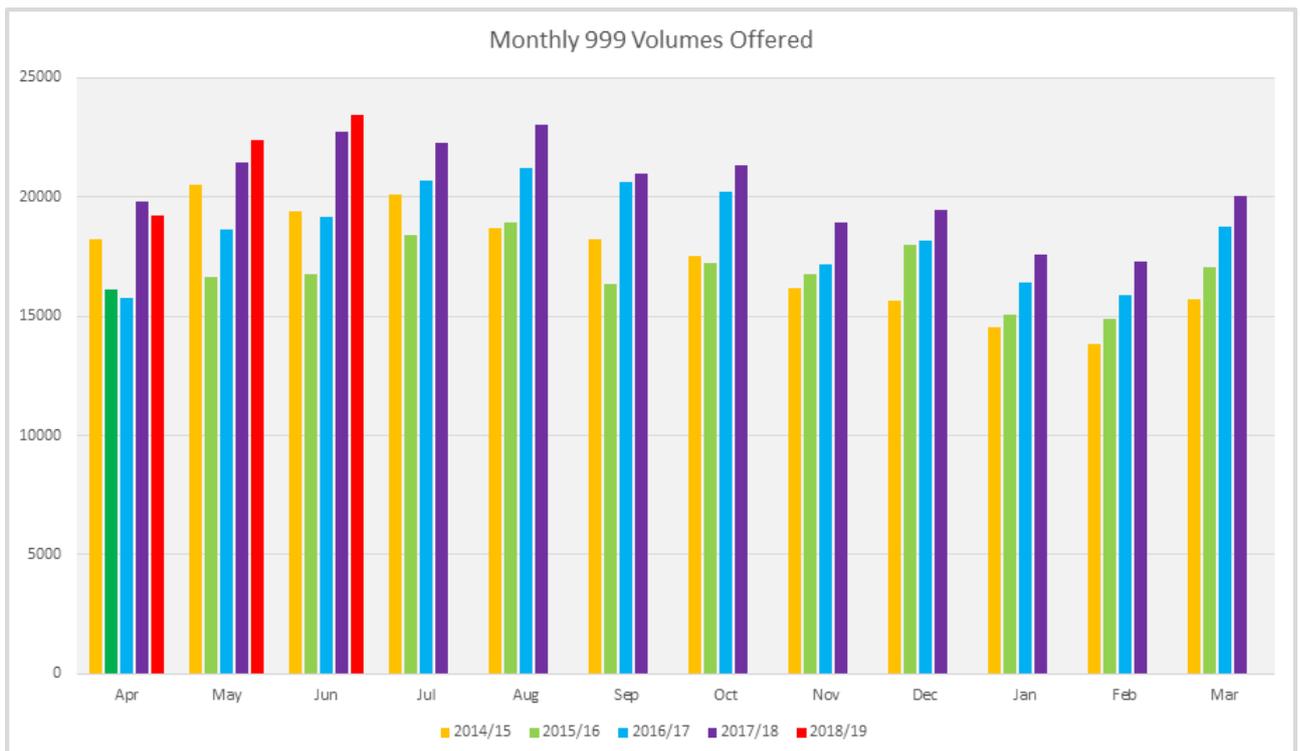


**National Context**

During 2017/2018, Police forces throughout England and Wales continue to report significant, and in some cases unprecedented demand on their Control Rooms. Many forces are reporting an increase in 999 calls and this has been the case in Lancashire. Where for example on a number of days in May and June the force received well over 900 emergency calls per day – levels exceeding even that experienced at Peak demand times (...and some New Year's Eves).

BT have reported that 999 demand continues to increase when compared to the same period in 2017, and they predict this not changing.

Lancashire has seen an increase in 999 demand, which mirrors the increase nationally.



BT has raised the concerns at the 999 National Liaison Meeting, as such a separate Strategic group with the three key ministers from Home Secretary, Policing and Culture & Media Ministers representatives at these meetings. Forces are reporting they are recruiting extra staff and diverting staff from other areas of business.

Due to the pressures of answering 999 many Police Forces nationally are struggling to answer 101 calls, 999 lines have to be prioritised which does impact on their ability to answer 101's. Issues around 101 have appeared in various regions media, North Yorkshire and Norfolk being the latest – the response from the North Yorkshire Police is to fund a further 15 call handlers. Whilst Norfolk state that the 101 waiting time of average 2 mins 45 secs is a result of staff taking more time to complete THRIVE (risk and threat) assessments and resolve more at first contact. All Forces are suffering the same issues in terms of recruiting i.e. the challenges of the role and shift working, and even when fully trained these staff need time to develop and settle into the role.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment campaigns are continuing for the department, with a requirement to uplift from 295 FTE to 345 FTE to meet current demand.

The intake that has been recently trained has joined the room early July and there is another intake planned for October. As the vacancies are permanent contracts, we are seeing a wide range of skills and experience including mental health and social services backgrounds. The current recruitment campaign has received 292 applications; this is very impressive as other forces are reporting a decrease in applicants for Police Control Room Operators.

There has been some work done in the department to assess why staff leave the department and look at retention. The turnover rate for Contact Management is 14.5%, which is significantly lower than some regional forces that report theirs at 20-25%.

Current risks to our FTE staffing levels are the PCSO recruitment process and the Connect Linking Team process scheduled for autumn 2018. It is important to note that even with the substantial intakes this year we will need to closely monitor the FTE staffing level and have planned in a further intake for October 2018 and January/March 2019. We do retain the 2-year tenure for our current staff joining Lancashire Police, whilst there has been concern that we have lost staff to Regional Police recruitment the numbers are actually minimal (two have left in the last 2yrs to join GMP).

Current recruitment levels will greatly assist the call-handling capabilities of the FCR but will need careful management to prevent the skills gap risk with the number of new and inexperienced members of staff in the room. We have changed some of the key processes, for example for the first time in department we now have an established team of tutor's who are trained, briefed and ready to deal with the intakes when they arrive. We have changed the rota that they will work so that it aligns to the tutor team - this also gets them used to their own teams and supervisors prior to leaving the tutoring hubs. Workbooks have been updated with clear progress plans to allow them to consolidate their training and move onto new areas as soon as possible and we are in negotiation with staff associations and HR to lengthen the probationary assessment period to ensure new staff are meeting the demands of the role before completing probation.

### **Other Impacts**

Over the next 12 months, we are conscious that there are also some systems changes additional to the POD implementation which we will monitor closely as they all, have the potential to affect our staffing and performance:

SMARTSTORM – a replacement of our current Command and Control system – it is anticipated that this will be a low-impact introduction as this is an upgraded version of our current system – this is due for testing in March with very little training requirement – **very little impact on staff and performance**

Connect Phase 2 – the replacement of the SLEUTH system – this will potentially have an impact on our call handling/data handling time within the FCR – this requires 2 days training which is programmed into the current plan and scheduled to go live in November – we will be watching this closely as it develops – **this has potential to impact on both staff and performance**

Workforce Management – the replacement of the Planet WFM system – the version we are taking looks and feels very similar to our current product and we do not anticipate any major impact on staff with its introduction. **Some impact on staff and performance**

Capita Upgrades on ICCS for ESN – there will be patching work over the next 12 months to bring us up to spec for ESN readiness. This will also stabilise the telephone interface and should give us a more resilient system within the FCR. There will be some service interruptions for the patching but staff will not notice any significant difference with the system being used (supervisors will require training as they will see a substantial difference) – **very little impact on staff and performance**

There are further details on the Consolidated Action Plan below in relation to the systems being introduced but it is important to emphasise the impact on staff and performance with every change of system that we bring in.