



REPORT TO:	STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
DATE:	September 2020
TITLE:	Contact Management Quarterly Report
REPORT BY:	Supt Mike Adamson

1. **Issue for Consideration**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to continued development and performance of the Contact Management Department of Lancashire Constabulary for the period April to June 2020

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 April to June 2020

Section 4 provides an update on significant programmes of work within the Force Control Room (FCR). This includes the status of the FCR decant project, refurbishment of the FCR and plans to return to a single control room in Spring 2021. To support the establishment of POD working within the new FCR, included will be details of the FCR Transformation Action Plan and updates in relation to Police Communications Room Operator (PCRO) recruitment and job evaluation/progression.

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

Refurbishment of the FCR

Since the last Strategic Scrutiny meeting, the decant of the FCR to three separate POD locations has been achieved. The key developments during this quarter are as follows:

- The South POD decanted to Preston Operations centre in January 2020 with East and West POD decanting during February 2020. West POD is currently located at Site B, HQ while East Pod is split between Burnley and Preston Operations Centre, due to limited space at Burnley. All PODs are now operating effectively and have embraced the benefits of POD working. This has already seen a significant enhancement of relationships between the FCR PODs and Basic Command Units (BCUs) at an operational and senior management level.
- Throughout the decant process revised Operating Models and Business Continuity plans have been developed to ensure the resilience of Contact Management during decant. In readiness for the return to a single FCR in 2021 Business Continuity plans have continued to be developed to support every stage of the planned phased return to a single FCR grounded in geographically aligned POD working.
- Comprehensive staff engagement is essential to ensure we deliver a new FCR which is fit for purpose, meets the needs of our workforce and enables us to deliver a first-class Contact Management service to our communities. Staff engagement has continued throughout the decant to enable staff to influence the final room layout. Engagement with staff, Unison and stakeholders will continue to increase over the coming months in preparation for a smooth return to a single FCR.
- The onset of Covid-19 and required social distancing in March 2020 inevitably required a change of approach to the FCR tender process, causing delays in providing necessary information to contractors and awarding the contract. Despite these challenges, City Build, was awarded the contract to rebuild the FCR in early July. The rebuild of the FCR remains on track for a return to a single room in May 2021.

Contact Management Transformation Plan

To deliver continuous improvement across Contact Management and ensure the provision of a service which is both efficient and effective in delivering a high quality, cost effective FCR, a Contact Management Transformation Plan has been established, led by the Head of Contact Management with support from James Harvard project management staff.

The transformation plan for the new FCR has continued to develop, with leads appointed for the 8 workstreams;

- Workforce Planning
- Communication Strategy
- Training, Progression and Recruitment
- Key Performance Indicators and Cost Ownership
- Operational Workflows
- Innovation and New Technology
- Staff Engagement and Wellbeing
- Continuous Improvement

This approach is supporting improved processes across the key areas of FCR delivery, for example; establishing a clear performance framework at individual, team and POD levels, developing Contact Management career pathways supported by improved training and recruitment plans designed to reduce staff turnover, improved staff engagement and understanding as well as developing a clear understanding of how new technology and innovative working practices will be introduced.

Progress on the transformation plan will be updated at the POD programme Board, Chaired by ACC Lawson.

Force Control Room PCRO Staffing / Training and Recruitment / Progression arrangements of Contact Management

The FCR continues to recruit PCROs to maintain a staff establishment of 345 PCRO Full-time Equivalent (FTE). Our objective is to move away from large intakes of 30 PCROs, due to the boom – bust impact this has on PCRO numbers and the consequent impact on call handling performance and quality of service. The challenge brought by Covid-19, in particular the capacity of Human Resources (HR) to support multiple small intakes, has delayed this change, although this remains the Contact Management recruitment objective.

On 14th April 2020 27 new PCRO recruits started their initial training. Due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions the FCR Training Team quickly designed an online training programme from what had previously been completely face to face input. The new training plan enabled the recruits to complete distance learning for the first 5 weeks, followed by smaller groups attending Headquarters (HQ) for socially distanced onsite learning. The need to social distance has placed additional challenges on the training Team and FCR mentors, in progressing the new recruits through the Call Taking Hub and the provision of one to one mentoring. This approach has inevitably impacted on the speed of training, causing a delay in the recruits building confidence and attaining competence. It is anticipated that the 27 recruits will enter the FCR PODs at the end of August.

A further 30 PCRO recruits will commence in September 2020, with an another intake planned for early 2021. The learning from the initial socially distanced training has been incorporated into the training plan for future intakes.

FCR attrition rates continue to run at 4 PCROs per month, driven by the current increase in Police officer recruitment across the region. The FCR has also experienced a significant increase in numbers of external applications for PCRO roles with nearly 800 applications being received for the 27 recruited in April. The FCR now has sufficient applicants through the selection process to fill the September intake.

To address the long-standing high attrition rates within Contact Management the FCR Transformation Plan incorporates the development of a FCR Career Pathway, supported by the Constabulary Kalidus PDR process, taking recruits from PCRO to senior leadership positions.

PCRO Recruit – Call Taker – Facilitator – Radio Operator – Mentor - Acting Supervisor – Supervisor – Pod Manager – Room manager.

To further improve PCRO retention the following measures have been taken

- PCRO Job Evaluation Completed, increasing starting scale from LC3 to LC4
- Pay progression arrangements have been fully implemented, enabling a PCRO to achieve LC6 in less than 2years where previously it would have taken over 10 years.
- Implementation of Acting Supervisor recruitment and selection process with supporting terms of reference and hourly pay arrangements.

The FCR Digital Team is planned to be established by November 2020 to support increased digital means of contact. The recruitment process for the Digital Team Leader is currently ongoing and the recruitment of the 19 digital operators will follow mid-August.

All of these developments have been widely welcomed by staff and Unison.

COVID-19 Impact

The onset of Covid-19 and the consequent lockdown had a significant impact on the operating practices within Contact Management as it undoubtedly did across the Constabulary. Early Covid-19 specific business continuity planning coupled with robust tabletop testing of the plans enabled Contact Management to flex and respond to the changes in the volume and nature of demand, availability of FCR resources and the need to operate in a Covid-19 secure, socially distanced manner.

At the onset of Covid-19 lockdown a phased business continuity plan was designed and where necessary implemented, enabling the FCR to respond progressively to between losses of 10 and 60% of the FCR workforce. At its height staff absences reached 30% of staff not being present in the FCR due to sickness, self-isolation, social distancing and consequential secondments to maintain FCR functionality.

Throughout the Covid-19 period 167 FCR staff members had a period of absence

from the FCR due to a Covid-19 related factors. At the end of July there are currently remaining 21 staff members who are still absent from the FCR due to Covid. 10 staff members have tested positive.

To support the continued functionality of the FCR PODs several measures were implemented, supporting our continued ability to answer calls. The Constabulary's online reporting portal was redesigned with a user friendly one-page Covid-19 breach reporting form, diverting non urgent Covid-19 reports away from the traditional telephony service. This was promoted via a range of online portals to encourage the public to report Covid-19 breaches online. This reduced demand on 101 and 999 services and enabled online Covid-19 reports to be efficiently managed and deployments triaged. To manage the increased online demand front counter staff were upskilled to manage the force mailbox. Additionally, FCR staff who were unable to attend work were equipped to work from home, undertaking a variety of functions including helping advanced duty planning, managing outstanding Grade 3 deployments and helping manage increased online demand.

A proof of concept trial of home based 101 call taking was undertaken and 101 calls were successfully answered at home. Due to imminent changes in FCR ICT, expanding home call taking has not been feasible at this time, however this will be revisited in early 2021 after the completion of Capita ICT upgrades.

The restrictions of the FCR infrastructure necessarily means that the FCR functions can only be undertaken within the established POD and Fall-Back locations, restricting the ability to move PCROs to work in alternative locations. To address social distancing working requirements a Power BI staffing product was quickly developed to identify when a POD social distancing capacity breach would occur. This has enabled staff welfare and Covid19 health concerns to be effectively managed across the PODs. At the peak staffing times where social distancing has not been possible to maintain, robust sanitising and PPE arrangements have been implemented.

5. Performance Update

As previously reported, there are a number of factors that can impact on the performance of the FCR in a reporting period. This quarter for both 999 and 101 has been no different; however positive interventions and forward planning are resulting in improved performance.

Throughout the reporting period there have continued to be significant upgrades to the FCR ICT infrastructure which have impacted on the stability and performance of the FCR. The second stage of the upgrade of the Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) has continued to progress and is now anticipated to be complete by October 2020. The switch from STORM to SMART STORM has also brought challenges to the smooth running of the FCR owing to the continuing need to refine the system, which will deliver improved speed of operation. The centricity upgrade has continued and is planned to be complete during late

August 2020.

Owing to the level of system instability in the FCR in late 2019 and its impact on operational performance a tracking and monitoring process was introduced in January 2020 enabling all faults and in particular periods of 'fallback' to be better managed. In order to test and introduce new systems it is necessary to enter periods of 'fallback' which inevitably impact on the operational effectiveness of the FCR PODs. During April, May, June there have been 2, 12 and 6 periods of 'fallback' respectively in order to facilitate system upgrades. What is pleasing is that the high numbers of unexpected periods of 'fallback' experienced in late 2019 have reduced significantly due to the improved stability of system infrastructure. At the conclusion of the final ICCS upgrade, long term ICT resilience will be greatly enhanced due to the availability of parallel platforms at Preston and Hutton, negating the need for 'fall back'.

Despite planning to move away from large intake of new PCRO recruits to smaller more regular recruitment, it has not been possible to achieve this due to the impact of Covid-19 on managing more regular recruitment and training. This has impacted in the continuation of the boom and bust cycle of staffing numbers. As documented above Covid-19 has also has a very significant impact on the training of new recruits and the speed with which they become competent to take calls within the PODs. The extended training of the new recruits has also increased the numbers of abstraction from the FCR PODs in order to provide increased mentoring to new recruits. This takes the mentors away from their core role of call taking at a time when there are already increased absences from the PODs owing to Covid-19. Despite the intake of 27 new recruits in April 2020, these staff will not achieve competency in the PODs until September. Improvements have been made to the training plan for the next intake of 30 in September but the need to social distance during training will inevitably mean an extended period of training for the next intake.

During Q1 the above factors have required the planned use of overtime to cover staffing abstractions. Both PCRO and Police Officer overtime has increased for this quarter. The development of an overtime Power BI product, coupled with enhanced performance management processes within the FCR now ensures efficient use of overtime, however it is expected that the use of overtime will continue to be a critical element of delivering acceptable levels of FCR performance.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 during the quarter the newly enhanced FCR training plan has continued to be progressed, increasing the skills base across all three PODs and thereby the resilience of each individual POD to be able to function independently.

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.

Key Points: 999 demand and service levels

- During Q1 2020 performance for 999 service levels (calls answered in less than 10 seconds) has improved in relation to the corresponding quarter in 2019 from 8.04 to 4.75 seconds. 87% of calls were answered within target in 2020 versus 76% in 2019. This represents an 11% increase. This performance is based against a 20% reduction in 999 demand (c14000 calls) during Q1 compared with the same quarter last year. While this improved performance during Q1 is set against reduced 999 demand, resourcing challenges in the FCR PODs also have to be considered to gain a full appreciation of the improved 999 performance.
- As the Commissioner will recall the Constabulary reported in previous Strategic Scrutiny meetings that Lancashire 999 demand has been on an increasing trajectory, a trend which is being seen in many other police forces. This quarter's reduction in 999 demand has been a short-term deviation due to the impact of Covid-19 however this has now increased again towards pre-Covid-19 levels. This return to increasing 999 demand is reflected nationally.

Period	999 Average Answer	101 Average Answer
01/04/19 – 30/06/19	8.04	180.81
01/04/20 – 30/06/20	4.75	95.75

Call Performance - Non-Emergency 101 Calls

As with 999 demand, Q1 2020 has seen significant reductions in 101 demand in Lancashire and indeed nationally due to the impact of Covid-19. 101 average time to answer has improved when compared to the same quarter last year from 180.81 seconds to 95.75 seconds. Lancashire has experienced a 17% 101 call reduction when set against the same period last year, equating to 35000 fewer calls. The percentage of abandoned 101s has reduced from 33% to 18%. The significantly reduced 101 demand has during July and August started to see a move back to increased 101 demand towards pre Covid-19 levels.

PCRO experience levels – as was highlighted in the last report the levels of inexperience in the FCR remain a significant issue. 23% of FCR staff have under 2years experience and 50% have under 5years. The high turnover of staff and consequent recruitment exacerbates the situation. The relative inexperience of staff is being offset by the FCR enhanced training plan which has continued to progress. 70% of staff within the FCR PODs have attained all core FCR skillsets with 18% of staff having basic call taking skills only. Continuing the enhanced training has been challenging during Covid-19 due to the need to abstract mentors to upskill colleagues and the need to maintain social distancing.

Encouragingly PCRO’s are progressing quicker through to the facilitating and dispatcher role.

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 analysis and evaluation, the overflow time was 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.

Owing to the challenges during Q1, particularly during June onwards as demand started to increase during a period of continuing decreased staff availability, the decision was taken to reduce the overflow time to 3 minutes. In reducing the overflow time it is recognised that this is a move away from the purist POD methodology, however all calls are still routed into their geographic POD, allowing opportunity for a localised FCR service, however in the event that demand outstrips the ability to answer calls in the home POD, the reduced overflow time increases the ability to answer the call from a member of the public before being abandoned. Prior to reducing the overflow time, it was noted that at peak times calls were being abandoned in one POD when call takers were free to take calls in another POD.

In Q4 2019 / 2020 82% of calls were answered in the home POD. In Q1 2020 / 2021 this had reduced to 70%, equating to a 12% reduction. The positive impact however can be seen in the reduced abandonment rates which reduced from 22% in Q4 2019 / 2020 to 18% in Q1 2020 / 2021 for 101 calls and 0.3% to 0.2% for 999s. This equates to over 7000 less 101 calls abandoned and over 70 less 999calls abandoned in Q1 against Q4 2019 / 2020.

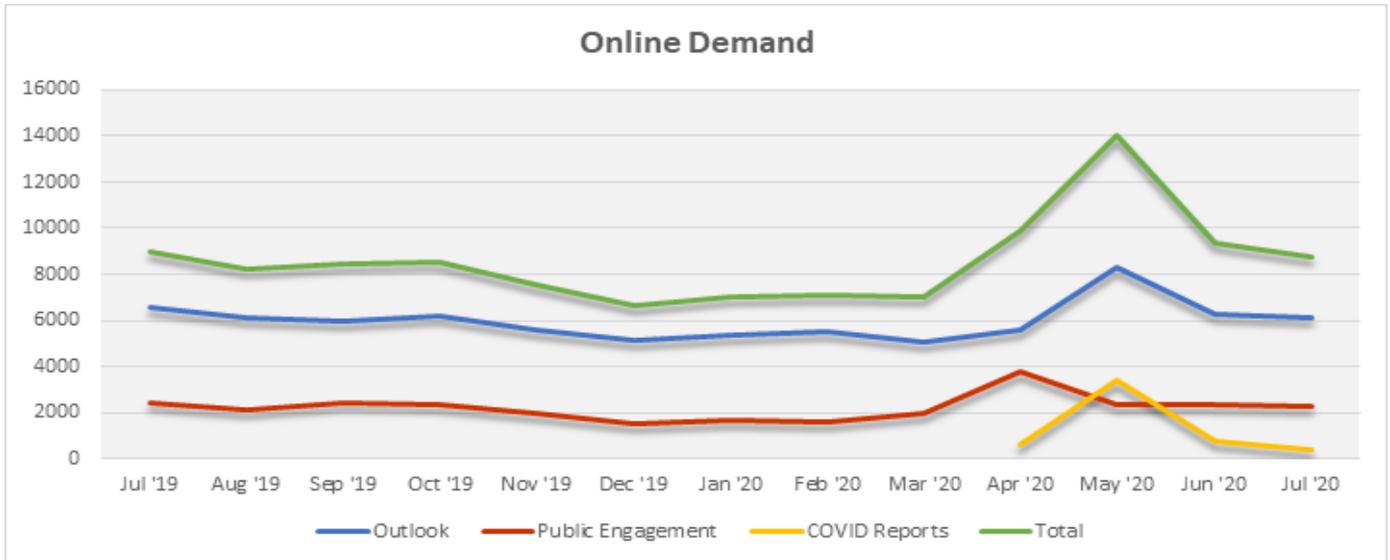
The overflow time continues to be monitored and is subject to regular reviews. At an appropriate time, the overflow rate will be increased to support the POD model.

Key Points: 101 demand and service levels

- In this quarter the 101-service level (answering calls within 40 seconds) has seen significant improvements to the corresponding quarter in 2019. Abandonment rates have similarly shown considerable improvements against the same quarter in 2019 as shown in the table below.

	April - June 2020		April - June 2019	
	101	999	101	999
Service Level	58.1%	87%	39.9%	76%
Demand Levels	167,109	57,259	202,224	71,510
Abandonment Rates	18.5%	0.3%	33.5%	0.5%
Time To Answer 90 th Centile (seconds)	298	13	508	24

Online Demand



Key Points: On-line demand

The public of Lancashire can currently contact the FCR by digital means via the Force Control Mailbox, and the Public Engagement portal to report incidents to the FCR. There also exists the option to submit a crime or contact an officer by digital means. In order to better manage and triage deployments to reported breaches of the new Covid-19 regulations the digital offer was rapidly reviewed at the onset of Covid, developing a simple one-page Covid-19 reporting form within the Public Engagement Portal. The use of the online Covid Reporting form was quickly adopted by the public with 4728 online Covid-19 reports being received during Q1 2020.

Overall the levels of digital demand have continued to rise in line with previous predictions, a trend which is reflected nationally in forces where digital contact has been promoted. During 2019 digital demand level started the year just above 5000 digital contacts, rising throughout the year to 6000 contacts.

Digital demand levels increased dramatically during Q1 2020 with 9000 contacts in April, rising to 14000 in May before settling back in the region of 9000 per month from June onwards.

Month	Outlook	PE	Covid	total
April	5559	3747	576	9882
May	8329	2335	3369	14033
June	6250	2326	781	9357
July	6138	2250	402	8790

Current forecasts indicate increasing online demand based on current available digital means of contact, rising to over 11000 contact per month during 2021.



If we were to introduce further avenues of contact (Twitter/Facebook) then this would likely increase.

Previous reviews of digital demand and the experience of other forces is that digital demand does not replace traditional demand and that the trend is that digital brings extra demand into the FCR.

Following the agreement to develop and recruit a dedicated Digital Team to manage existing and developing online demand, a FCR Digital Operating process is being developed. The process to recruit the Digital Supervisor and 18 Digital Operators is underway. It is anticipated that the Digital Team will be in place towards the close of 2020.

The team itself will receive bespoke training and will provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wanting to report an incident or raise an enquiry using online services. The team will cover shifts over a 24hr period and will work in line with current Contact Management rotas.

The objective of the Digital Team will be to provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wishing to report an incident or an enquiry to Lancashire Police via a digital avenue. Whilst we are able to predict their workload based on current contact online methods, we are expecting to see an additional increase in contacts following planned media campaigns, and with the introduction of Twitter and Facebook interaction. The team will provide out of hours support to the Constabulary Media and Engagement Team for high profile social media cases as well as proactive social media postings and replies concerning live time events of concern to the public.

The development of digital functionality within the FCR will support:

- The national roll out of the Single Online Home (SOH) police website, which the Constabulary is expecting to adopt during 2021
- The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Policing Vision 2025, advocating increased digital policing capability and capacity
- The adoption of mandatory European Union legislation requiring police forces to accommodate the ability for members of the public to report emergency incidents via digital channels.

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

The FCR has successfully decanted into the 3 locations of Preston, Burnley and the upper level in site B, HQ. As planned all the Control rooms successfully transitioned to Windows 10, USB functionality and SMARTSTORM. Within the FCR environment there is always an element of change with the ICT systems and as the FCR prepares to return there are still a number of ICT work streams ongoing. This is to ensure that the FCR ICT platforms and systems are stable, up-to-date, and Contact Management is supported to be able to continue to pursue further innovative opportunities. Moving forwards into 2021 we will continue to explore our Digital Footprint in the FCR and how we can improve our service to the public.

The current significant ICT projects on-going in the FCR at this time are:

SMARTSTORM upgrade

Within the POD project we identified an opportunity to move from the old command and control system STORM, to the new upgraded version SMARTSTORM. The rationale behind this was due to the fact that we were unable to make any further technical changes to STORM and the supplier now providing an enhanced version with multiple benefits and opportunities. Since being introduced a number of issues with SMARTSTORM have been identified which are currently being addressed by Lancashire ICT department and STERIA. Significant improvements in the performance of SMARTSTORM are expected to be delivered by the end of August 2020.

Capita ICCS (Integrated Command and Control System) upgrade

The full upgrade of the ICCS continues to be a major project for the FCR. The delivery of the upgrade is a significant programme of work and is governed by the 'ICCS board'. The main benefits for the FCR and the public of Lancashire will be:

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

August/September 2020

- 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 fallback arrangements.
- The upgraded ICCS will allow the Constabulary to meet its national obligations around control room readiness for the transition from Airwave to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that is scheduled to take place in the coming years (no date for the Lancs transition is available)

Emergency Service Network. (ESN) ports replacement.

As part of the national ESN project, Lancashire have been working with the project team to upgrade the airwave ports from an old out of date platform to a new enhanced more stable platform. The ports are available within our ICCS system and control the way the transmissions are received into the control room, and the way the control room transmissions are communicated to operational officers. The ICT work in respect of replacing the ports has been added on to the ICCS project and is are scheduled to take place Q4 2020.

National Enabling Program (NEP)

As a force we have signed up to the NEP and in Q1 2021 we will see the rooms return to the main FCR site on the NEP platform, which enables us to move to Office 365 and explore further opportunities within this for the FCR such as, home working during the Covid-19 pandemic.