



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

REPORT TO : STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
REPORT BY: T/CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT PETER LAWSON
TITLE: UPDATE ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Quality of Service – Update on Contact Management of the Constabulary up to 30th November

2. Decision Required

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

3. Information

3.1 This reporting period has continued to be challenging for the Force Control Room. Increases in the number of calls received compared to corresponding months in 2015 continued to show large percentage increases in line with that experienced during the summer period.

3.2 For example a 21% and 15% increase in 999 calls in September and October respectively when compared to 2015 represents over 2500 more emergency calls received for that 2 month period.

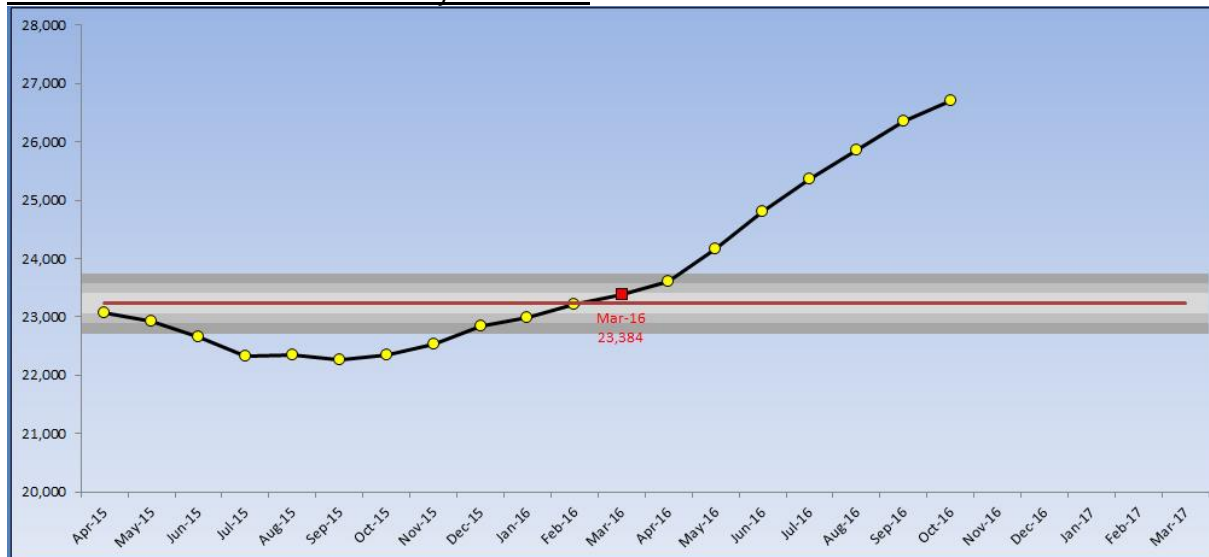
3.3 The increase in Public Safety related demand has continued unabated; with a rising trend of urgent deployments to Missing Persons, Concern for Welfares, Collapsed and Ill People. The control chart below demonstrates the scale of the challenge faced by the Constabulary this year.

3.4 The central red line is drawn at the average value expected for urgent response public safety incidents. The grey areas indicate the threshold at which the measure is considered statistically unlikely. Since April, urgent public safety incidents have dramatically exceeded predictions. This is reflective of change manifesting across the public sector.

3.5 Much public safety demand is incidents that other organisations are more appropriate than the police to deal with. This work includes vulnerable people

with mental illness in crisis, people with alcohol and drug dependencies and the elderly and frail/ill who at times of medical crisis call the police (on most days police officers transport people to hospital because no ambulance is available). One of the greatest increases has been in missing persons – both vulnerable adults together with children who are looked after in the many local authority and private children’s homes in the county.

Table 1: Grade 1 Public Safety Incidents



3.6 Public safety demand is complex and time consuming to deal with; far more so than is the case for many basic criminal offences. A report of many theft or damage crimes for example takes a PCRO (Police Control Room Operator) much less time than does a report of a high risk missing person. Not only does it take more time for the Operator to gather information on the call, but once off the line they continue to make enquiries such as telephoning hospitals to check if the missing person has been admitted, and making checks on police databases to be able to pass as much information as possible to the patrol that is deployed.

3.7 When this unprecedented demand is combined with other factors including sub-optimal staffing levels in the control room (subject to later comment) it has resulted in acute pressure on both the 999 and 101 services. Operators will always prioritise 999 calls which does mean that at times of peak demand 101 service will be impacted most significantly.

3.8 The scale of the challenge is perhaps well illustrated by the example of the longest wait for a 101 call to be answered in October – which was 45 minutes. This is an exceptionally long wait (the mean average in October was 1:42 seconds). At the time the call in question was waiting it would have required an additional 20 PCROs to be on duty in the room at that time to have answered the call in the average of 1:42.

3.9 Such a level of staffing uplift is unrealistic and would be prohibitively expensive and illustrates why at times of peak demand call waiting times can increase so much.

Emergency Calls - Context

- Based on 2015/16 call volumes, Contact Management receives an average of 549 emergency calls per day.
- The nationally agreed target is to answer 90% of calls within 10 seconds.
- The chart below shows service levels and average speed to answer.

Table 2: 999 Service Levels

	999					
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Calls Offered % Change from last year
NOV	16745	14761	88.15%	4.2	0.4%	
DEC	17984	15721	87.42%	4.4	0.5%	
JAN	15009	13813	92.03%	3.3	0.5%	
FEB	14918	13235	88.72%	4.4	0.9%	
MAR	16683	14786	88.63%	4.4	0.5%	
APR	15794	13931	88.20%	4.4	0.7%	
MAY	18623	15105	81.11%*	6.4	1.1%	
JUN	19157	13693	71.48%	9.9	1.6%	+14%
JUL	20658	15186	73.51%	8.9	1.7%	+21%
AUG	21245	14355	67.57%	11.8	2%	+12%
SEP	20563	13362	64.98%	13.3	2.5%	+21%
OCT	20236	14457	71.44%	9.4	1.3%	+15%
NOV	17079	13629	79.80%	6.5	0.8%	+2%

- Nationally there has been a significant increase in call-demand affecting all emergency services. This has continued into September, October and November.
- September, October and November experienced 999 call levels 21%, 15%, and 2% respectively above the corresponding months in 2015. To give this increase

context, Sunday 30th October experienced 976 emergency calls. This compares to the busiest day of last year (New Year’s Eve) that had 998 calls.

3.10 It is difficult to determine exact reasons for abandoned calls – the aim is of course to answer all calls before they are abandoned. In some cases the caller abandons the call and redials, before joining the queue again.

Non-Emergency Calls - Context

- Based on 2015/16 call volumes, Contact Management receives an average of 2120 non-emergency calls per day.
- There is no nationally agreed target for non-emergency calls, but call handling is measured against a desired level of 80% of calls being answered within 40 seconds.
- The chart below shows average speed to answer.

Table 3: Non-Emergency Service Levels

	Non-Emergency					
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Calls Offered % Change from last year
NOV	63380	51772	81.69%	23.3	7.3%	
DEC	63502	48406	76.23%	35.7	11.4%	
JAN	57724	50136	86.85%	15.8	4.5%	
FEB	58404	48085	82.33%	21.1	6.1%	
MAR	61877	50211	81.15%	22.9	7.1%	
APR	60710	46029	75.82%	29.1	8.3%	
MAY	68044	43415	63.80% *	48.3	14%	
JUN	72984	40988	56.16%	73	20.1%	+5%
JUL	72115	41324	57.30%	63	20.9%	+8%
AUG	73459	34896	47.50%	100.9	25.2%	+6%
SEP	73643	29542	40.12%	129.9	30.9%	+11%
OCT	70057	32530	46.43%	102.8	25.1%	+4%
NOV	61157	39252	64.18%	59.2	15.9%	-3.5%

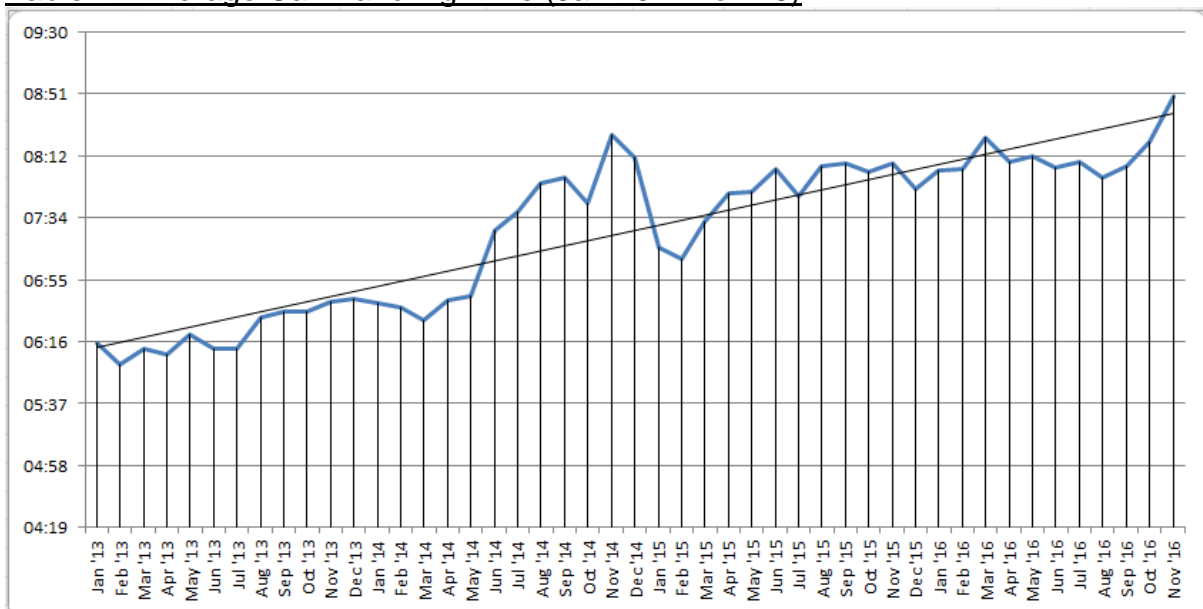
3.11 In general, where service levels are below 80% reasons relate to raised demand for emergency calls – will result in operators prioritising the 999 calls to the detriment of non-emergency performance.

Average Call Length

3.12 Table 4 below shows there has been a steady increase in the average call length. What is also worthy of consideration is not just the call length but the time taken after the call for the PCRO to conduct relevant checks to assess Risk, Threat and Harm.

- Average call length is influenced by a number of factors:
 - Balance between quality VS quantity – i.e. do we choose to deal with lots of calls very quickly but in doing so obtain poor quality information and resolve relatively few at the first contact. Alternatively we can take a little longer on the call to obtain information that is capable of making a better quality decision and resolving more at first contact.
 - The changing natures of demand – especially public safety incidents – tend to be complex and take more time to deal with.
 - Inexperienced operators – of whom there are a number in the room including a new intake – take longer to deal with calls.

Table 4: Average Call Handling Time (Jan 13 – Nov 16)



Exceptions since last Committee:

- 17 Sept – highest 999 calls received for Sept total 836 with 218 of those received over 3hrs alone current average that month was 600 within 24hrs.
- 30 Oct – highest 999 calls received for Oct total 976 with 257 of those received over 3hrs after midnight

Table 5: Top Ten Longest waiting Calls (Minutes)

Year	2016		
Month	Sep	Oct	Nov
Top 10	00:35:48	00:45:23	00:31:55
	00:32:53	00:39:56	00:22:11
	00:31:54	00:35:25	00:21:59
	00:31:27	00:30:19	00:21:44
	00:28:35	00:29:11	00:21:00
	00:28:32	00:27:52	00:20:51
	00:28:05	00:27:46	00:20:40
	00:25:51	00:27:26	00:18:59
	00:22:05	00:26:14	00:18:11
	00:22:02	00:22:24	00:17:15
Overall Average	00:03:11	00:02:36	00:01:29

- The longest waiting time was over 45mins, this call was taken on the 19th October and although it was a Wednesday it was the third busiest day of the month. The call which waited 45 minutes 23 seconds was answered sometime between 20:15 and 20:30hrs. It was one of 49 calls which were offered during that 15 minute period. Given the average handle time* for October of 8 minutes 21 seconds, to achieve an average speed to answer those 101 calls of 120 seconds would have required 20 additional staff when this call came in and this increase in demand was unexpected.

(* NB "Handle Time" refers to the time taken on the call itself together with the 'Wrap Time' which is the time the operator takes to complete tasks directly relating to that call before being in a ready state to take a new call)

Detailed Analysis: October 2016

3.13 The table below presents some of the factors why October was particularly challenging.

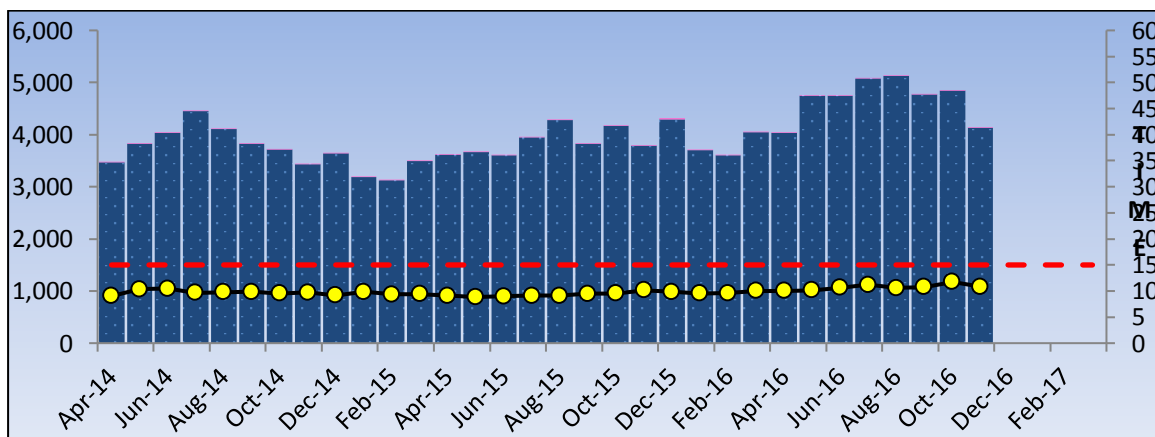
- An overall increase in call volumes of 6.1%
- An overall increase in the time to handle each call of 3.9%
- A decrease in total staffing hours of 12.7%

	2015	2016		
999 Calls	17237	20236	↑	17.4%
101 Calls	67880	70057	↑	3.2%
Total Calls	85117	90293	↑	6.1%
Average Talk Time	04:05	04:03	↓	-0.8%
Average Wrap Time	03:57	04:18	↑	8.9%
Average Handle Time	08:02	08:21	↑	3.9%
999 Staffing Hours	1976	2097	↑	6.1%
999 'Calls per Hour'	8.7	9.6	↑	10.6%
101 Staffing Hours	12258	10332	↓	-15.7%
101 'Calls per Hour'	6.9	8.7	↑	25.9%
Total Staffing Hours	14234	12429	↓	-12.7%
All 'Calls per Hour'	6.0	7.3	↑	21.5%

Emergency Response Times

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

Table 6: Emergency Calls: Response Times



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Human Resources – Resourcing

- A new intake of PCRO’s are now taking calls within the room
- Because of the challenges described in this paper, the department has embarked on an ambitious and challenging programme to recruit new staff into the room. A recruitment campaign offering permanent (as opposed to temporary) contracts for the first time in several years has been successful in attracting a large number of high quality applicants.
- It is expected that in January around 40 new staff will be inducted into the department and begin training. Such a large intake will require a longer training and mentoring process but will put the room in a stronger position before summer 2017.

Attendance

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

Table 7: Contact Management Attendance 2015 - Apr 2016

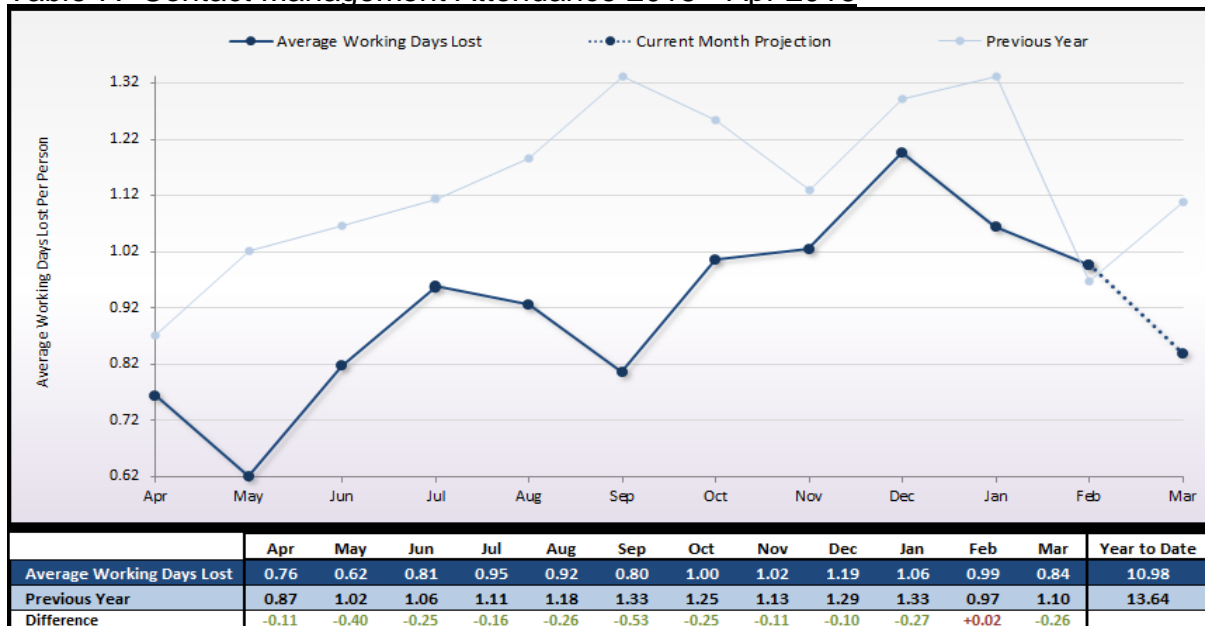
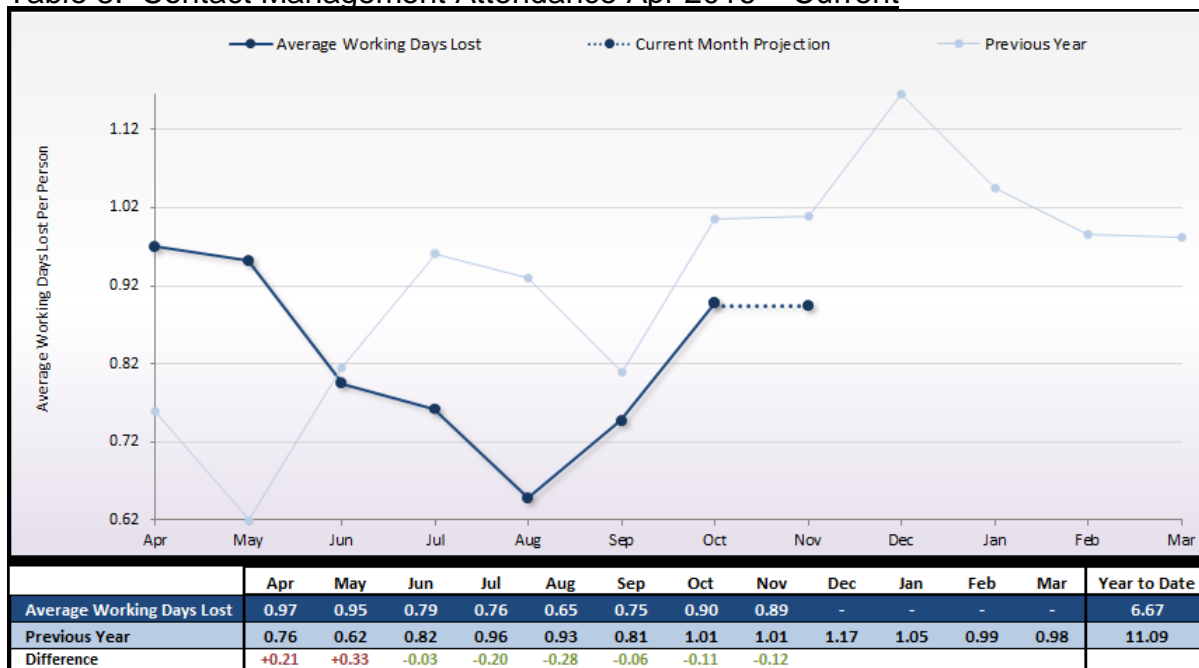


Table 8: Contact Management Attendance Apr 2016 – Current



Summary

- 3.15 Overall, this has been a challenging period, but strategic developments within Contact Management are establishing strong foundations upon which to enhance future performance.
- 3.16 The Constabulary’s Strategic Management Board held in November agreed a strategy for the Contact Management department which sets out the long term vision and direction for the business area. This is presented as an accompanying document for the Scrutiny Committee.