



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**  
police and communities together

## ITEM 4

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| <b>REPORT TO : STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING</b>         |
| <b>REPORT BY: T/CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT PETER LAWSON</b> |
| <b>TITLE: UPDATE ON FORCE CONTROL ROOM</b>            |

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Quality of Service – Update on Contact Management of the Constabulary up to 31<sup>st</sup> January

### 2. Decision Required

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

### 3. Information

- 3.1 This report advises the Commissioning of the quality of service (Contact Management) against the performance indicators agreed.
- 3.2 This reporting period has continued to be challenging for the Force Control Room. Increases in the number of 999 calls received and increase time needed for operators to deal with these calls has been a contributing factor.
- 3.3 Resourcing within the Control room is paramount, the current intake of 37 new recruits will be ready to take calls mid-April with another intake starting their training course in June. This will give increased staffing levels required for summer demand. Recruiting on permanent contracts has brought a variety of skills to the control room and with new restrictions for operators to apply as Police Officers (2yr tenure) this should bring more stability to staff retention.
- 3.4 Abstractions from the control room for fracking (mid-Jan) have caused significant staffing issues as this requires at least 3 PCRO's and a supervisor taken away from normal call-handling/dispatching duties.
- 3.5 Call handling times continue to increase and this can be contributed to Public safety related demand, in order to assess risk/threat and harm PCRO's are required to obtain enough information to do this from the caller which at times

can involve vulnerable people with mental health crisis. This demand tends to be early evening when other agencies are not available.

- 3.6 The control Room has been inundated with silent/nuisance/hoax 999 calls. One example was an evening in December over a 15min period 50 hoax 999 calls were received from one mobile caller. This caller was unregistered and untraceable, a block was put on this number by the Control Room supervisor however this took considerable time from the mobile company and can only last 8hrs. This is putting an enormous pressure not only on Lancashire Police but on BT 999 Call Handling to answer these and genuine 999 calls.

#### 4. CALL HANDLING – MEASURES

##### 4.1 Emergency Calls - Context

- 4.2 Based on 2015/16 call volumes, Contact Management receives an average of 549 emergency calls per day.

- 4.3 The nationally agreed target is to answer 90% of calls within 10 seconds.

- 4.4 The chart below shows service levels and average speed to answer.

##### 4.5 Table 2: 999 Service Levels

|                | 999     |          |               |                         |                  |   |
|----------------|---------|----------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|
|                | Offered | Achieved | Service Level | Average Speed to Answer | Abandonment Rate | Calls Offered % change from previous year |
| <b>FEB '16</b> | 14918   | 13235    | 88.72%        | 4.4                     | 0.9%             | +8.0%                                     |
| <b>MAR '16</b> | 16683   | 14786    | 88.63%        | 4.4                     | 0.5%             | +8.2%                                     |
| <b>APR '16</b> | 15794   | 13931    | 88.20%        | 4.4                     | 0.7%             | -2.0%                                     |
| <b>MAY '16</b> | 18623   | 15105    | 81.11%        | 6.4                     | 1.0%             | +11.9%                                    |
| <b>JUN '16</b> | 19157   | 13693    | 71.48%        | 9.9                     | 1.8%             | +14.3%                                    |
| <b>JUL '16</b> | 20658   | 15186    | 73.51%        | 8.9                     | 1.9%             | +21.6%                                    |
| <b>AUG '16</b> | 21245   | 14355    | 67.57%        | 11.8                    | 2.0%             | +12.2%                                    |
| <b>SEP '16</b> | 20563   | 13362    | 64.98%        | 13.3                    | 2.6%             | +25.6%                                    |
| <b>OCT '16</b> | 20236   | 14457    | 71.44%        | 9.4                     | 1.3%             | +17.4%                                    |
| <b>NOV '16</b> | 17079   | 13629    | 79.80%        | 6.5                     | 0.8%             | +2.0%                                     |
| <b>DEC '16</b> | 18184   | 13592    | 74.75%        | 7.8                     | 0.6%             | +1.1%                                     |
| <b>JAN '17</b> | 16396   | 13770    | 83.98%        | 5.1                     | 0.8%             | +9.2%                                     |

- 4.6 1086 999 calls were presented this New Year's Eve compared to 998 last year. Of note during the period from 9pm to 5am we were offered 721 emergency calls, this 8 hour period alone was 36% busier than the daily average for January.

## 5. Non-Emergency Calls - Context

5.1 Based on 2015/16 call volumes, Contact Management receives an average of 2120 non-emergency calls per day.

5.2 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.

5.3 The chart below shows average speed to answer.

5.4 Table 3: Non-Emergency Service Levels

|                | Non-Emergency |          |               |                         |                  |   |
|----------------|---------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|
|                | Offered       | Achieved | Service Level | Average Speed to Answer | Abandonment Rate | Calls Offered % change from previous year |
| <b>FEB '16</b> | 58404         | 48085    | 82.33%        | 21.1                    | 6.2%             | -8.8%                                     |
| <b>MAR '16</b> | 61877         | 50211    | 81.15%        | 22.9                    | 9.3%             | -10.0%                                    |
| <b>APR '16</b> | 60710         | 46029    | 75.82%        | 29.1                    | 9.1%             | -6.7%                                     |
| <b>MAY '16</b> | 68044         | 43415    | 63.80%        | 48.3                    | 14.7%            | +5.7%                                     |
| <b>JUN '16</b> | 72984         | 40988    | 56.16%        | 73.0                    | 20.3%            | +5.2%                                     |
| <b>JUL '16</b> | 72115         | 41324    | 57.30%        | 63.0                    | 20.0%            | +7.8%                                     |
| <b>AUG '16</b> | 73459         | 34896    | 47.50%        | 100.9                   | 25.7%            | +6.4%                                     |
| <b>SEP '16</b> | 73643         | 29542    | 40.12%        | 129.9                   | 30.9%            | +11.4%                                    |
| <b>OCT '16</b> | 70057         | 32530    | 46.43%        | 102.8                   | 26.6%            | +3.2%                                     |
| <b>NOV '16</b> | 61157         | 39252    | 64.18%        | 59.2                    | 15.5%            | -3.5%                                     |
| <b>DEC '16</b> | 59734         | 34149    | 57.17%        | 73.2                    | 19.0%            | -5.9%                                     |
| <b>JAN '17</b> | 58949         | 39517    | 67.04%        | 44.8                    | 12.0%            | +2.1%                                     |

5.5 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.

## 6.0 Average Call Length

6.1 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.

6.2 Average call length is influenced by a number of factors:

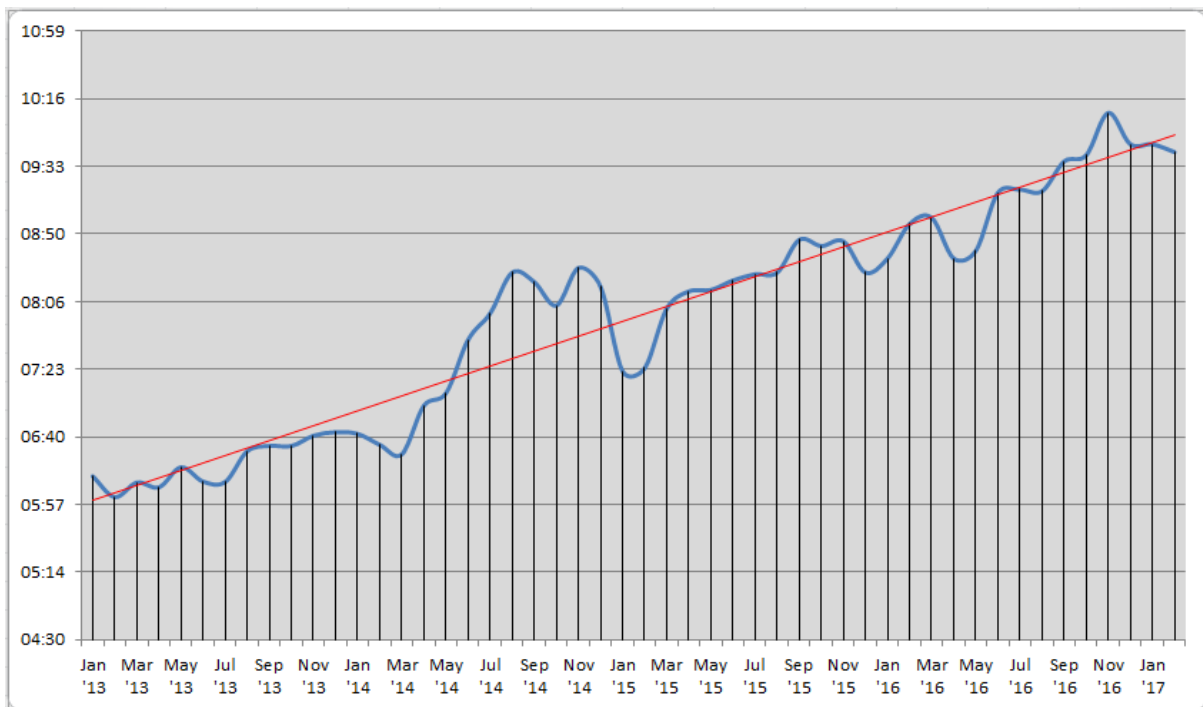
6.3 Balance between quality VS quantity – i.e. do we choose to deal with lots of calls very quickly but in doing so obtain poor quality information and resolve relatively few at the first contact. Alternatively we can take a little longer on

the call to obtain information that is capable of making a better quality decision and resolving more at first contact.

6.4 The changing natures of demand – especially public safety incidents – tend to be complex and take more time to deal with.

6.5 Inexperienced operators – of whom there are a number in the room including a new intake – take longer to deal with calls.

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



## 7. Exceptions since last Committee:

7.1 5<sup>th</sup> November, Bonfire Night - received the highest volume of 999's for the month, with 826. From 6pm until 3am we were offered 523 calls (Nov daily average was 569), with 110 of those being offered in one hour.













7.2 Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December – highest 999 volume for December at 755 calls offered. This was part of a busy weekend with the Fri, Sat and Sunday totalling 2065 emergency calls being offered (17% increase on the monthly average)

7.3 Table 5: Top Ten Longest waiting Calls (Minutes)

| Year            | 2016            |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Month           | Nov             | Dec             | Jan             |
| Top 10          | 00:31:55        | 00:30:29        | 00:42:29        |
|                 | 00:22:11        | 00:25:30        | 00:23:28        |
|                 | 00:21:59        | 00:25:27        | 00:22:54        |
|                 | 00:21:44        | 00:23:04        | 00:22:12        |
|                 | 00:21:00        | 00:22:56        | 00:21:17        |
|                 | 00:20:51        | 00:21:17        | 00:17:47        |
|                 | 00:20:40        | 00:20:03        | 00:17:06        |
|                 | 00:18:59        | 00:19:47        | 00:15:13        |
|                 | 00:18:11        | 00:18:55        | 00:14:11        |
|                 | 00:17:15        | 00:18:08        | 00:13:25        |
| Overall Average | <b>00:01:29</b> | <b>00:01:47</b> | <b>00:01:04</b> |

7.4 The longest waiting call for this period occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Staffing levels appear to be the main contributing factor to this extended wait time. The call waited 42 mins and 29 seconds and was answered sometime between 02:30hrs and 02:45hrs. During the period 01:00-02:00hrs we had 3 staff scheduled to 101 call handling, the period 02:00-03:00hrs this fell to 2 staff scheduled. Unfortunately sickness was a big issue on this particular night. Five staff were booked off from nights due to illness. This abstraction of staff will always come from the Call Handling reserve, therefore leaving us short of appropriate staffing levels.

**8. Detailed Analysis: Nov, Dec and Jan comparison**

|                      | <b>2015/16</b> | <b>2016/17</b> |   |       |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|---|-------|
| 999 Calls            | 49738          | 51659          |    | 3.9%  |
| 101 Calls            | 184606         | 179840         |    | -2.6% |
| Total Calls          | 234344         | 231499         |    | -1.2% |
| Average Talk Time    | 04:04          | 04:27          |    | 9.4%  |
| Average Wrap Time    | 04:30          | 05:27          |    | 21.1% |
| Average Handle Time  | 08:34          | 09:54          |    | 15.6% |
| 999 Staffing Hours   | 5874           | 5962           |    | 1.5%  |
| 999 'Calls per Hour' | 8.5            | 8.7            |   | 2.3%  |
| 101 Staffing Hours   | 35900          | 32725          |  | -8.8% |
| 101 'Calls per Hour' | 6.5            | 7.1            |  | 8.4%  |
| Total Staffing Hours | 41774          | 38687          |  | -7.4% |
| All 'Calls per Hour' | 5.6            | 6.0            |  | 6.7%  |

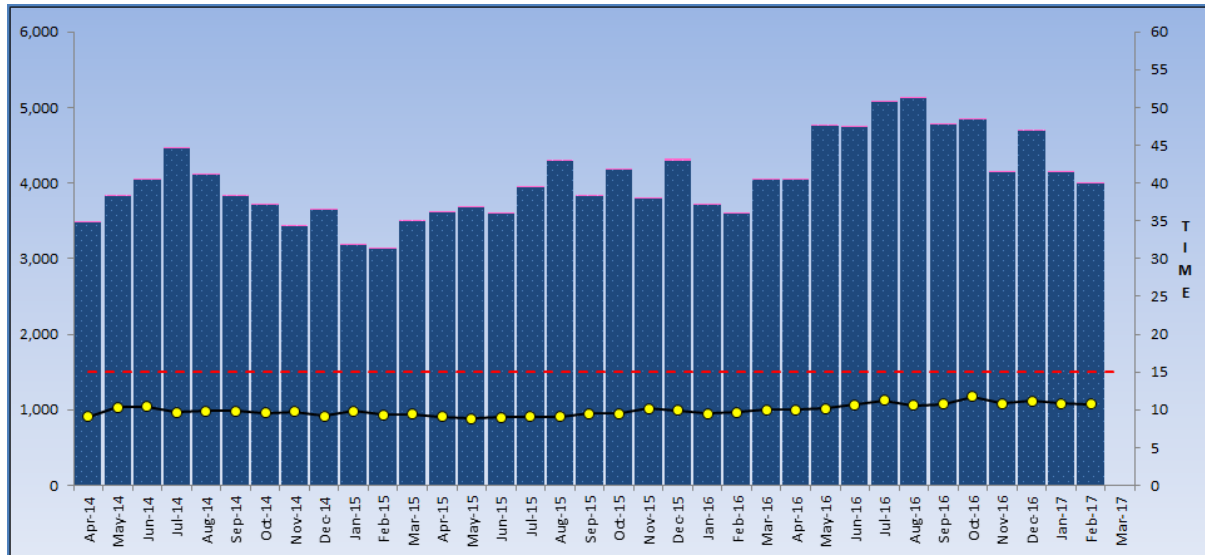
8.1 Although total calls down average talk time has increased by 15.6%

8.2 Operators are taking more calls per hour, increase by 6.7% on both 101's and 9's

## 9. Emergency Response Times

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

### 9.2 Table 6: Emergency Calls: Response Times



## 10. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

### 10.1 Human Resources – Resourcing

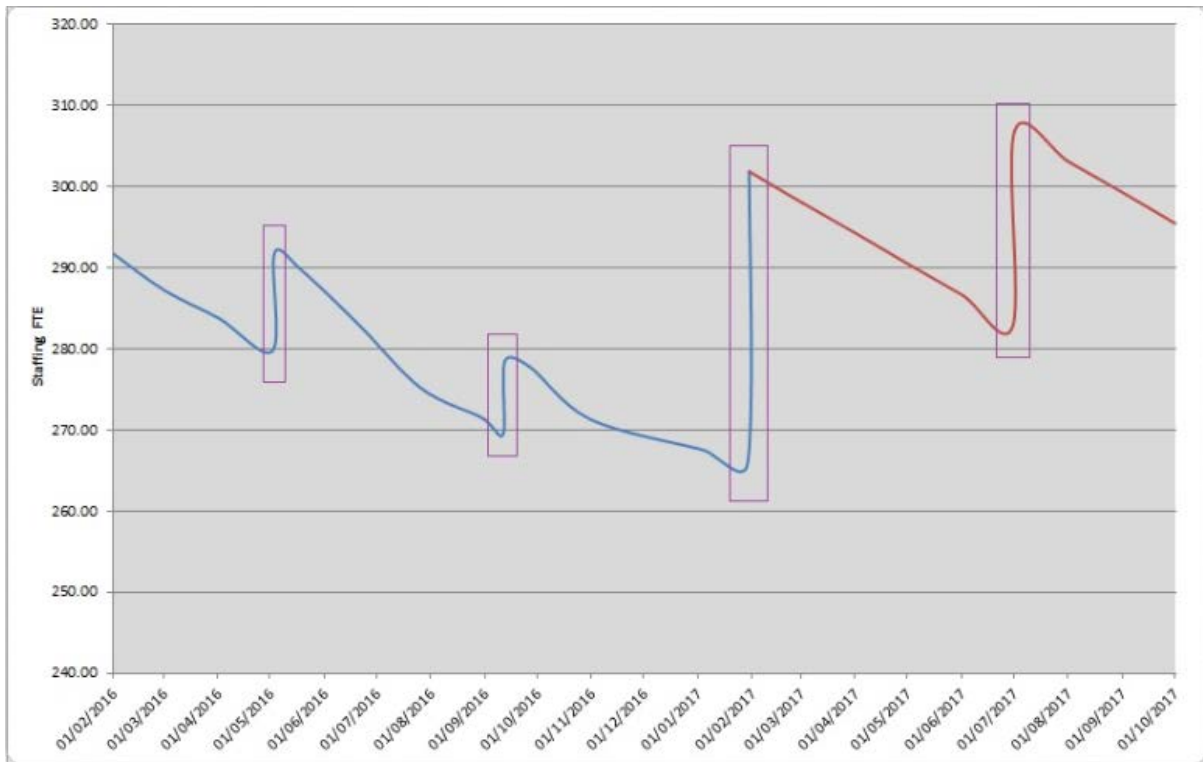
10.2 Because of the challenges described in this paper, the department has embarked on an ambitious and challenging programme to recruit new staff into the room. A recruitment campaign offering permanent (as opposed to temporary) contracts for the first time in several years has been successful in attracting a large number of high quality applicants.

10.3 New recruit training course is currently on-going with 37 new staff. On completion of the course (17<sup>th</sup> April) they will answer both 999/101 calls supported by tutors in a call-handling hub. The hours this will be conducted are based on the 2,2,2 rota but with variations to support peak call demand times. This hub will be in place until 1<sup>st</sup> September and on completion of this the new staff will be progressed onto the established PCRO teams.

10.4 In addition to this we are conducting continual recruitment campaigns with another intake starting their Training at the end of June and will enter the call-handling hub as the current new starters complete theirs. This provides extra support to new starters but also ensures effective utilization of PCRO tutors as they are required to be abstracted from the control room.

10.5 Although there is no specific force requirement, Contact management will be conducting exit interviews with staff that leave the department in order to understand if there are another factors for leaving apart from contractual and Police officer recruitment.

10.6 Below table is current and projected PCRO staffing FTE, the boxes indicate recruitment intakes



10.7 Low recruitment numbers previously have been affected by temporary contracts and since the current permanent contracts have been advertised we have seen an increase on applications.

10.8 Consideration has been given to whether the location of the Control room is a hindrance to the amount of new applicants received, however the current trainees reside in all areas of Lancashire including Heysham and Colne.

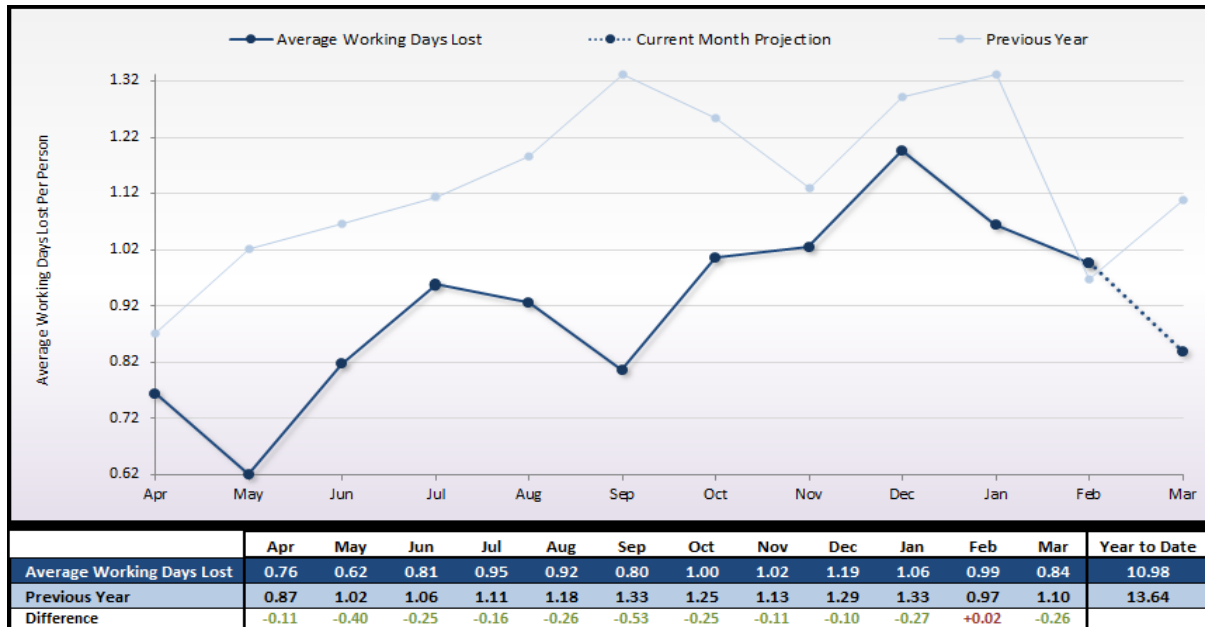
10.9 Recruitment seminars are ongoing including inputs from experienced PCRO's to help applicants fully understand what the role of a PCRO entails.



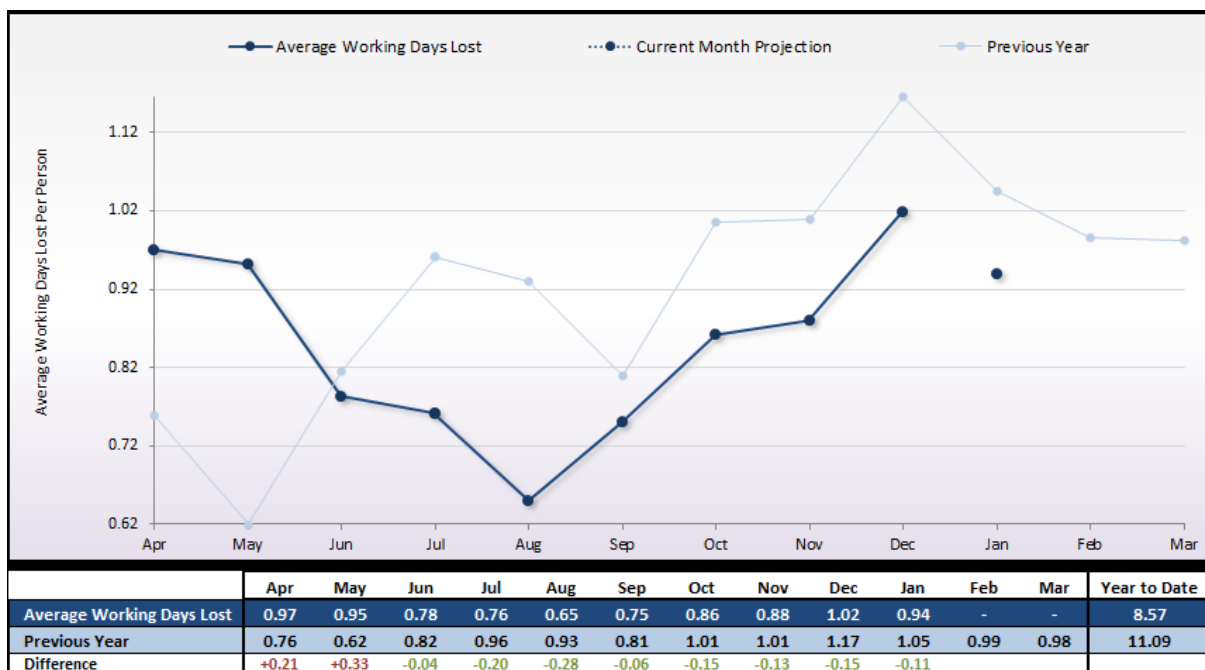
## 11. Attendance

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

11.2 Table 7: Contact Management Attendance 2015 - Apr 2016



11.3 Table 8: Contact Management Attendance Apr 2016 – Current



## **12. Summary**

- 12.1 Overall, this has been a challenging period, but with the addition 37 staff being available to take calls mid-April this will assist significantly with demand in the Control Room.
- 12.2 Contact Management continues to develop in other areas such as channel shift and is also working closely with the Demand Analysis team to ensure service delivery is enhanced.