



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**  
police and communities together

<b>REPORT TO : STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING</b>
<b>DATE : 15 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>
<b>REPORT BY: T/CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT PETER LAWSON</b>
<b>TITLE: UPDATE ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT</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> August 2016

## 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 been challenging for the Force Control Room (FCR) with the increase in calls for service normally associated with the summer months exceeding predictions. There is growing evidence that the nature of demand being received by the FCR is changing, with increases particularly in Public Safety incidents related to concern for the welfare of members of the public, together with collapsed and injured people.
- 3.3 This increase in demand has impacted on call handling service levels, but the impact being felt in Lancashire appears to be reflected both in the region and nationally among emergency services.
- 3.4 The on-going review of demand in Contact Management together with other organisational development initiatives in the FCR are establishing strong foundations that will enable the room to adapt to this changing profile of calls for service together with other future challenges. These measures are described in more detail later in the report.
- 3.5 This reporting period has also experienced stable and steady operation of all critical IT systems, with the only outages being for planned and routine maintenance.

## 4.0 CALL HANDLING – MEASURES

### 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 1: 999 Service Levels

	999					
	Offered	Achieved	Service Level	Average Speed to Answer	Abandonment Rate	Calls Offered % Change from last year
<b>JUN</b>	16758	14749	88.01%	4.3	0.8%	
<b>JUL</b>	16983	14885	87.65%	4.6	0.5%	
<b>AUG</b>	18933	16754	88.49%	4.2	0.8%	
<b>SEP</b>	16374	14194	86.69%	4.8	0.5%	
<b>OCT</b>	17237	15483	89.82%	4.0	0.4%	
<b>NOV</b>	16745	14761	88.15%	4.2	0.4%	
<b>DEC</b>	17984	15721	87.42%	4.4	0.5%	
<b>JAN</b>	15009	13813	92.03%	3.3	0.5%	
<b>FEB</b>	14918	13235	88.72%	4.4	0.9%	
<b>MAR</b>	16683	14786	88.63%	4.4	0.5%	
<b>APR</b>	15794	13931	88.20%	4.4	0.7%	
<b>MAY</b>	18623	15105	81.11% *	6.4	1.1%	
<b>JUN</b>	19157	13693	71.48%	9.9	1.6%	+14%
<b>JUL</b>	20658	15186	73.51%	8.9	1.7%	+21%
<b>AUG</b>	21245	14355	67.57%	11.8	2%	+12%

Call data changed since previous scrutiny due to system fail data now available

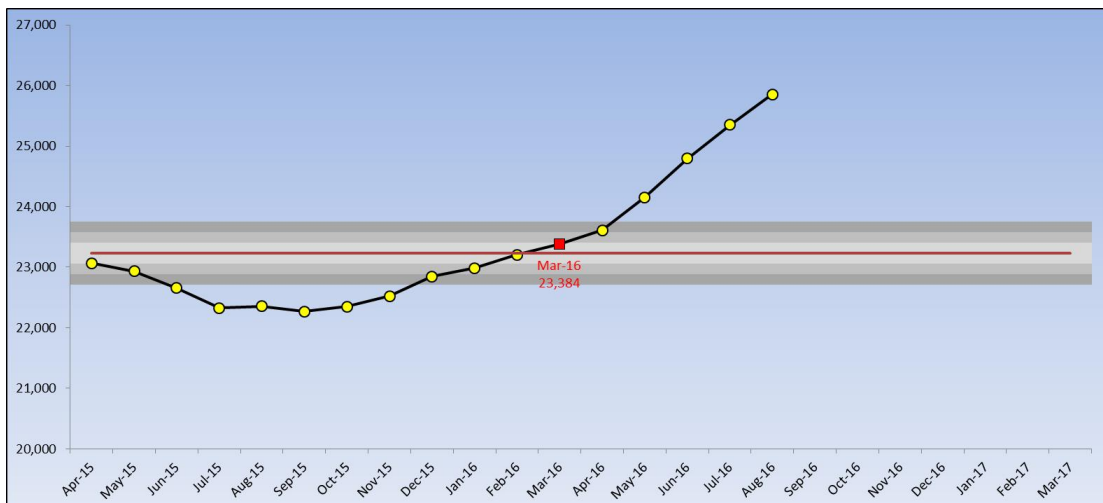
\* See p8. 12-18 May ICCS System Instability resulted in fall-back procedures being implemented.

- Nationally for the months of June and July there has been a significant increase in call-demand affecting all emergency services. Lancashire attended a recent national 999/112 Liaison Committee Meeting in London when it was reported that the national average time for police to answer 999 calls for June/July was 10seconds.
- June, July, and August experienced 999 call levels 14%, 21%, and 12% respectively above the corresponding months in 2015. To give this increase context, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July experienced 931 emergency calls. This compares to the busiest day of last year (New Year’s Eve) that had 998 calls.

4.1 In general, where service levels are below 90% reasons relate to demand exceeding the capacity of the FCR to deal with in within desired timescales together with:

- Sudden surges in demand: a typical example would be an incident on the motorway network at peak times – which can result in multiple emergency calls being received in a very short timeframe. It is almost impossible to mitigate against the impact this type of event has on call handling performance.
- Complexity of calls: There has been a significant increase in public safety demand. This includes logs created for Concern for Welfare together with the Collapse / Illness / Injury category. Most of these high risk incidents are received via the 999 line and need to be dealt with thoroughly by the CCA taking the call. Typically, it takes around 20 minutes on the phone to deal with this type of call followed by 20 minutes of checks prior to deployment (e.g. checking with hospitals for admissions etc.).

Table 2: Grade 1 Public Safety Incidents (12 month Rolling Total)



- Demand exceeding predictions: The room is resourced based on a combination of historic call handling and demand data together with predictable operational threats. For these reasons staffing in the room will be enhanced

for easily predictable events such as major sporting occasions, Halloween etc. More challenging threats to performance are unexpected events such as spells of unusually good weather – it is challenging to respond quickly enough and adapt staffing levels to this type of scenario.

4.2 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.

## 5.0 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
<b>JUN</b>	69359	56492	81.45%	22.9	7.4%	
<b>JUL</b>	66926	53433	79.84%	27	8%	
<b>AUG</b>	69019	52294	75.77%	29.3	9.2%	
<b>SEP</b>	66105	51767	78.31%	28.7	8.5%	
<b>OCT</b>	67880	53476	78.78%	26.7	8.1%	
<b>NOV</b>	63380	51772	81.69%	23.3	7.3%	
<b>DEC</b>	63502	48406	76.23%	35.7	11.4%	
<b>JAN</b>	57724	50136	86.85%	15.8	4.5%	
<b>FEB</b>	58404	48085	82.33%	21.1	6.1%	
<b>MAR</b>	61877	50211	81.15%	22.9	7.1%	
<b>APR</b>	60710	46029	75.82%	29.1	8.3%	
<b>MAY</b>	68044	43415	63.80% *	48.3	14%	
<b>JUN</b>	72984	40988	56.16%	73	20.1%	+5%

<b>JUL</b>	72115	41324	57.30%	63	20.9%	+8%
<b>AUG</b>	73459	34896	47.50%	100.9	25.2%	+6%

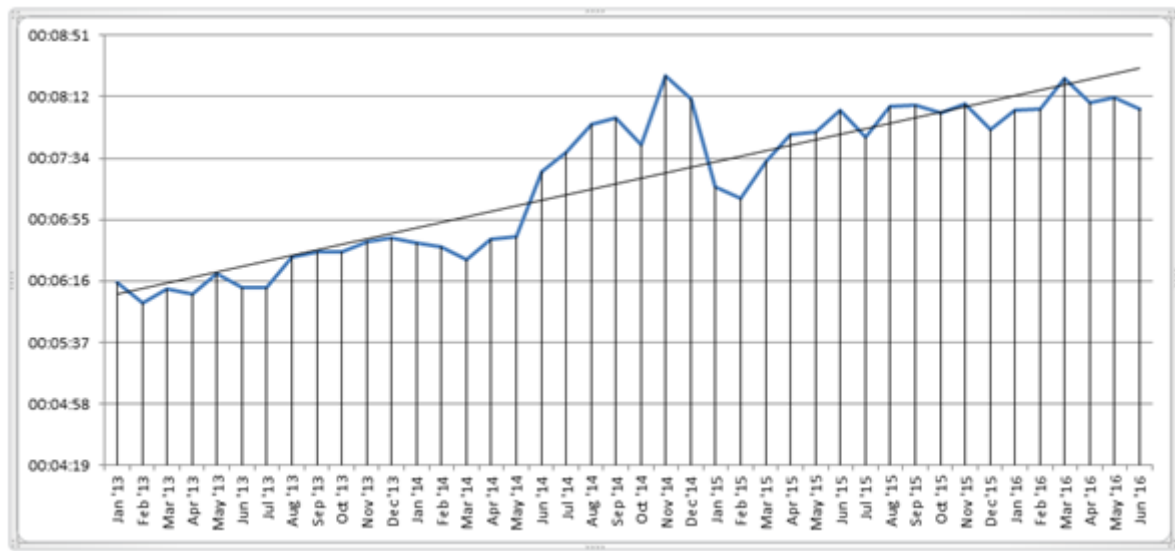
Call data changed since previous scrutiny due to system fail data now available

\* See p8. 12-18 May ICCS System Instability resulted in fall-back procedures being implemented.

5.1 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 – The chart 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 CCA to conduct relevant checks to assess Risk, Threat and Harm. This isn't currently measured but is a measure being explored by the on-going demand review of Contact Management because it can be a considerable length of time depending on the incident type.
- 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 nature 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. Longer term plans around recruitment are designed to reduce turnover and attrition of staff.

Table 4: Average Call Handling Time (Jan 13 - Jun 16)



**Exceptions since last meeting:**

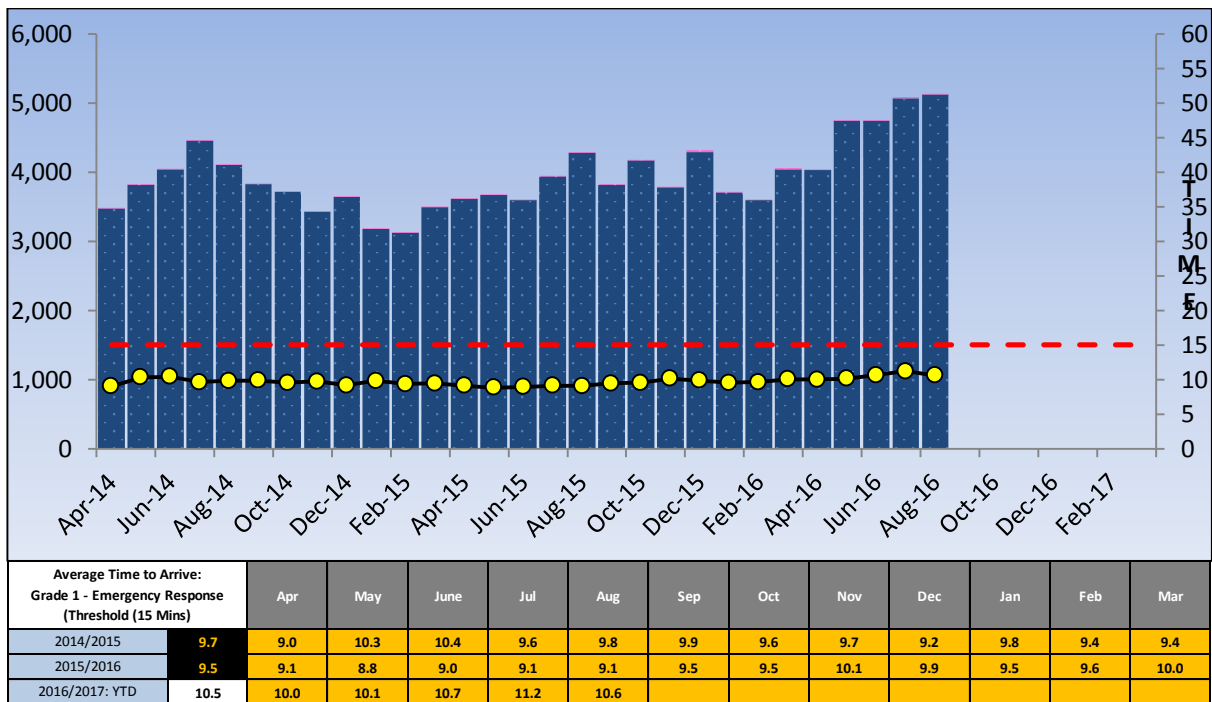
- 12 June – highest 999 calls received for June total 826 with 249 of those received over 3hrs alone current average that month was 600 within 24hrs.
- 15 June – stage 1 bar place on two separate mobile phone numbers for making hoax 999 calls, both phones making in excess of 40 hoax calls
- 18 July – 3259 101 calls received because Merseyside and GMP reported problems with their telephony that impacted on calls received by Lancs.
- 23 July – 931 9's received: this volume is similar to that expected on New Year's Eve. Nothing significant of note but consistent high volume of calls.

Table 5: Top Ten Longest waiting Calls (Minutes)

<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>
00:36:40	00:27:54	00:24:18
00:25:55	00:26:28	00:24:04
00:21:16	00:20:12	00:23:14
00:21:03	00:19:40	00:22:23
00:20:35	00:19:04	00:21:45
00:19:32	00:18:39	00:19:13
00:19:27	00:17:49	00:18:23
00:19:14	00:17:47	00:17:59
00:19:05	00:17:37	00:17:36
00:17:24	00:17:32	00:17:36

- Longest call waiting times have lengthened since the last scrutiny report because of higher call volumes over the summer period as described above.
- The average call waiting time for 101 calls in June was 73 seconds. In July it was 63 seconds, and in August it was 101 seconds.

Table 6: Emergency Calls: Response Times



## 6.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

### Human Resources - Attendance

- (i) The switchboard remains within the Force Control Room and a review of demand by the Futures team commenced in April to examine demand and work flow processes in Contact Management. This is expected to report with recommendations later in 2016.
- (ii) A new intake of CCA's are now taking calls however with projected vacancies additional new recruit courses have been planned for 2017.

Table 7: Contact Management Attendance 2015 - Apr 2016

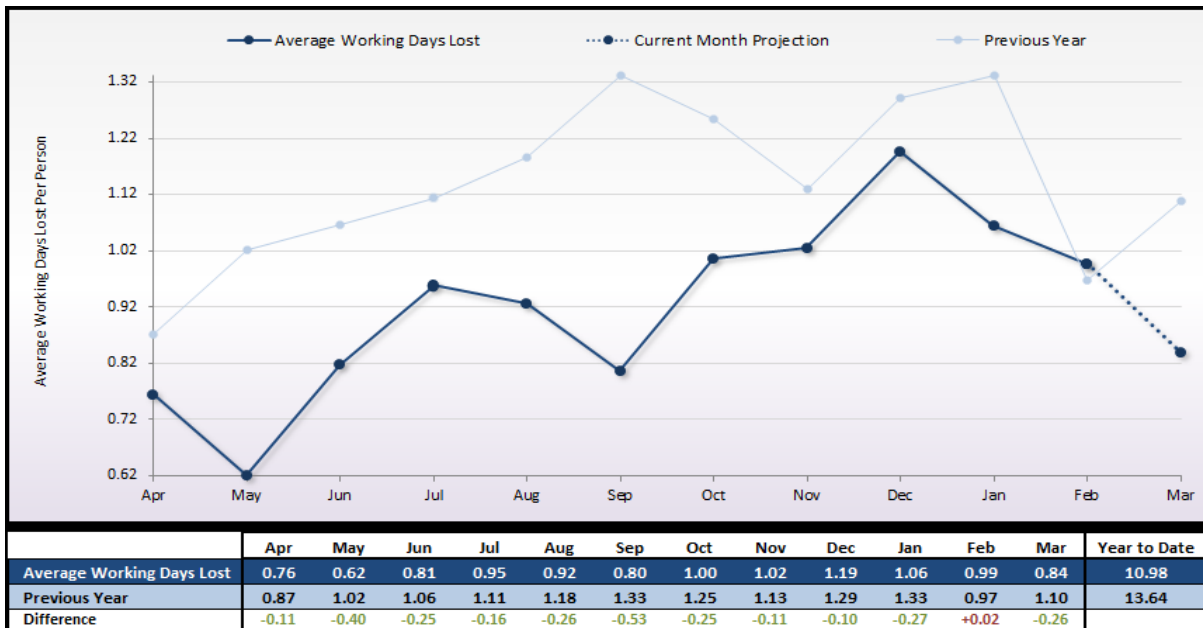
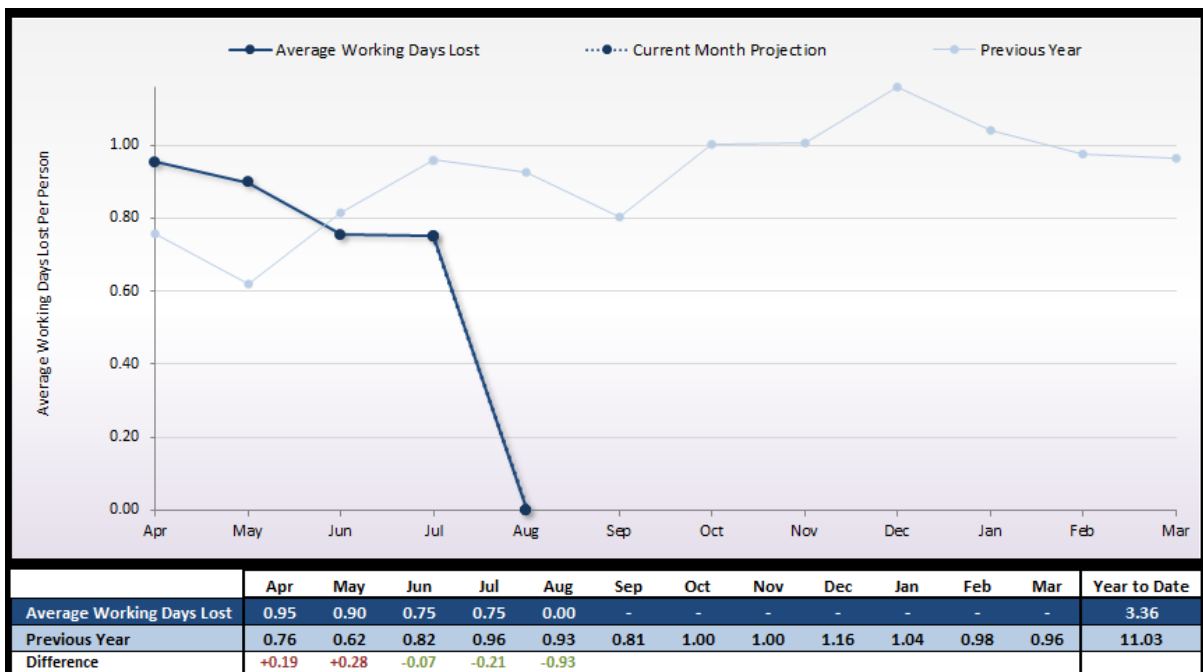


Table 8: Contact Management Attendance Apr 2016 – Current



- (iii) Contact Management have been working closely with the Performance Improvement Unit over the last 12 months to help manage attendance; introducing supportive yet robust improvement plans. The charts above show a consistent downward trend in terms of average days lost to sickness in the department.



## 7.0 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONTACT MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The report describes a challenging summer period for the Force Control Room during which calls for service have been complex in nature and high in volume. The department is developing a number of strategic work streams to build competence and resilience that will mean it is better equipped to respond to future challenges. These are outlined below:

### FCR Establishment: Recruitment, Retention, and Staff Development

#### Background

- 7.2 When in 2013 the old 6 divisional control rooms were consolidated into 1 at Hutton Headquarters, cost saving reviews reduced permanent staff numbers in the FCR in phased steps from 317, to 295, and then to 275.
- 7.3 The operating context and demand received in the FCR has never stabilised at a level that provided sufficient confidence to drop permanently to 275 CCAs. Therefore since 2013, 20 posts with temporary contracts have existed in the room to “top up” the establishment from 275 to 295 posts.
- 7.4 The presence of 20 temporary posts in the room has been an impediment to attracting enough applicants of the right calibre; many of the best potential recruits are put off applying by the temporary nature of the contracts offered. Furthermore the ‘turnover’ of temporary staff in the room tends to be relatively high with temporary CCAs using the role as a stepping stone to moving onto other roles inside and outside the Constabulary.
- 7.5 Through exit interviews together with feedback from new members of staff, it has also been determined that the name “Customer Contact Advisor” (CCA) is in itself an impediment to effective recruitment and retention of staff because the name fails to accurately describe the role performed by operators. Members of staff have said that the name CCA led them to believe they would be working in an environment similar to a commercial call centre. Having joined and found the high risk decision making role in the FCR very different to this perception some have left the organisation.
- 7.6 The practical consequence of the above issues has been that attrition rate / staff leaving the department has consistently exceeded the rate at which new CCAs have been recruited – with actual staff numbers consistently being around the 275-280 level; insufficient to provide acceptable service levels. At the time of writing, the room actually has 278 CCAs.

#### New Developments

- 7.7 Over the summer the department has conducted a comprehensive review of its approach to recruitment, development and retention of staff that has resulted in the following key initiatives:

- 7.8 Name of CCAs:** a survey and consultation in the department has resulted in the name of CCAs being changed with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September. They will now be titled “Police Control Room Operators”. This is viewed as a positive change by staff and is the title that will be used when the department recruits in future.
- 7.9 Permanent Contracts:** In the Strategic Management Board in August, the decision was taken to make the 20 temporary contracts permanent. The effect of this is to set the establishment of the FCR at 295 permanent posts (rather than 275 permanent + 20 temporary). This is expected to be highly advantageous in future recruitment processes and will also help to reduce attrition and turnover of staff – ultimately making the room more effective.
- 7.10 Recruitment:** On 26<sup>th</sup> August marketing commenced for a recruitment process for the Force Control Room. During the first half of September the following will take place:
- Facebook events marketing the role of Police Control Room Operator
  - Twitter marketing of the role
  - An open evening hosted at HQ with presentations from members of the Senior Management Team.

Application packs will then be made available from 15<sup>th</sup> September.

- 7.11 Training and Mentoring:** The approach used by the department to training and introduction of new starters to the room has been refreshed and plans include trained mentors and refreshed training content that better reflects the demands of the role.
- 7.12 Demand Analysis Review:** The Demand Analysis review is continuing to make good progress and is expected to enable substantial process, cultural, and technology related improvements over the next 12 months.
- 7.13 Technology – Systems and Infrastructure Issues**
- 7.14** A meeting held monthly between Contact Management and ICT is making good progress in terms of strengthening support for the control room. Examples of developments include:
- Greater coordination of planned system maintenance
  - Better communication of faults that need resolving.
  - An enhanced approach to long term development – e.g. project management work has commenced on a replacement for the ‘Planet’ workforce scheduling system used in the control room.
- 7.15** Since the last scrutiny reporting period, systems and infrastructure in the FCR have been in a steady and stable state with no unplanned outages.
- 7.16** Integration of the Disaster Recovery Integrated Command and Control System (DR-ICCS) is almost complete. This is essentially a fall-back ICCS located at

Preston Ops Centre that means in the event of an ICCS failure at Hutton, up to 50 terminals in the Hutton FCR can operate off the DR-ICCS. This will be a robust business continuity procedure that in future will significantly mitigate against the need to adopt fall-back working.

## **8.0 Summary**

- 8.1 Overall, this has been a challenging period, but strategic developments within Contact Management are establishing strong foundations upon which to enhance future performance.