



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**  
police and communities together

<b>REPORT TO : SCRUTINY MEETING</b>
<b>REPORT BY: SUPERINTENDENT RICHARD ROBERTSHAW</b>
<b>TITLE: UPDATE ON CONTACT MANAGEMENT</b>

### **Summary**

This report sets out the update on the Contact Management Department of the Constabulary for the reporting period January to March 2019.

### **Decision Required**

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

## Contact Management Update to the PCC

This report will provide an update on the latest call performance and significant organisational developments in Contact Management for the quarter Jan 2019 – Mar 2019.

**Section 1** provides an update on significant programmes of work within the FCR (Force Control Room). Most notably, this will include details of the internal approval to progress the refurbishment of the FCR to facilitate geographic POD based working, which will take place during 2020-21. The section also includes an update on planned PCRO recruitment scheduled for 2019-20.

**Section 2** provides an update on the performance within the FCR across a number of key call performance metrics. To allow a more informative and meaningful scrutiny of Contact Management performance several of the reporting graphs now provide a six rather than three month comparison.

**Section 3** provides a brief overview / update of a number of other important – predominantly ICT work streams - that will have significant current, or future impact on the FCR.

### Section 1 - Overview of key developments

#### Decision to refurbish the FCR in 2020/21

- 1.1 Since the last scrutiny update in February 2019 the business case and associated funding to refurbish the FCR to support geographic Pod, based working was approved through the Constabulary's internal governance process. As previously reported, the temporary Pod working geographic structure in the FCR is delivering improved performance across a range of key metrics. However, it is not sustainable within the constraints of the current FCR footprint.
- 1.2 Now that the decision has formally been taken, the emphasis of this key programme of work has shifted to establishing appropriate governance and reporting structures. A central aspect of this enhanced governance arrangement is the establishment of a FCR decent / refurbishment board. The first meeting of the board took place in May. The board will be comprised of all the key stakeholders involved in this complex and challenging programme of work. A representative of the OPCC has a standing invitation to the board to monitor progress. A key decision that formed part of the business case was the use of a dedicated project manager to ensure the decant and associated refurbishment is delivered in line with project management best practice. This individual is now in place and has assumed responsibility for supporting the internal constabulary team with the delivery of the programme of work.
- 1.3 The high-level timeline for the refurbishment is that the decant of staff from the main FCR to the fall back communications rooms will commence in early 2020, with staff returning to the refurbished FCR in early 2021. Progress on this important programme of work will be reported on in future Contact Management scrutiny updates.

### Force Control Room PCRO Staffing, training and recruitment 2019/20

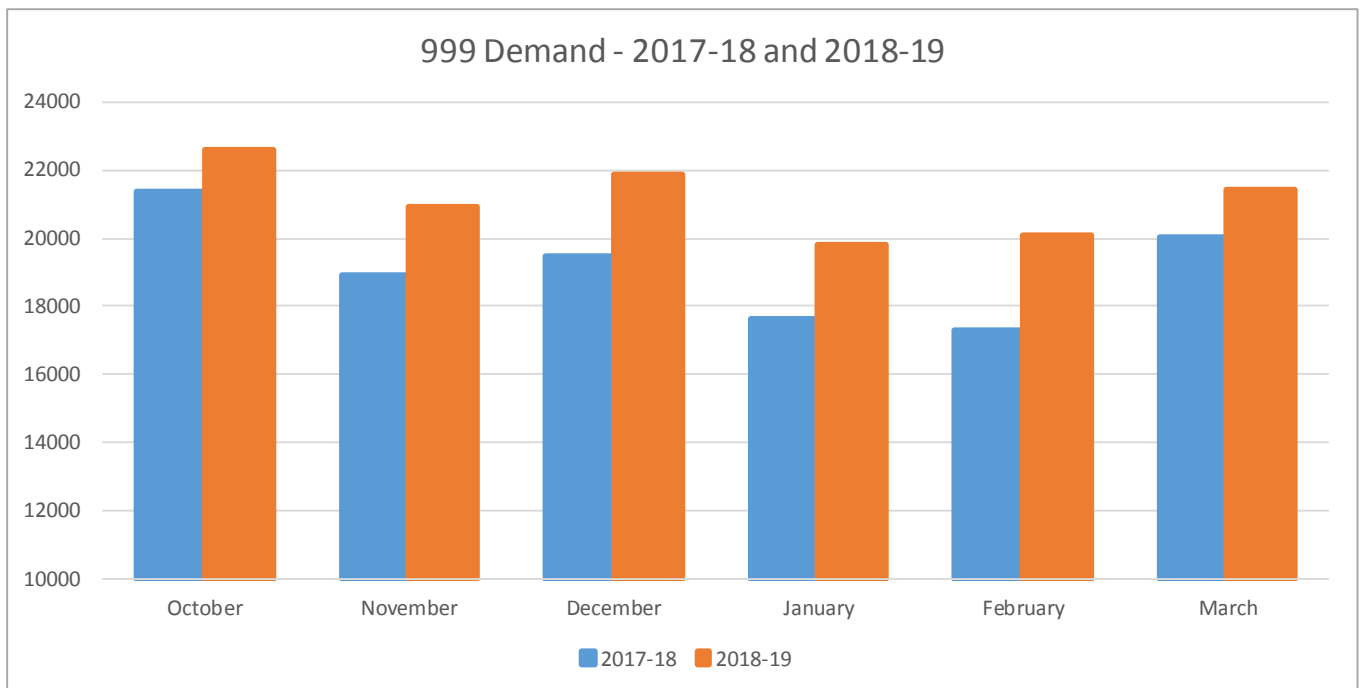
- 1.4 The FCR continues to recruit PCROs to maintain a staff establishment of 345 PCRO (Police Control Room Operators) FTEs. There are currently 337 FTE. In order to maintain this level there was an intake of 17 PCROs in April. The target for this recruitment window had been 20 PCROs, but unfortunately insufficient suitably skilled individuals accepted offers of employment. The focus is now on a recruitment intake of 40 PCROs in September 2019. The window for applications is currently open and has been accompanied by a focused social media campaign and roadshow presentations highlighting the professionally rewarding nature of the PCRO role. A key objective of both recruitment drives has been; the focus on diverse demographic groups and geographic areas that will assist in ensuring the recruitment profile is representative of Lancashire as a whole. The recruitment of a significant number of PCROs in September has been deliberately timed to ensure the FCR is at full establishment operationally at the point of the commencement of the decant in January 2020.
- 1.5 Early planning has started for recruitment in 2020, the current proposal being following the same model as 2019 with intakes in April and September. The size of these intakes will be determined nearer the time, when the vacancy picture within the department can be accurately assessed.
- 1.6 Since the last update, there has been good progress in upskilling the significant number of new PCROs with the dispatching and facilitating skill sets that are essential for them to be able to perform all aspects of the PCRO role. Although, it should be noted, that the volume of new staff, combined with the need to maintain acceptable call taking performance makes this upskilling process challenging to facilitate.

## Section 2 - FCR performance update

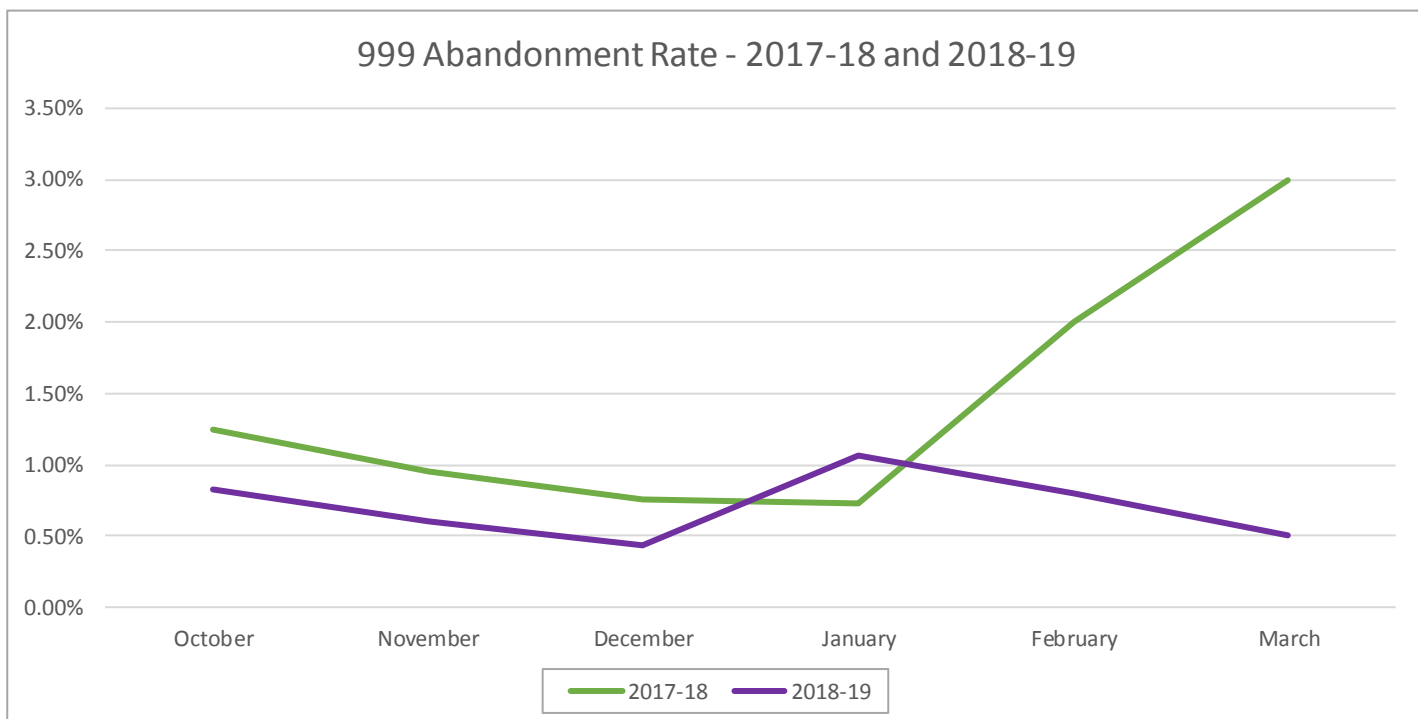
### Call Performance – 999 Emergency Calls

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The following graphs provide a comparison of how the FCR has performed across a range of metrics for this scrutiny period (Jan – Mar 2019) versus the same period in 2018. To provide a more informative picture of FCR performance some of the graphs now cover a six-month year on year comparison.
- 2.3 Positively, the data in the following graphs for this scrutiny period show improvement in 999 performance across a range of metrics.

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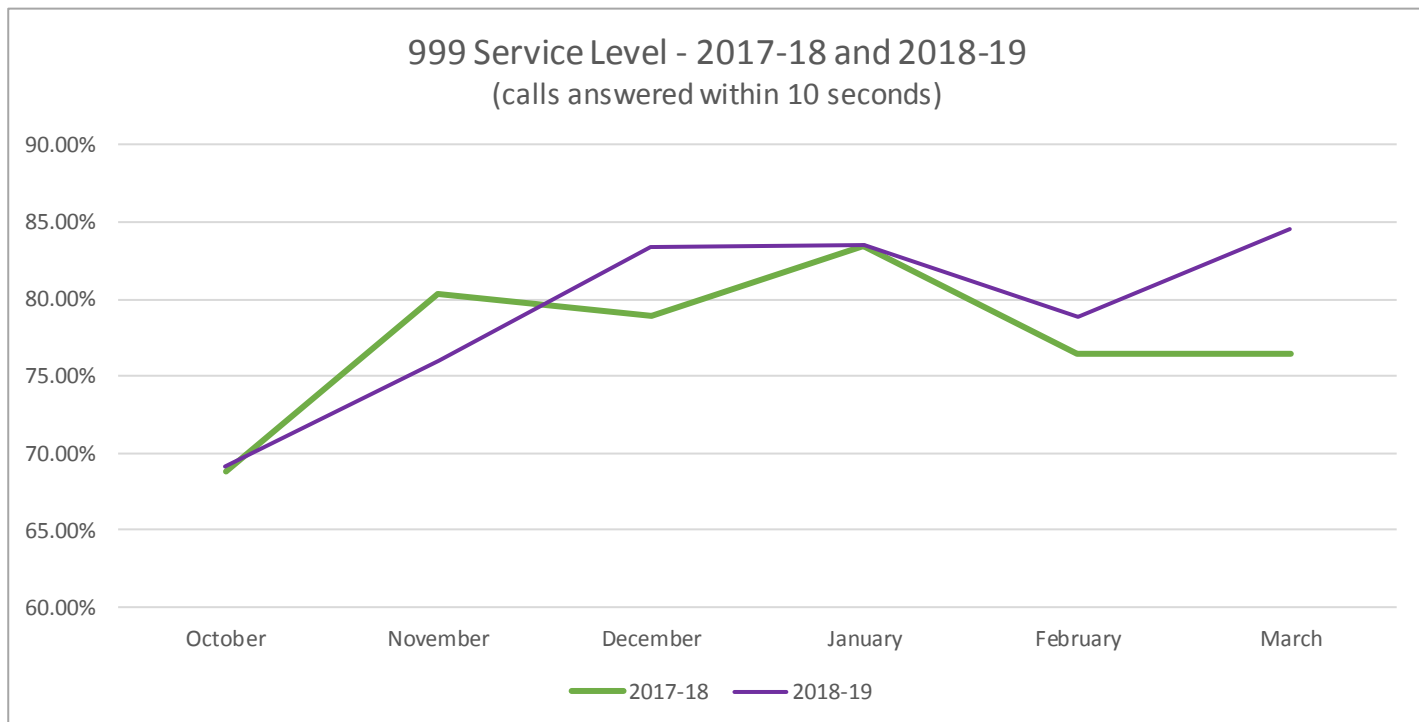
- The first quarter of 2019 has seen the FCR dealing with a larger amount of 999 calls compared to the previous year this trend is continuing. There has been an 11.6% rise in demand overall across the quarter.
- A high-level review of the increases in 999 calls has not identified a single cause of the increase in 999 calls across the period.



- Despite the increase in 999 demand the abandonment on remains very low, and is consistently lower than last year.

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- The abandonment rate was extremely variable in 2017-18. With the introduction of POD working in September 2018 and the increase in PCRO establishment, this aspect of performance has proven to be more stable and consistent with far less significant variations on a day-to-day basis. Whilst national data on this aspect of performance is not available, discussions with other forces have highlighted that this consistent excellent level of performance is not the norm in many other police forces.



- Our 999-service level was on a downward trend prior to POD go-live in November 2019, since then it has climbed or maintained each month. The FCRs average service level prior to PODs was around 70%, it is now averaging around a stable level of 80%+ each month of calls answered within 10 seconds.
- This performance has been achieved despite the increase in 999 demand over the reporting period.

#### National 999 Context

- 2.4 Detailed below is the number of BT longest wait time for 999 performance (any 999-call waiting over two minutes before it is transferred to the force the call has emanated from). The data below focuses on comparable sized forces with similar levels of demand. BT do not provide figures when the long

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waits have not exceeded 50 calls in a month, these months are represented by a blank box in the below table.

### BT Long waits of 2 minutes (figures only supplied if monthly total exceeds 50)

999 > 2 minutes	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
DEVON & CORNWALL	316	255	381	204	124	136	131	213	268
ESSEX	569	441	373	204	261	167	79	108	322
HAMPSHIRE	172	193	129	117	104	165	80	162	143
HUMBERSIDE	156	85		52	50	69		66	78
KENT	63			59	79	73	56	60	101
<b>LANCASHIRE</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>84</b>		<b>177*</b>					
LEICESTER	147	131	103	73	63	60	54	66	72
MERSEYSIDE	143	182	203	309	277	268	78	210	186
NORTHUMBRIA	686	416	549	508	344	203	93	145	217
SOUTH WALES	61								
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	272	129	68	51	477	604	294	316	416
THAMES VALLEY	224	179	131	148	131	158	60	98	57

- 2.5 As can be seen from the above data Lancashire continues to perform extremely favourable in comparison with other similarly sized forces in relation to the number of long wait 999's.

\*The commissioner will recall that the high October figure was an anomaly (discussed at the Feb 19 meeting) caused by a technical issue which has been addressed.

### Call Performance - Non Emergency 101 Calls

- 2.6 Non-emergency calls also remain a priority for the FCR. As has been reported previously, achieving the national target of answering 101s within 40 seconds remains extremely challenging. As with 999-call performance, a proportion of these difficulties can be attributed to the changing nature of demand entering the FCR.
- 2.7 The main issues are the complexity of the demand within the calls, combined with the additional safeguarding / vulnerability checks done by FCR staff (following adverse Child Protection and Crime and Data Integrity HMICFRS inspections in 2017/19). Additionally the change from SLEUTH to Northgate Connect for crime and investigation in November 2018, has cumulatively led to significantly longer average call handling times.
- 2.8 It should be noted that call handling time is the total time it takes to deal with a call, not just the 'talk time', it is often the case that after a call has concluded additional checks will be made and updates will be added to the incident log before a PCRO is free to take their next call. The inevitable impact of longer call handling times is a reduction in available capacity in the FCR to answer new calls for service.

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2.9 As previously reported, 101 performance is an improving picture in some regards. However, there are areas of performance that remain challenging.

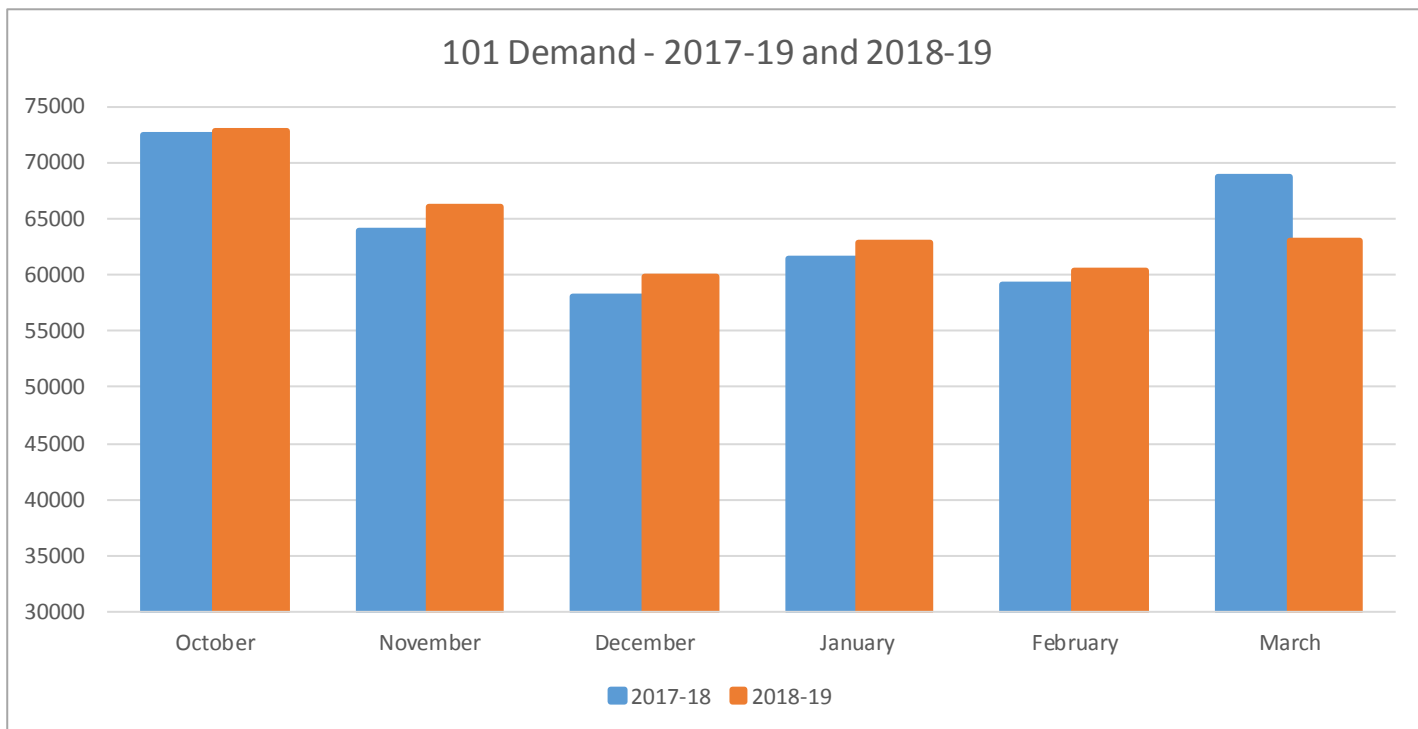
The following are a number of operational challenges that are present in respect of delivering consistently high 101 performance figures:

- **101 Talk Time** has increased by 11.23% (34 seconds) for this quarter, compared to the same quarter last year. The following points provide some explanation for this increase.
- **Criming of Grade 3 and 4s** – From August 2018 it has become standard practice for PCROs to enter ‘Quick Crimes’<sup>1</sup> for all Grade 3 and Grade 4 crime-related incidents. Compliance with this requirement was driven throughout 2018 where prior to Connect go live in November 2018, over 50% of applicable crime categories were being crimed at first point of contact by the PCRO. A natural consequence of this additional work was an increase in call-handling times whilst the PCRO fully managed the caller’s requirements. Whilst not at the same level of performance post Connect implementation PCROs are being encouraged to continue to crime grade 3 and 4 crime related incidents.
- **Connect** – Phase 2 of Connect (intelligence and investigation) went live on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Since the introduction of Connect, there was an initial increase in call handling time for system searches and crime inputting. There was on average approximately a 4% increase, this roughly equates to approximately 560 extra hours a month (or over 23 days) on the phone per month. The FCR staff have needed to become adept at using a completely different system to the one they had gained familiarity and proficiency with over many years.
- **Inexperienced Staff** – As has been reported in previous updates, there has been a large recruitment drive to bring the department up to its budgeted 345 FTE PCRO establishment (this figure being an increase of 50 on the previous 295 FTE PCRO establishment). Positively there are more PCROs in the FCR; however, this translates into; more inexperienced call-handlers who naturally take longer to handle calls. At present 36.5% of the PCROs have under 2 years’ service and 46.5% have less than 3 years’ of service in the FCR. This lack of experience creates a significant resource overhead not just when staff are new to the room, but also when essential training is scheduled for facilitating and dispatch.
- **Pod Overflow Testing** – Since POD Go-Live, there has been on-going testing of the 101 call overflow times. ‘Overflow’ happens when calls are not answered within a certain time from within the POD the call came into. If this happens, the call will ‘overflow’ into the other PODs for the first available operator to answer. Initially the overflow time limit was set at 10 minutes, this was done deliberately to try to ensure each caller has the maximum chance of being answered by the POD / PCROs for their area to provide them with a localised service. The commissioner will recall that the data for the first 3 months of POD working showed an unacceptably high abandonment rate. We are therefore incrementally reducing the overflow time limit to identify the optimum balance between a localised service and an acceptable wait.

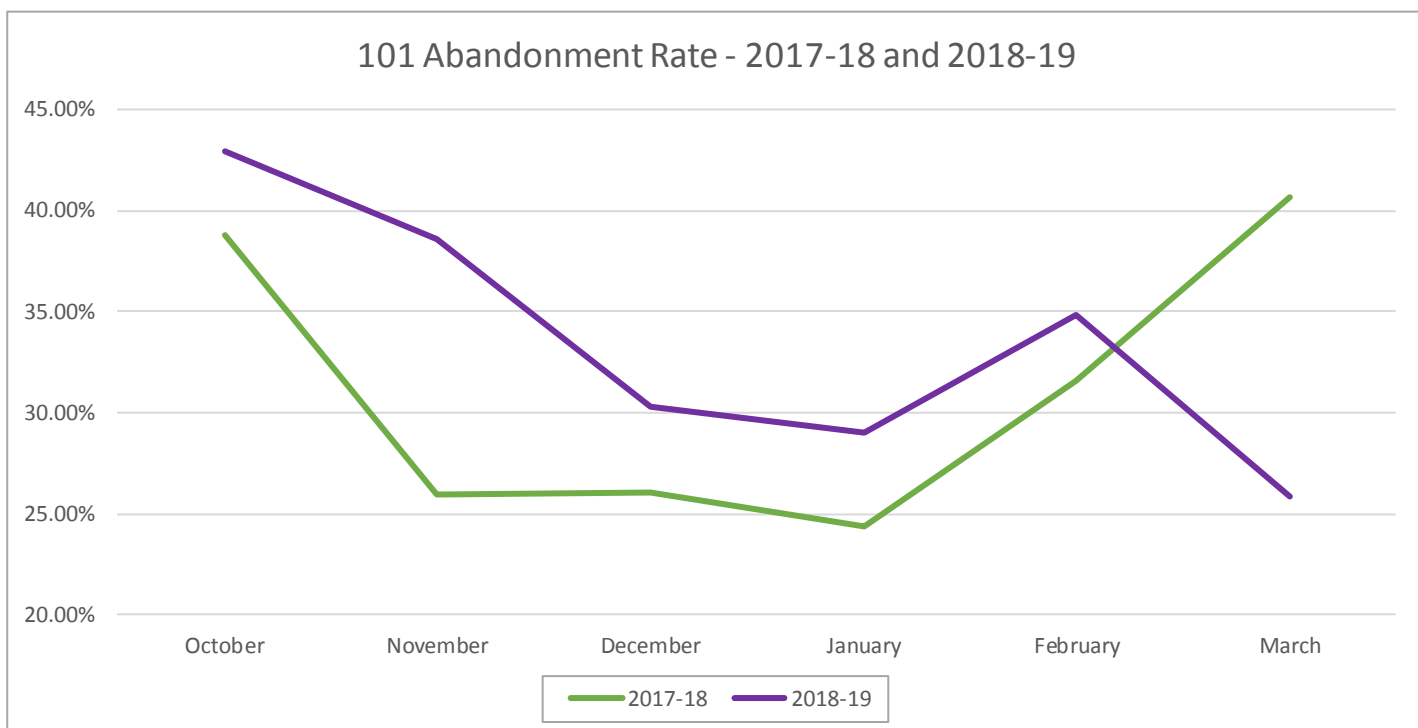
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<sup>1</sup> Quick crimes are an abbreviated crime report that allows the PCRO to input the basic details of a crime report. The advantage to this approach being the member of the public is provided with a crime reference number at the conclusion of their call

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- As with 999 demand the FCR is dealing with an increased amount of 101 calls since the previous year. The FCR has experienced a 2.2% rise in 101 demands for the quarter.

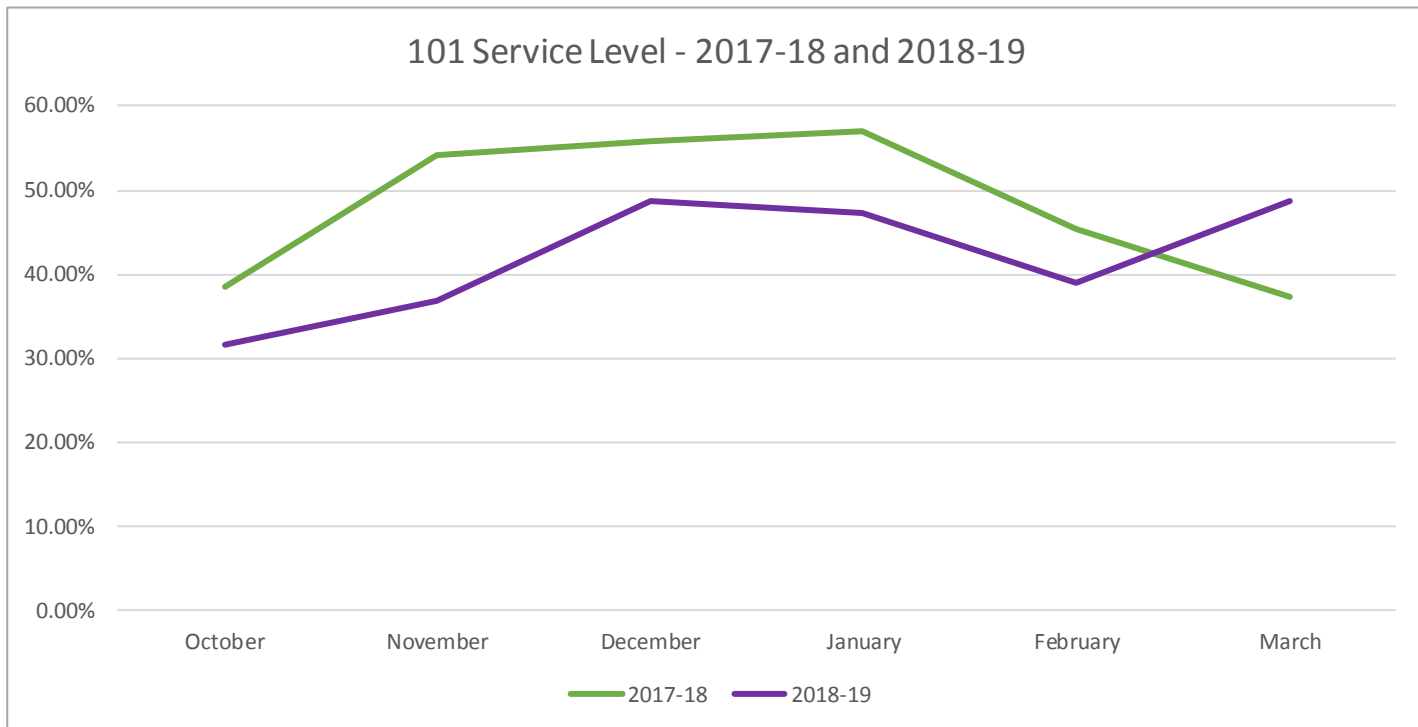


- Regardless of the impacting factors outlined above, since the move to POD working the abandonment rate for 101s has been steadily falling. This has continued month-by-month as we have



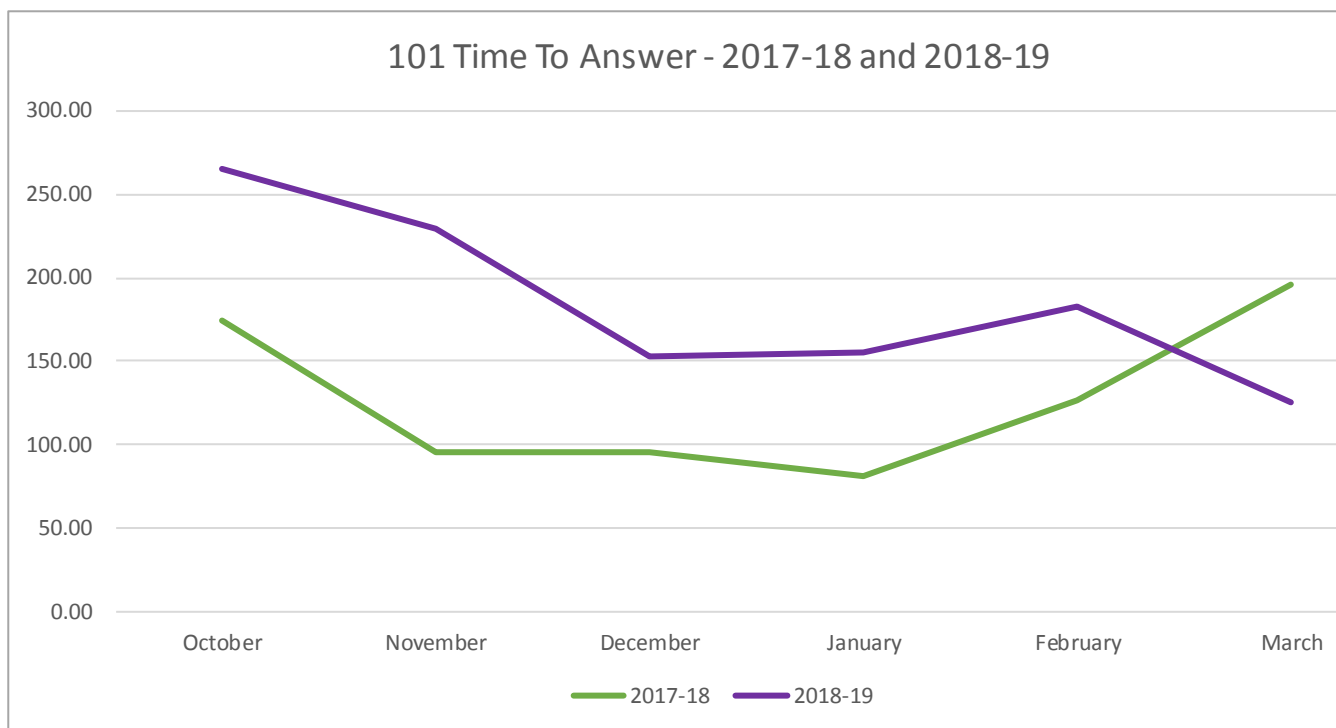
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put scrutiny and governance around how each POD is managing its resource to demand. It is anticipated that over the coming months that the downward trend will continue.

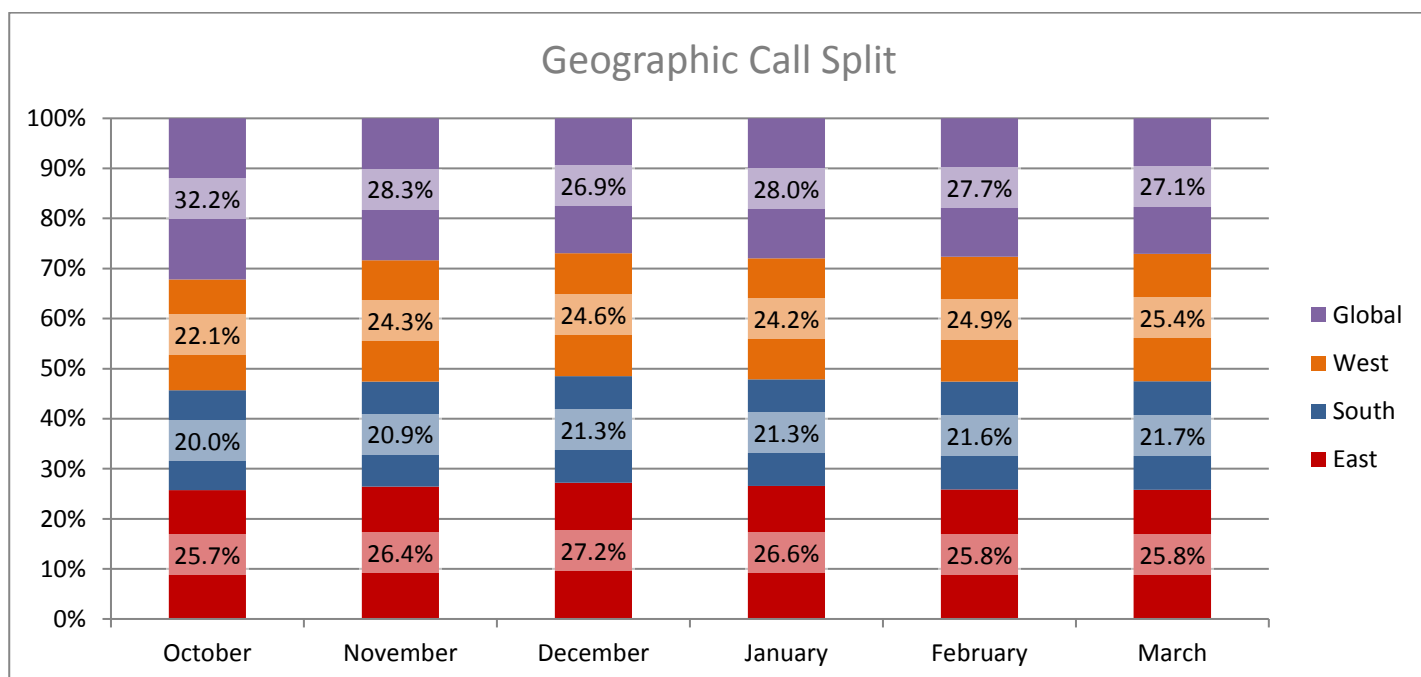


- Again, despite the factors listed above, service level for 101s has been climbing since the introduction of PODs, whilst dealing with more demand than the previous year.
- What can clearly be seen in the data, is that since POD go live the trajectory is an gradual upward one. This has been a large-scale change process, which has needed time to bed in and stabilise. As with 999s, putting scrutiny and governance around how each POD is managing its resource in respect of 101 demand is steadily improving our performance.

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- Although the annual performance shows an increase in 101 answering times, they have been improving since POD go-live, it is anticipated the trend will continue.



- 2.10 One of the main benefits to the Public of POD working is the localism it provides.
- Following the introduction of PODs, work is ongoing to increase the accuracy of the geographic calls routing. This includes working with partner agencies and neighbouring forces to direct their calls to the most appropriate POD for them, to provide a more bespoke service.
  - ICT work is also ongoing to increase the accuracy of call routing, this requirement is incorporated into the requirements for the upgrade of the Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) telephony platform. It is anticipated this work will reduce the number of 'global' calls presented to the FCR, which are a mix of calls made from outside Lancashire, internet based calls (made either from in or outside Lancashire) and withheld numbers where it is not possible to ascertain where the call originated.
- 2.11 Month by month since POD go-live there has been a steady improvement in geographic routing and a more localised service to the public:
- In October 68% of calls were presented to their area Pod to be answered.
  - In November 71% of calls were presented to their area Pod.
  - In December 73% of calls were presented to their area Pod.
  - In January 72% of calls were presented to their area Pod
  - In February 72% of calls were presented to their area Pod
  - In March 73% of calls were presented to their area Pod

It is hoped further improvements will be seen with the implementation of the new ICCS, which provides an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) for callers to select which area they wish to contact.

### Section 3 - FCR key ICT work streams update

- 3.1 Over the next 12 months there are a number of ICT changes both within the department and wider organisation that are likely to have an impact on the FCR in terms of performance (both positive and negative). The most significant IT changes that it is useful to highlight are:
- **Workforce Management upgrade** – The upgrading of the Contact Management duty planning and scheduling system is long overdue. The recently upgraded legacy version of Planet has been unsupported by the supplier Verint for several years due to its age. The system upgrade successfully took place in late April. Despite the complexity of the operating model in the FCR, i.e. several core rotas, three geographic Pods which run largely independently of each other, a multi skilled workforce (call taking, facilitating, dispatching and mailbox) and several hundred different variations of the core rotas to allow for flexible working, the transition has gone extremely well from a technical perspective. The issues with the new system are largely cultural, as it significantly reduced the ability of FCR Team Leaders to amend both their own and their staff duties and provides a significantly enhanced 'adherence' management information around the productivity of PCROs. It is anticipated that over a relatively short period of time FCR staff will become more accepting of the new more effective processes for managing duties that the system has enabled.
  - **Connect Public Engagement** – The PE public portal has been live since November 2018. As previously reported in the last scrutiny report there were some initial technical issues with a proportion of reports submitted via the portal. These issues have now been rectified and

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members of the public report both crimes and incidents to the FCR. An action plan has been prepared with the objective of raising awareness internally around the functionality available within PE for officers to update members of the public electronically on the progress of investigations. The action plan will be progressed incrementally over the coming months, as it is anticipated that changing well-established working practices around the preferred method of communication officers have will be a significant challenge. This effort will ultimately be worthwhile given the opportunities for improving the current ad hoc approach to this important area of constabulary business. It should be noted that at the present time there are no plans to promote the use of PE externally due to a lack of capacity in the FCR to process an increase in reports made via PE beyond the levels that are currently being seen with no external publicity.

- **SMARTSTORM implementation** – This upgrade of our command and control system (Storm) will be phased over spring / summer 2019 – This is a significant upgrade, but can be incrementally done reducing the organisational risk and disruption that are associated with upgrading a key ICT system.
- **Capita ICCS upgrade** - This is a major project for the FCR in 2019, with successful completion of the significant upgrade being a prerequisite for the decant of the FCR in 2020-21. The main benefits the FCR and the public of Lancashire will be:
  - Implementation of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) this allows 101 callers to know their place in the queue and estimated wait time. This is scheduled to be available in Oct 2019.
  - Ability for members of the public calling from outside Lancashire to select the geographic areas to which their call relates. 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 arrangements
  - The upgraded ICCS will allow the constabulary to meet its national obligations around control room readiness for the transition from Airwave to Emergency Services Network (ESN) that is scheduled to take place in the coming years (no date for the Lancs transition is available)