



Contact Management Call Handling Performance – TVP

Context

Between April 2021 and February 2022 Thames Valley Police received 899, 772 calls for service through Contact Management (CM). Of these 172,706 were recorded as crimes and officers deployed to 211,273 incidents. In order to manage this demand effectively CM have daily management meetings examining the average speed to answer (ASA), abandoned rate, average handing times and call volumes as well as forecast demand and available resources.

CM measure performance against two key performance indicators (KPI), the first, is to ensure that 90% of emergency (999) are answered in under 10 seconds. This measure will form part of the national league table data from May 2022. The second is that the average speed to answer non-emergency (101) calls is under 3 minutes.

The key demand metrics below (Figure 1) compare April to the Feb for 2019 and 2021. 2019 has been used as a comparator for two reasons, firstly CMP was fully implemented in Oct 2020 and secondly 2020 data is heavily weighted by the Covid restrictions in place at the time.

Table 1. Comparative Data for April 19 – 28th March 20 and April 20 – 28th March 21

		April – 28 th Feb 2019/20	April to 28 th Feb 2021/22	Volume Change	% Change
999	Volumes	341,336	331,768	-9,568	-3%
	Average speed to Answer mm:ss	00:08	00:07	00:01	-
	% Abandoned	0.70%	0.76%	+0.6%	
	AHT mm:ss	00:09:05	00:11:00	+01:55	+27%
101	Volumes	735,224	496,518	-238,706	-32%
	Average speed to Answer mm:ss	00:02:49	00:03:03	+00:14	-9%
	% Abandoned	18.1%	17.1%	-1%	
	AHT mm:ss	00:11:54	00:14:12	+02:13	+19%
Online	Single Online Home	35,839	71,486	+35,647	+99%
Incidents	Total Created	514,332	515,301	+969	+0.2%
	Total Deployments / % Created	200,589	211,273	+10,684	+5%
	Total Crimes created	164,780	172,706	+7,926	+5%

Data Results

We have narrowly missed our service level agreements for 999 and 101 calls. Currently the 999 calls answered within 10 seconds is at 87% and our average speed to answer for 101 calls



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at 03.02 minutes. This position will not improve by the end of March 2022. We have seen significant increases in demand for emergency calls in 2022 (February seeing an increase of 42% compared to last year) and this has had an impact on our ability to meet our service levels

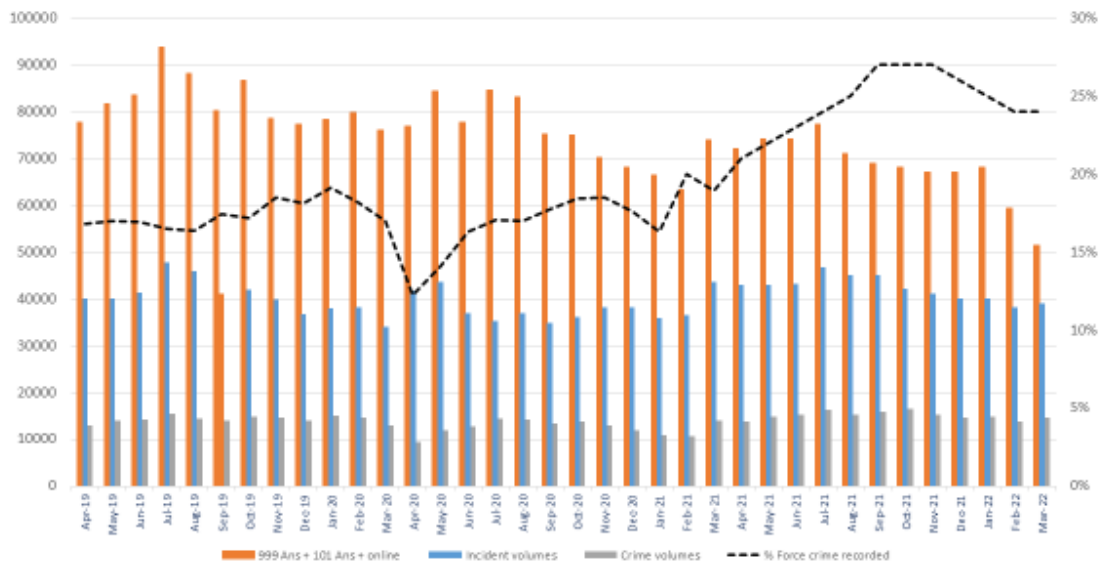
Compared to 2019 contact coming into policing has decreased, however the complexity in those calls has increased. Overall incident volumes are up and the percentage of calls converted to crimes has increased by 5%.

As shown in table 1, average call handle times continue to be higher than in 2019. This reflects the additional tasks on CM staff to manage the call appropriately at first point of contact. There are now additional responsibilities for call takers for Crime Data Integrity (CDI), understanding, prioritising and recording the Threat, Harm, Opportunity and Risk (THOR) and the Victim Needs Assessments (VNA's) for each contact. This is a priority for CM following the latest HMICFRS inspection and forms part of the improvement plan. Although a follow up inspection by HMICFRS acknowledging the steps taken to improve with call-takers making good risk based decisions, it is important to acknowledge that this does come at the cost of creating additional demand for call-takers to ensure the best response to our public.

Figure 1 below shows the percentage of calls converted to crime (black dotted line). Since the start of Covid in April 2020, there has been a steady increase in the creation of crimes from calls and by February 2021, the conversion rate exceeded the 2019 number.

Staffing to meet this demand has been challenging due to increased sickness and abstractions for training within the department. Between December and February there has been a noticeable increase in short-term Covid related absence that has affected resilience.

Figure 1. Crimes and Incident as a Proportion of the Calls Answered April 2019 to Feb 2022





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Training

As the first point of contact, it is imperative CM provide a good service and maintain confidence in policing. Continual Professional Development (CPD) is delivered by five protected days a year. Department and organisational learning, audits and horizon scanning are used to identify content for these days. New starters receive five weeks of classroom training and then 1-2-1 tuition for a further six weeks. This ensures that THOR is properly assessed and victim needs are considered.

In addition, controllers will also have a further two months Radio Based training (Includes Classroom and 1-2-1 support). New starters enter into an emergency service call handling apprenticeship for 16 months. During this time, there are further abstractions away from their core role to prepare and participate in functional skills training. Tutors are required to participate in a three-day course and annual CPD. All staff and officers are required to attend Domestic Abuse Matters training with additional CPD for our DA Champions. All of these abstractions come at a cost to numerical performance but are key to ensuring quality performance and focus on doing the right thing for our victims.

Retention

Contact Management has always been a stepping-stone into the police force. This is not something we would want to change as having officers / staff within the force with a background in CM is invaluable. This does come at a cost to CM in terms of a higher staff attrition, which in turn means more recruitment, training and tutoring is required within the department.

CM currently has 30% of its staff with less than two years' service. There are recruitment and retention plans to minimise (external) turnover in order to retain an experienced workforce. There is a CM retention board in place to increase engagement with staff to understand motivations and hindrances. This board report directly into the strategic workforce board.

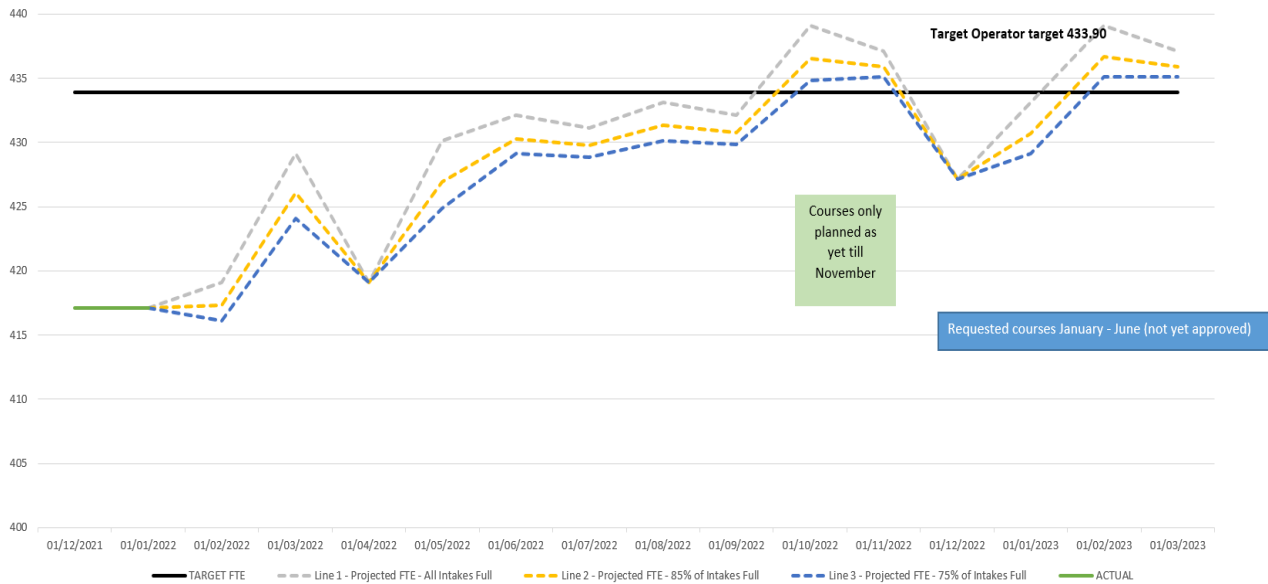
The creation of a Talent Pool and a Quality and Development team aims to drive improvements across the department and create opportunities to develop the staff. This increase in abstractions has effected performance over the last few months particularly with the recent increased numbers of short-term Covid absence. However, it does provide assurance that changes such as the Victim Needs Assessment have been fully understood and implemented. It is important that as well as quantitative data measures there is a good qualitative assessment of the accuracy and professionalism of the calls taken.

Recruitment

CM regularly review attrition and update the recruitment plans accordingly, linking in with positive action to increase the diversity of the department to replicate that of the communities we serve. Data (figure 2) shows an improving picture, bringing CM up to full establishment by October 2022. However, with post Covid demand expected to continue beyond 2019 figures it is important that recruitment and training is continually reviewed. Figure 2 shows the projected resourcing versus the required establishment (solid black line). Additional courses for November 2022 and beyond are still to be agreed but, by October 2022, the prediction is that resources will be at the necessary levels to match demand into CM.



Figure 2. Projected Recruitment and Training Courses Versus Establishment



Single Online Home (SOH)

Contact Management has embraced new technology to broaden communication channels and become more accessible. In July 2021, CM introduced the opportunity to report Domestic incidents online. This is a high-risk area for the force with good scrutiny in place to ensure good assessment and prioritisation of risk.

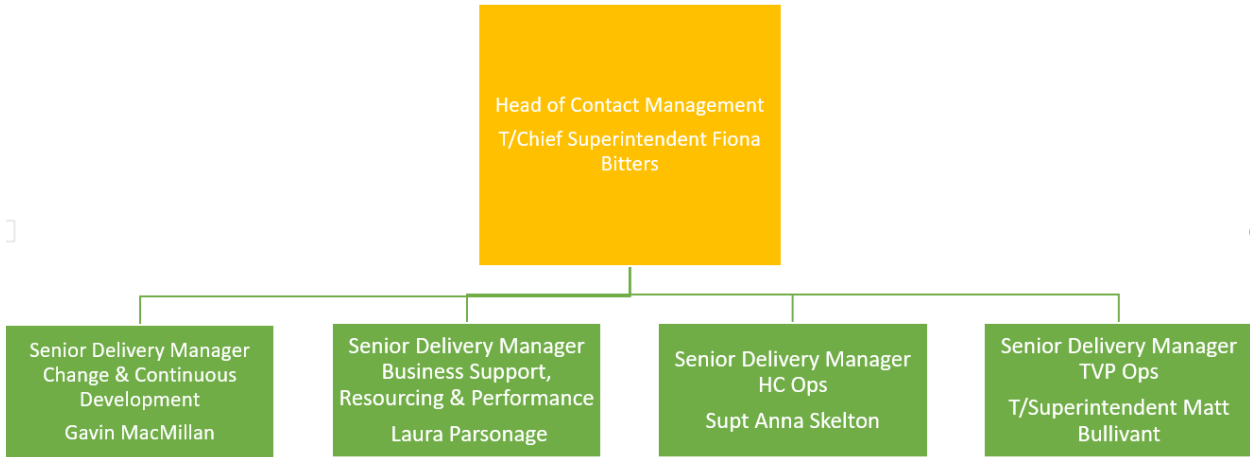
SOH demand is difficult to forecast and is a developing area where CM are seeing additional as well as displaced demand. As CM expand in this area (Missing people) and reaching out into Digital 101 (the ability to report / update via social media), it is critical we build a model that enables us to forecast and meet demand. CM are looking at digital options through the collaborated ICT digital team to develop technology to assist in best managing this new demand.

Governance

There is clear governance and accountability in CM, which is part of the collaborated Joint Operations Unit (JOU) overseen by ACC Catherine Akehurst. In addition to daily performance meetings, there are monthly department and quarterly command meetings with qualitative and quantitative data scrutinised to identify best practise and areas for improvement. Joint monthly performance packs inform the force performance group and the joint collaborated governance board alternately chaired by the Hampshire and Thames Valley PCC. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) shown below (Figure 3) work together to ensure people, process and performance are closely aligned.



Figure 3. Contact Management Senior Leadership Team and Departments



Summary

Demand has been unpredictable since the implementation of the Contact Management Platform (CMP) and the start of the Corona virus. CM is now seeing a sustained increase in demand, which brings with it, increased complexity, crime recording and handle times. The increase in front-end activity does provide opportunities for improved overall efficiencies in the end-to-end journey for the victim. With more done at the point of call there is a desire to reduce the demand on frontline officers deployed to calls. CMP provides a single point of information that makes the appropriate identification of risk and vulnerability for the call-taker much easier.

In 2022, identifying and implementing digital reporting solutions will be a priority. This will offer alternative means of reporting for the public, including through social media platforms. This provides an opportunity to protect our emergency call (999) response. Criticality we need to continually review and move our resources to where the need is greatest to maintain public confidence. With a continually evolving workforce, CM will continue to balance the training requirements against performance. There is a clear governance structures and performance framework in place to ensure continual improvements are made to enable those who urgently need our help can contact us.