AGENDA ITEM 10a



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

21st May 2019

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Satisfaction with Police Services

Title: Contact and Response

Presented by: ACC Chris Johnson

PURPOSE OF PAPER

- 1. The purpose of this paper is to set out performance in relation to the public's ability to access WMP services including;
 - 101
 - 999
 - Digital channels
 - West Midlands Police (WMP) response to calls for service
- 2. This paper is for public discussion.

BACKGROUND

- 3. In previous 'Access to Service' papers in November 2017 and May 2018, we have described ongoing and increasing demand challenges to WMP and policing nationally. This is a continuing trend and challenge.
- 4. We are providing greater recognition of vulnerability and dealing with more complex incidents requiring increased time to gather information and provide the right service to the public.

- 5. We have described difficulties in maintaining the resource establishment and attrition rates, and whilst this continues to be an area to maintain, the position is much more stable and the ability to provide continuous recruitment enables a sustained approach.
- 6. WMP continues to operate a contact handling system where the public directly access a contact handler at the first point of contact. This enables immediate access to services, providing advice, support and obtaining information for the correct resolution, rather than a delayed process through a switchboard.
- 7. We have enhanced the service offer through increasing digital channels and providing an omni-competent model where staff deal with all call types. Contact handlers continue to resolve around 70% of all contacts at the first point of contact.
- 8. All contact types regardless of channel are subject to a THRIVE assessment determining risk, appropriate management and individual need, supporting decisions regarding the most effective and efficient service delivery. We continue to evolve and learn more in relation to the public's wishes in relation to these channels to invest the right resource to deliver to best outcome in a value added way, enabling service offers which utilise technology.
- Supporting and educating the public to understand and use the right channel for service delivery is a key focus for the coming year, especially as between 60-70% of emergency 999 calls are assessed as not needing an emergency or priority response.
- 10. This paper aims to provide an outline of current levels of service that the public can expect from WMP and the ongoing work to offer a wider range of services through new channels to meet current and future societal needs, offering the most effective and efficient service.

KEY POINTS

11. The performance in relation to contact handling continues to be an improving picture, whilst challenges still exist around high demand periods. The use of omni-competence, where all staff are aligned to take 999 and 101 calls, alongside the introduction of online incident reporting, an enhanced website and the use of Livechat, have all proved beneficial in delivering a better service (Annex 1 - contact handling performance) (Annex 3 digital channels).

- 12. Further enhancements continue to be explored through the business area and New Ways of Public Contact (NWOPC) project. There is significant work to increase the range of offences and incident types which can be reported online or through Livechat, reflecting the public uptake of these channels in recent month (Annex 3).
- 13. We continue through normal business to review and develop our understanding and approaches to ensure a timely and professional service in an efficient way, in order to reduce the average call length, creating greater capacity to address increased demand. This seeks to identify the policing purpose and information captured at the earliest stage, signposting callers to other routes and agencies when appropriate.
- 14. We are working on a communication plan and campaign similar to that used by the NHS, to educate the public on the right contact channel for different situations. This raises awareness for the public on the best channel for their requirements and the circumstances.
- 15. The success of Livechat and the clear appetite of the public to use this channel, even in some serious and vulnerable cases, reflects public expectation. This channel has seen a 25% increase of contacts from people with vulnerabilities, reporting historical sexual abuse, people with disabilities where some forms of communication are more difficult or allowing for greater confidence to type responses rather than speak about sensitive matters. We want to build on this understanding to provide much greater opportunities for the public through this channel (Annex 3 Charts 1 and 2).
- 16. The next twelve months will see the replacement of the current command and control system with a more intuitive system via a single interface, improving speed and information accuracy at the front end of contact handling and throughout the end-to-end journey.
- 17. The risks and challenges remain around: increasing demand (especially in emergency contact handling); encouraging and educating the public to use the appropriate and best channel to receive the right service; and continued efforts around the attrition of staff, including recruitment and training.

CONTACT 101, 999 & DIGITAL CHANNEL PERFORMANCE (Annex 1)

- The volumes of 999 calls being receiving on a monthly basis over the last 5 years has substantially increased; 50k per month in 2014/15, to 59k in 2017/18, compared to 64k in 2018/19. Overall we now receive 14,000 more emergency calls per month (Annex 1 - Chart 1).
- We answered 89% of 999 calls in 10 seconds in 2018/19 compared to 85% in 2017/18 (Annex 1 - Chart 2). The volume of abandoned 999 calls after the 10 second threshold has consistently reduced since 2014, now averaging nearly just 1% (Annex 1 - Chart 3).
- Alongside this calls have been more complex requiring detailed information for crimes, THRIVE assessment and dealing with complex needs relating to vulnerability, mental illness and historical abuse. This has led to increased call lengths of 4 minutes 10 seconds in 2018/19, compared to 3 minutes 20 seconds in 2017/18 (Annex 1 - Charts 5 (Mean) and 6 (Median)).
- 21. The combination of these two factors mean that overall contact staff are now handling approximately 900 hours more emergency calls per month in 2018/19 than in 2017/18, equivalent to over 6 FTE per month.
- 22. One of the national measures of emergency contact handling is the delays where calls remain held by the BT Operator due to there being no capacity to transfer the call to the local force. With the existing demand and resourcing challenges, WMP has continued to perform well in this area, having limited delayed transfers compared to similar sized and some smaller forces.
- 23. The distribution of incidents by grade for emergency 999 calls has overall remained stable. The two key fluctuations in the last 2 years are the increase in P1 emergency incidents already described, followed by P4 attended appointments, where the call was not an emergency and to manage the incident at the public's convenience an appointment was scheduled and finally, P9 resolved at first contact, which reflects the increase in emergency calls which did not require a police response (Annex 1 Chart 10).

NON-EMERGENCY 101 CALLS

- 24. Non-emergency 101 contact handling over the last five years shows an overall reduction, down from 118k per month in 2014/15, to 108k in 2017/18 and subsequently at 90k per month in 2018/19 (Annex 1 Chart 12).
- 25. There is no national target or requirement for answering non-emergency calls. WMP has historically taken a service industry measure of calls answered within 30 seconds. These are normally related to switchboard services and not where the first contact is with someone that is trained to deal with the call. We answered 45% of calls in 30 seconds in 2018/19 compared to 30% in 2017/18 (Annex 1 -Chart 13).
- 26. Whilst the reduction in volume provides a positive position, the 101 service has also seen an increase in call length as staff record more low-level crime and deal with complex matters, such as missing person reports, Clare's and Sarah's law requests. The call length chart shows call length now being 4 minutes 25 seconds in 2018/19, compared to 3 minutes 50 seconds in 2017/18 (Annex 1 Charts 19-22).
- 27. The reduction in 101 call demand is mainly attributed to the new service channels and offers relating to intelligent voice recognition, online incident reporting and Livechat. These channels continue to be managed by staff within Force Contact.

DIGITAL CHANNELS - LIVECHAT

- 28. Our Livechat channel launched in August 2018 and since this time there has been a month on month growth in the public uptake of this service from 7,000 contacts in September 2018 (the first full month) to 14,000 contacts in March 2019 (Annex 3 Chart 1).
- 29. Our contact staff handling Livechat can manage up to four contacts simultaneously making this a more efficient service, with the average wait time for a connection being 1 minute 30 seconds (Annex 3 Charts 1 and 2).
- 30. In terms of public satisfaction with this service, 77% responded to say that we resolved their enquiry, 88% stated they would use the service again and 76% would rate the service as good to excellent (Annex 3 Chart 2).

 From the feedback received, 77% of people would have used 101 had the Livechat facility not been available. This is where we draw the understanding of 23% of additional demand created by this channel. (Annex 3 - Chart 2)

DIGITAL CHANNELS - ONLINE INCIDENT REPORTING

- 32. Online incident reporting is provided through the WMP website and the internally developed E-Notes system which offers the public access to report incidents online. Following this the public have the capability to update and view crimes data once a crime report has been created by Public Contact Office staff.
- 33. The Public Contact Office staff primarily manage the online incident reports, recording crimes or generating Command and Control incidents where these need to be dealt with by another force resource.
- 34. Public Contact Office staff access the generated E-note report, review the information provided and assess the appropriate method of response. If all appropriate information is provided they will record the crime, complete all crime details and respond to the member of the public with the crime reference and link for crime tracking. These cases will then either be filed at source with no further open lines of enquiry or entered onto the docutrak system for allocation to the relevant investigation team.
- 35. Where the member of the public has provided insufficient detail the Public Contact Office staff will make further contact to obtain the necessary information and record the crime following the same process.
- 36. Whilst assessing the submission, Public Contact Office staff will conduct a THRIVE assessment and make decisions on any cases where there is risk or attendance is such that it requires a police officer. In these cases they will create an incident log for the appropriate response depending on the assessment and force grading process.
- 37. Since the previous paper in May 2018 there has been a significant increase in the public uptake of online incident reporting. There was an initial increase in August 2018, from 750 reports per month to 1,200. This was as a result of upgrading the force website and promoting this channel through social media and the telephony automated messaging (Annex 3 Chart 3).

- 38. Since February 2019 this has increased again to 3,000 reports per month. This is due to further enhancements, promotion and advice provided by contact handlers and with the support of neighbourhood colleagues, especially in relation to business crime (Annex 3 Chart 3).
- 39. Online incident reports are managed within 1 hour and 30 minutes for the initial viewing and assessment of the report (Annex 3 Chart 4).
- 40. Following the increased use of this reporting method, where the public are showing a desire to report more serious and complex crimes through this method, there has been an increase in the reports requiring a scheduled appointment from Force CID. This leads to a longer period from creation to completion as the appointment and evidence gathering is completed (Annex 3 Chart 5).
- 41. The volume of total crime reported through online and digital channels has seen a month on month increase and now accounts for approximately 13% of all crime reported through these channels (Annex 3 Chart 7).
- 42. This channel remains limited at present due to the crime types which can reported using this method, however we can see from the Livechat experience and the increased online reports that the public have a greater desire to use these channels for a much wider range of incidents (Annex 3 Chart 8).
- 43. This channel remains an area of further exploration and evolution as we utilise technology to improve the options and access to pre-formated documents for convenience and ease of use for the public, such as Sarah's Law, Clare's Law, lower risk missing person reports, road traffic collisions and additional crime types.
- 44. The online incident reporting method allows the public to be able to track and update crimes when reported through this method, therefore offering a better service and reducing the demand placed on 101.
- 45. We have explored options to open up the tracking facility to all crimes, however due to the connectivity and security access to systems, this would require the generation of an E-Note for every matter reported. This would place a significant demand on Force Contact staff. Due to the configuration with the Command and

Control replacement which offers a different option of recording 'all call contacts' this has not been explored further at this time.

RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR SERVICE

- 46. Force Response has primary responsibility for servicing calls graded as requiring an immediate (P1) or priority (P2) response. For incidents assessed as immediate response, we direct the nearest resource, aiming to be in attendance as quickly as possible, with the right experience and skills (Annex 2).
- 47. In addition to the immediate (P1) and priority (P2) incidents Force Response will resource P3 direct dispatch investigations such as missing persons, crimes affecting vulnerable people or incidents likely to escalate. They continue to manage the first response to hospital watches, scene guarding and custody support, until replaced by colleagues from the Force Support Unit (Annex 2 charts 1 and 4).
- 48. In current terminology we have said we aim to be in attendance at an immediate (P1) incident within 15 minutes. WMP is currently attending 57% of immediate incidents within 15 minutes. However the comparison to previous years and the level of achievement in target needs to be taken in context with the increasing number of emergency calls, which are resulting in more immediate incidents; 1,000 more incidents per month in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 and 5,500 more incidents per month than in 2016/17 (Annex 2 Chart 1).
- 49. Our message to the public is that we continue to strive to be with them as quickly as we can. We measure ourselves against improving the average time it is taking us to attend these incidents rather than an arbitrary target time and we are currently on a median average responding to immediate incidents within 13 minutes (Annex 2 Chart 2).
- 50. In the same period, the volume of P2 priority incidents has reduced by nearly 2,000 per month from 2017/18, however this remains at 1,000 per month above that seen in 2016/17. This means across P1 and P2 incidents, Force Response are dealing with 6,500 more incidents per month than at the transition to Force Response in 2016/17 (Annex 2 Chart 1).
- 51. Calls in the P2 priority response category are ones which require a physical attendance, but not with the same level of immediacy. The grading of these logs will be in line with the THRIVE assessment. This remains a focus of attending as

soon as possible. Historically the target has been set at 60 minutes, however this doesn't accurately respresent the need or benefits to attending within this time period for all incidents within the category.

- 52. The current median response time for the the P2 priority response is approximately 1 hour 23 minutes (Annex 2 Chart 3).
- 53. The direct dispatch (P3) demand has fluctuated starkly during the period since November 2016. This is due to the evolution and testing of approaches to address increasing demand and resolve incidents in a more consistent, effective and efficient way. These incidents are greatly affected by seasonality, with many relating to anti-social behaviour in this category during spring and summer months, which fall away during autumn and winter months. The fluctuation in P3 can also be attributed to the re-introduction of P4 in February 2018 (Annex 2 -Chart 1).
- 54. In relation to immediate (P1) and priority (P2) reponses as outlined in the 'Access to Service' paper May 2018, the focus and assessment regarding these incidents is getting there as quickly as possible. This is assessed using a median rather than mean average.
- 55. In delivering the approach to arrive sooner a number of improvements and opportunities are in train. These include closer working relationships with Force Contact through aligned shifts, greater alignment of resource to demand through the banded shift pattern, increasing the efficiency and productivity of response officers, increased mobility creating more time out of station, reducing unproductive travel time and ensuring additional support against dynamic demand increases through the escalation doctrine.
- 56. Force Response and Force Contact now have weekly meetings to discuss approaches and evolve practice to meet demand. To support this work a joint Service Improvement Team is being explored, to provide data, analysis and audit to ensure productivity is being maximised.
- 57. The joint approach to embedding the escalation doctrine (a process to mobilise resource from other departments when required to meet demand) prioritises the response to the public when response resources reach capacity.

- 58. The uptake and benefits of mobility devices, additional apps and over the coming months the statement generator and mirror books will reduce the current need to return to the station, therefore increasing productivity and available time.
- 59. The introduction of the banded shift pattern has increased the resource availability matching resource to demand, supported by additional flexing of the force vehicle fleet, all benefiting our ability to meet demand.
- 60. The greatest risks and challenges continue to be the continual increase in more critical demand and complex resource intensive incidents. The rise in 999 calls and P1 immediate incidents, generally requires more resources to attend and these resources are committed for longer.
- 61. Whilst this remains a national picture, we continue to explore ways in which to ensure we are maximising the deployment of our resources to maximium effect, where attendance is necessary and provides value to the outcome of the incident.
- 62. Through analysis where response attendance provides little or no value to service delivery we are working to utilise alternative approaches and encourage the public to understand the demand challenge, promoting the use other digital and technological options to report incidents and provide evidence.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- 63. There are already aspects of future opportunities being explored to deliver the fine balance between meeting increasing demand and continuing to deliver a quality service.
- 64. The NWOPC project continues to develop and explore the ways in which technology and online channels provide more efficient and wider choice to meet with public demand now and into the future. This includes exploring options to link in social media, utilising robots to initiate information, basic information gathering and widening the scope of online options.
- 65. The replacement Command and Control system being launched later in the year provides initial benefits in terms of push of information and access to activites through a single platform. This will then evolve over phase two of the project and offer wider benefits for the whole force and deliver a more effective service.

- 66. In June 2019 the dispatch function of Force Contact will move onto a new shift pattern which aligns both Contact Handling and Force Response. This pattern provides briefing and debriefing periods, training days and allows for greater consistency of working practices within teams.
- 67. At all supervisory levels, engagement and plans are ongoing to develop and embed these relationships with shadowing, awareness raising, job swaps and peer reviews.
- 68. The force plans for summer demand are managed through a dedicated Silver Commander from Mission Support. The learning from approaches tested over the last two years is integrated into the approach for example, the use of Operation Even Keel to flex and deploy more resources to front end incidents when required, the development of the escalation doctrine, the increased access to digital and online channels and the daily analysis through 'Threat Risk Meetings' to understanding fluctuating demand levels to greater affect and provide the appropriate response.
- 69. The summer demand plans stretch beyond Force Contact and Force Response, with other departments all exploring how they can increase resource capability, through temporary recruitment, where departmental demands can be managed differently and house keeping ahead of the summer to ensure the force is in a stable position to start.
- 70. The new appointment of Supt Phil Dolby as the Operation Guardian lead, including violence and knife crime suppression work, will support reducing these resource intensive incidents, as well as providing additional resource into areas affected which will reduce the demand generated.
- 71. We have already implemented the daily tipping points and Service Delivery Officer dashboard, which identifies increasing outstanding P2 and P3 demand, alongside predicted incident levels and available resource. This provides an informed position to flex or utilise resources from across the force or other departments when necessary.
- 72. This approach means additional resources from other departments can be used in a more predictive and balanced way, rather than constantly drawing upon them. Whilst this means there will continue to be impacts on other departments in addressing increased front end demand, this will be managed more effectively.

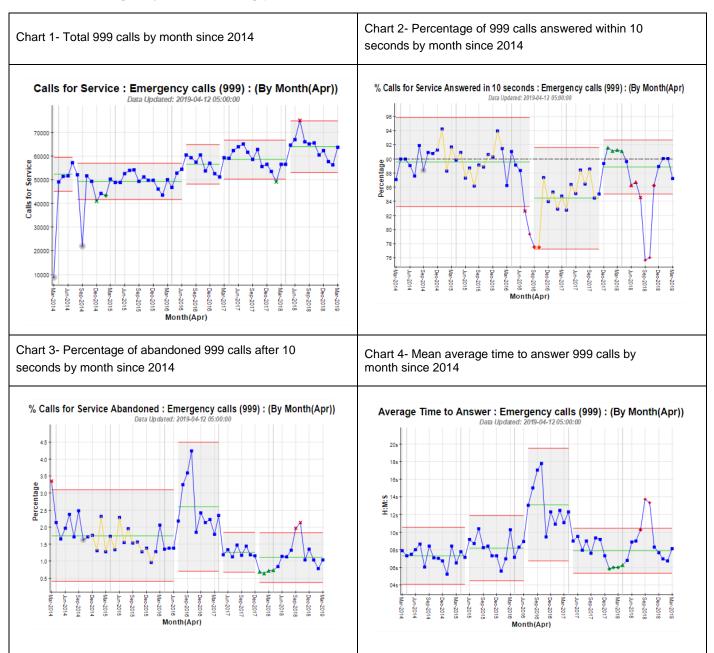
- 73. The review of outstanding incident logs at 24, 48 and 96 hours has seen outstanding logs relating to vulnerability reduce significantly since implementation in November 2018. This provides access to local geographic 'Threat Risk Meetings' of the outstanding incidents of note in order for resources to be allocated to resolve them.
- 74. Over the coming months there will be further development and roll out of devices to enable officers to become more mobile, with increased application development and the issuance of mirror books to provide greater keyboard capacity for statement taking and report completion.
- 75. The benefits are already reflected in the reduction in demand placed on the dispatch function through the service desk, where calls have reduced by 10,000 per month since the roll out of the stop and search and PNC applications on mobile devices. This is likely to reduce further with the Insights search application for intelligence checks.
- 76. WMP continues to invest in the 'People Deal', with events this year including the roll out of 'WMP Conversations', 'Lead 2 Achieve' events and 'Inspire to Aspire'. Force Contact and Force Response has supported supervisors through all of these areas.
- 77. The recognition of excellent work and praise was reflected in the representation across departments including Force Contact and Force Response at the final including the winner for Inspirational Leadership.
- 78. The Operations Portfolio which includes Force Response and Force Contact run a leadersip programme to support prospective future leaders from operational roles to first line supervision called 'Stepping Up'. This is represented across the departments by a number of individuals and is supported by the talent management processes and Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion group.
- 79. Staff welfare is managed through work force strategy processes and the support of people and organisation development with both data analysis, as well as support and advice.
- 80. During the period of consultation for the new shift pattern, annual leave requests in the dispatch function of Force Contact has been held 'pending' whilst the new teams are aligned and built with the force resource management system. This

has understandably caused frustration and concern, especially over a prolonged period. This is now resolved and all leave allocation have returned to normal.

81. Leave allocations are managed through force policy, against force risk assessments, minimum staffing levels and/or maximum abstraction rates. These ensure that at all times WMP is providing appropriate resources for safe working practices. This is delivered through either the Duty Management Team or the Force Contact Resource Management Team. Leave would only be refused where the request has been made at a later stage where other colleagues leave has been approved resulting in the abstraction levels already being reached. Within this there is an appeals process should the leave be required for a special reason.

NEXT STEPS

- 82. The board is asked to acknowledge the considerable and ongoing efforts made in Force Contact and Force Response to deliver an improving service against increased critical demand, with particular note to;
 - The significant joint work to address demand
 - The investment in reviewing processes enhance new technology and offer enhanced options to the public
 - The investment and recognition of the development of staff
 - To support the future work and options to increase digital options for the public
 - To support the drive and messaging to encourage the public to report through the most appropriate channels.
- Author(s): Chief Supt. Richard Fisher Head of Force Contact Chief Supt. Steve Graham - Head of Force Response



Annex 1- Emergency Call Handling performance

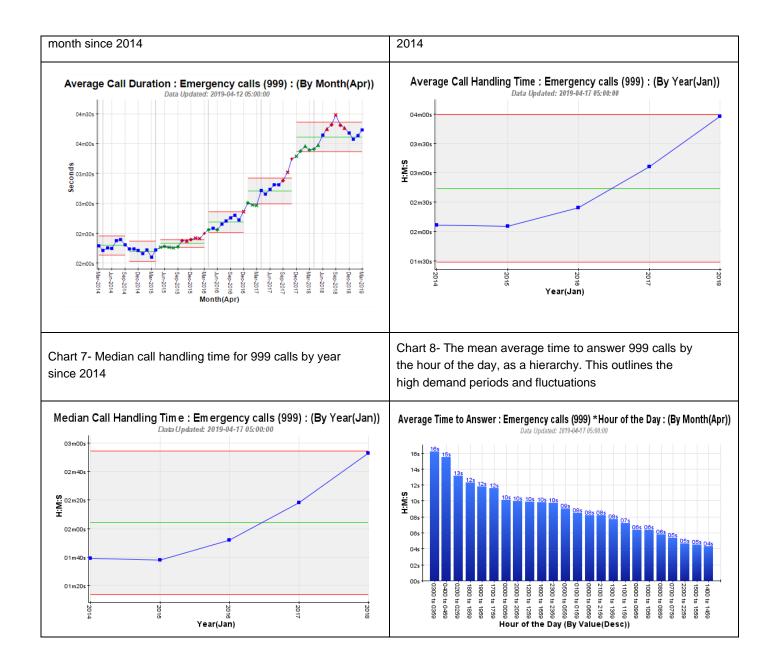
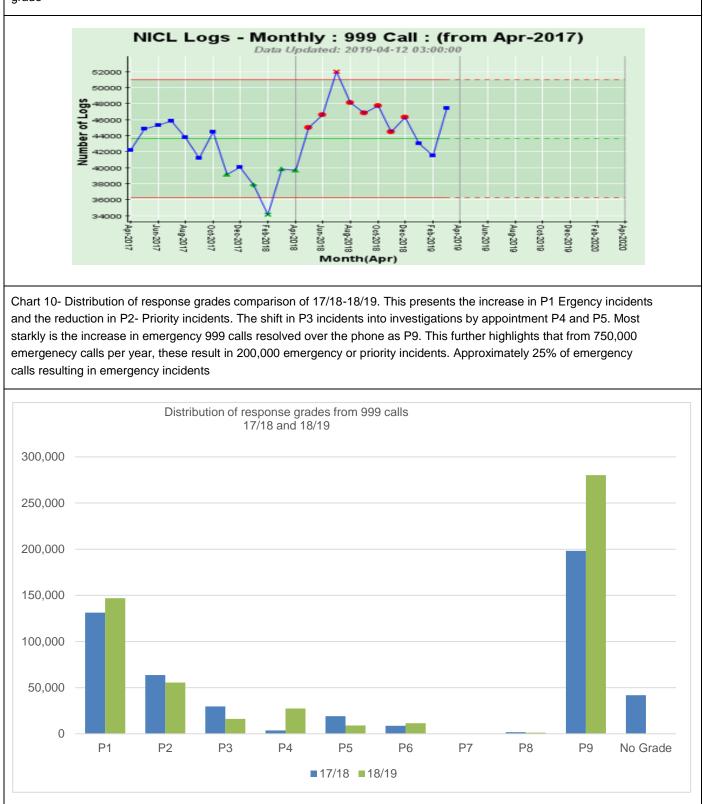
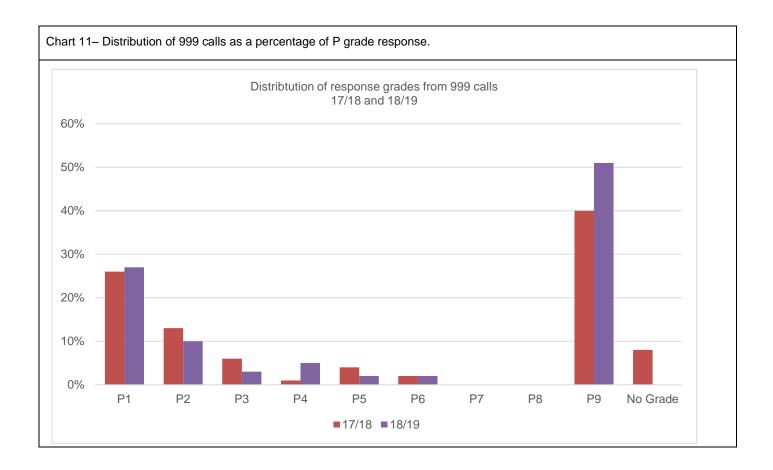
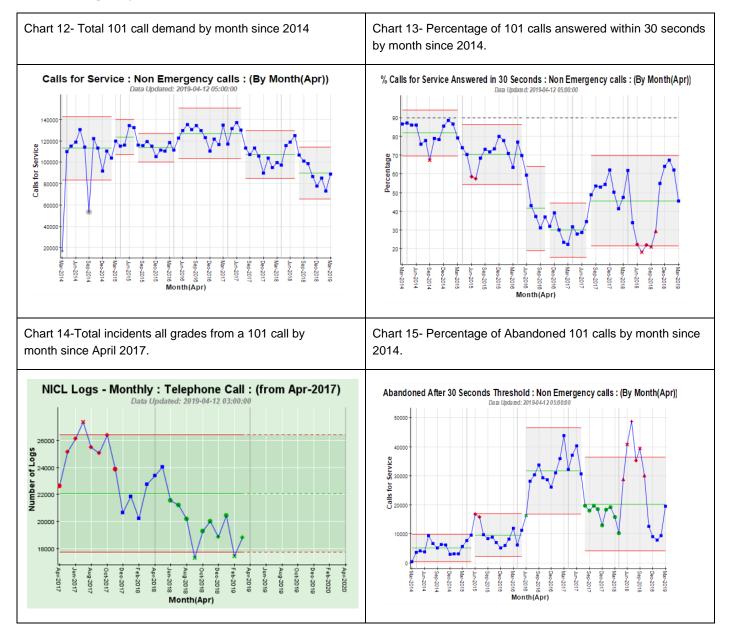


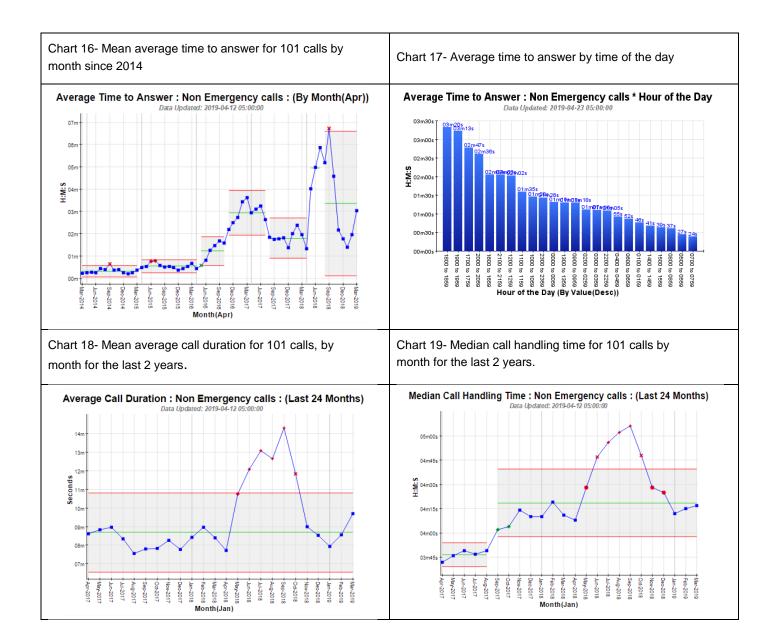
Chart 9- Total number of incident logs generated from a 999 call by month since April 2017. Therefore from an average of 64,000 emergency calls we ony generate 47,000 incident logs meaning on average 73% of calls result in a log of any grade

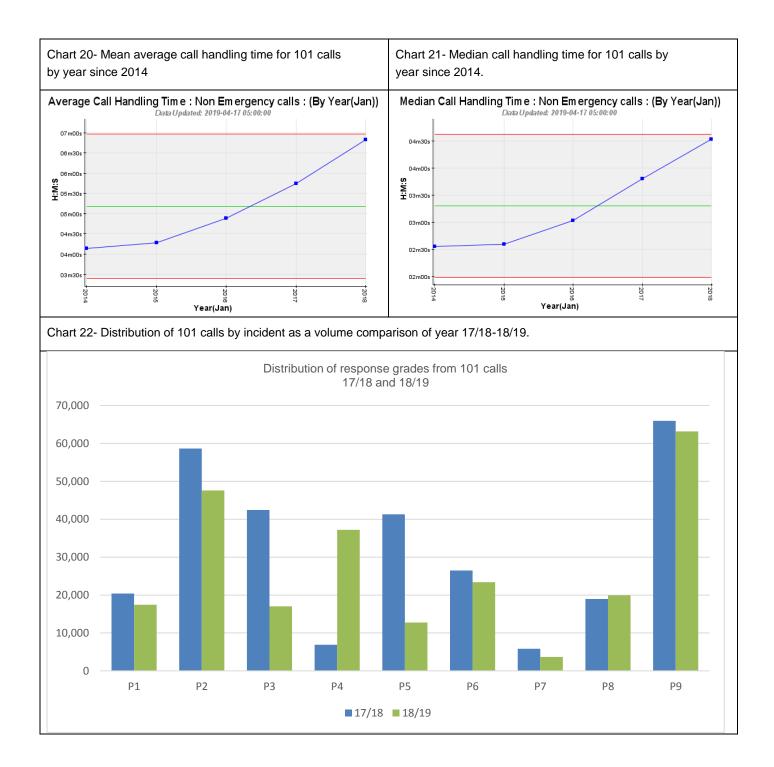


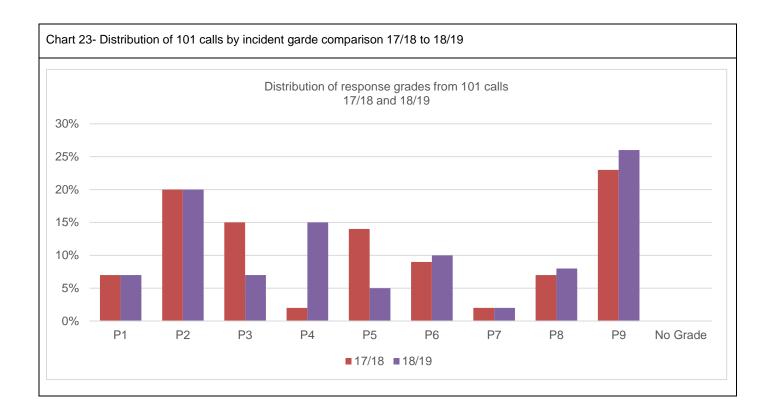


Non-Emergency calls 101

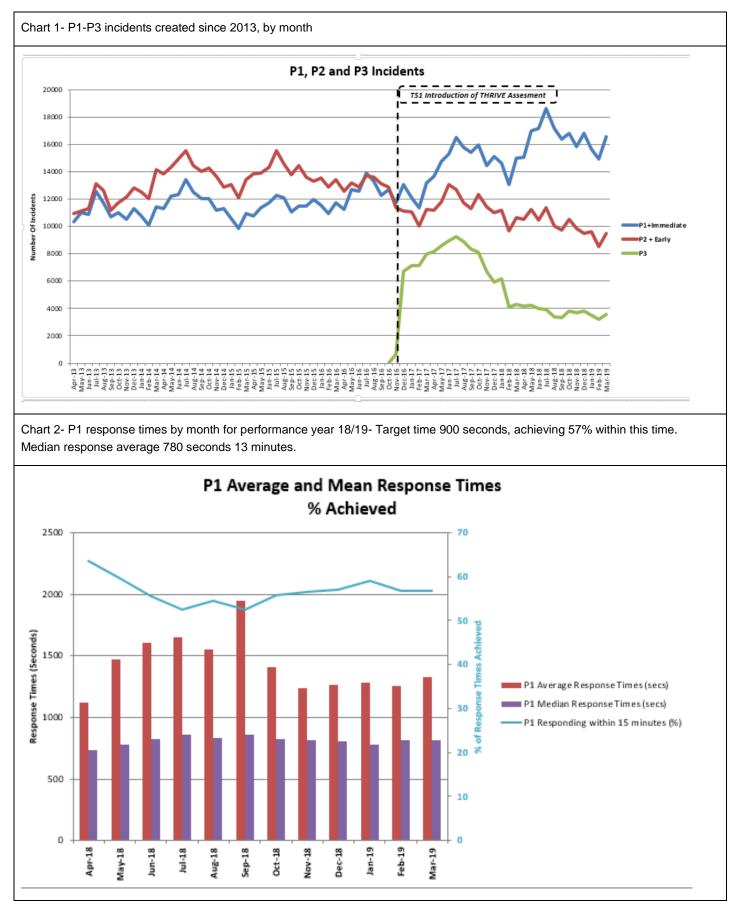


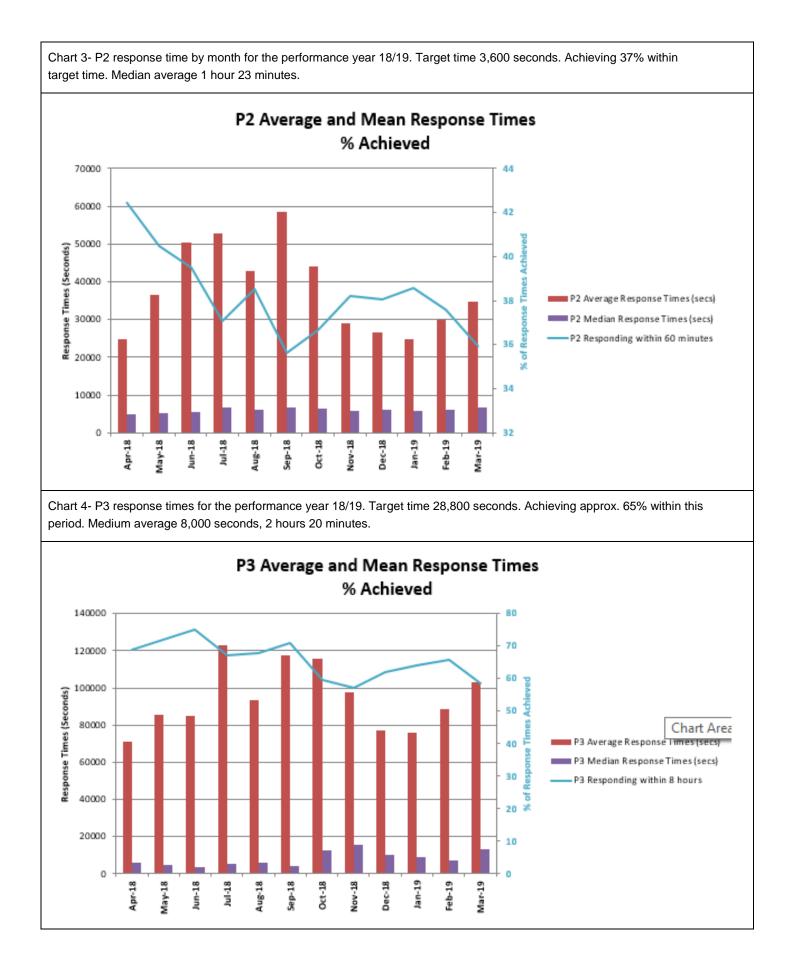


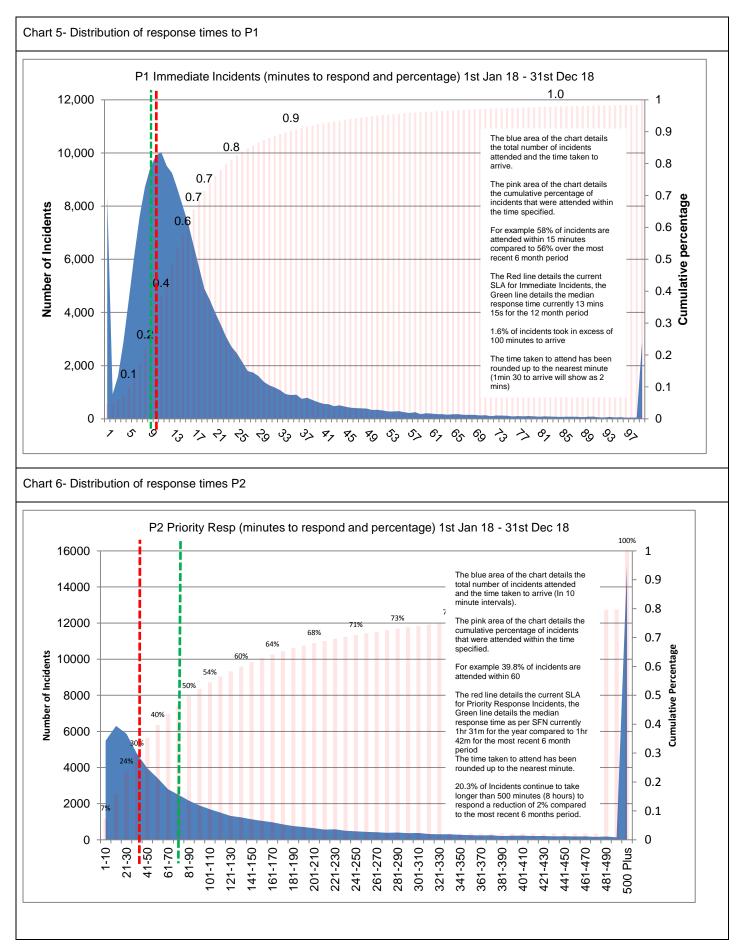


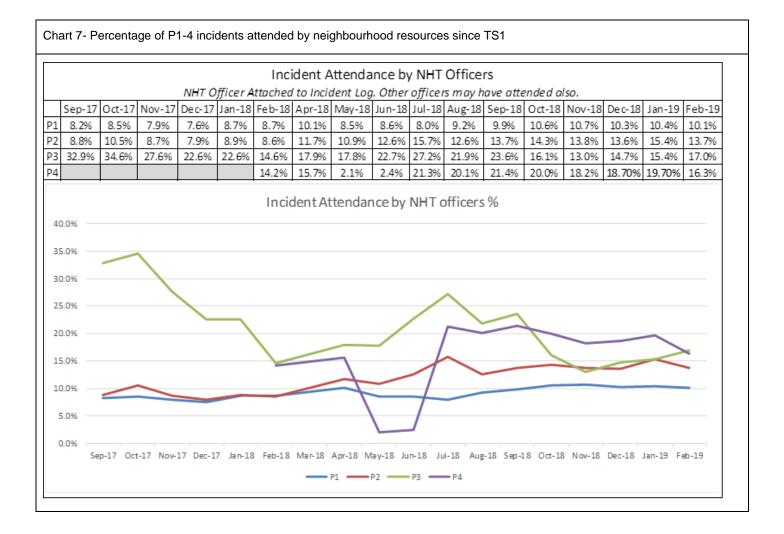


Annex 2- Response Performance









Annex 3- Digital options



