

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP21/56

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL -
19 NOVEMBER 2021**

SUBJECT: CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM (CCR) AND PUBLIC ACCESS

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update on the Contact and Control Room (CCR) and website projects.
2. This report details the project work which is ongoing to ensure a more effective and efficient CCR including Public Access and Websites projects updates.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the content of this report.

SECTION ONE: SUFFOLK CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM (CCR) UPDATE

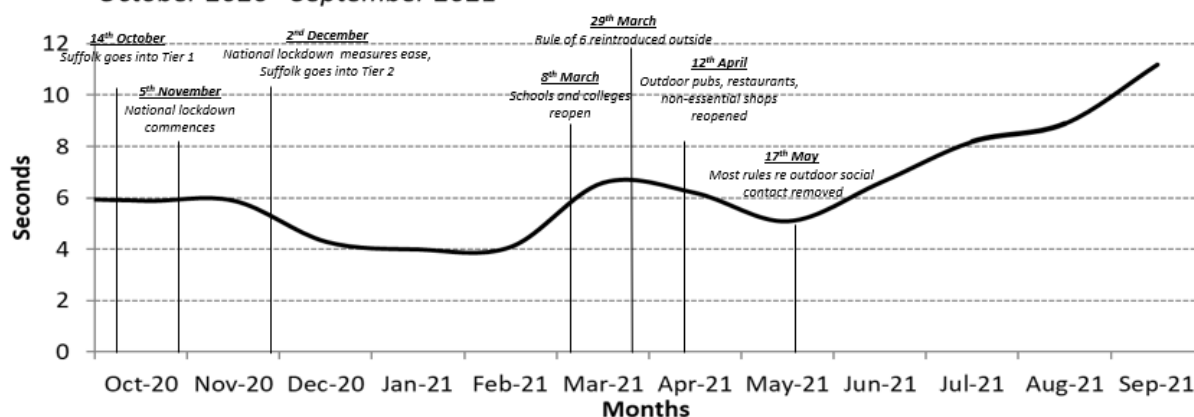
1. OVERVIEW

999 - emergency call handling

- 1.1 999 call handling demand has increased by 2.8% in the last 12 months compared to the Long-Term Average. Suffolk Constabulary has answered 90.9% of calls within 10 seconds between October 2020 and September 2021 and the average time to answer calls is 6.4 seconds between October 2020 and September 2021 (compared to 6.9 seconds between October 2019 and September 2020).

999 - average time to answer calls

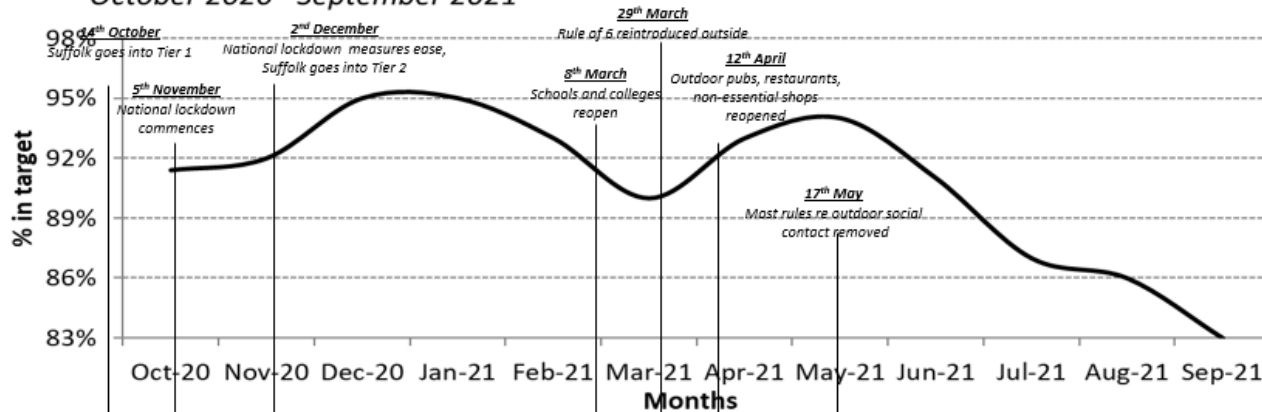
October 2020 - September 2021



- 1.12 Performance had been improving since the introduction of the telephony system in May 2018 in spite of increasing demand. After dropping mid-2020 performance steadily improved toward the end of 2020. The drop in August coincided with peaks in 999 demand. There were further dips in performance in March and June 2021, however performance had remained above the monthly average.

999 calls answered within 10 seconds

October 2020 - September 2021

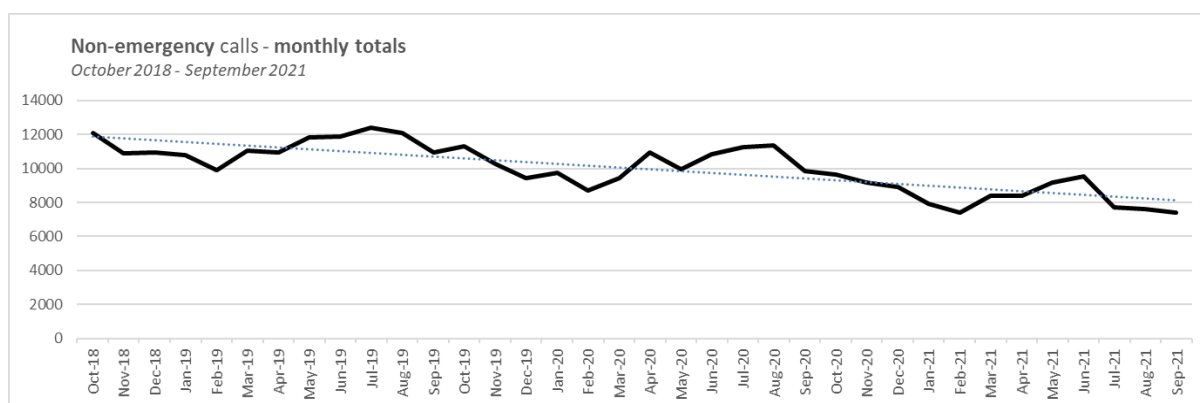


- 1.3 Since June 2021 the CCR has seen daily demand on 999 calls increase above previous daily demand averages. This has culminated in 2021 Summer 999 call demand regularly exceeding 400 calls both at weekends and during the week. This is comparable with demand normally experienced on New Year's Eve, the force's busiest day of the year. The impact of the increase

in 999 emergency calls has been a decrease in the percentage of calls answered with 10 seconds to 83% in September 2021. This increase is not unique to Suffolk or the police and nationally we have seen all forces reporting an increase in 999 calls alongside the Ambulance Service. In June 2021 BT also reported an increase in 999 calls, especially in the evenings and at the weekends. This in turn has led to heightened levels of delay in answering at some emergency control rooms.

101 - Non-emergency call handling

- 1.4 Non-emergency call handling continued to see a decline overall in volume between April 2021 to September 2021. There was a slight increase seen at the end of Lockdown restrictions.



- 1.5 The main impact of 999 Call Demand has been on the 101 call waiting times. When dialling 101, callers are presented with a series of options. Those not requiring one of the self-service options are put through to the switchboard call handler. On average the time taken to answer calls by the switchboard in September 2021 was 20 seconds. The switchboard resolves at this point nearly 30% of all 101 calls. The remaining 101 calls then continue to a control room operator following a risk assessment under the THRIVE policing model (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement). Following this assessment, calls are placed into appropriate queues. The below tables show the increase in time taken to answer 101 calls placed in these queues since May 2021. The increase in time taken to answer is due to the prioritisation being given by the CCR Call operators to the incoming 999 calls.

May 2021 Average Answer Time:

Call Type	Calls Received	Calls Answered	Average Answer Time
Emergency	829	827	00:00:05
Priority	2,828	2,086	00:09:03
Routine	5,117	3,074	00:10:35
Advice	392	198	00:15:32
Partners	2,326	2,212	
Other	244	134	
Total	11,736	8,531	

Sept 2021 Average Answer Time:

Call Type	Calls Received	Calls Answered	Average Answer Time
Emergency	773	766	00:00:12
Priority	2,509	1,820	00:11:27
Routine	5,114	2,401	00:15:13
Advice	268	101	00:17:36
Partners	2,264	2,096	
Other	180	87	
Total	11,108	7,271	

- 1.6 Online reporting and live web chat continued to be highlighted as a range of options to contact the Suffolk Constabulary and to reduce inbound telephony calls and wait times. The 'Click before you call' campaign has continued to be publicised throughout the summer period. There is no doubt the CCR has many calls coming in that could be dealt with via on-line reporting or by looking at Suffolk Constabulary information pages. Postcards have been printed to support engagement officers in delivering these alternative options of contact and previous media releases have been revisited to add details of calls the CCR should not be receiving.

Leadership Update

- 1.7 In February Superintendent Kerry Cutler was appointed to the CCR to lead the CCR review and take forward the review recommendations.

Suffolk CCR Improvement and transformation Programme

- 1.8 Following on from the work and the recommendations made in the CCR Improvement Project submitted to the April 2025 Strategic Board, the Suffolk CCR Improvement and transformation Programme has been set up and is currently working through the recommendations of the initial paper.
- 1.9 A Continuous Improvement Plan has been developed alongside the 2025 Project Team CCR review, it contains short term and longer-term actions designed to improve the efficiency and resourcing of the CCR and prioritises HMIC report findings.
- 1.10 Actions are grouped into key themes:

Building Capability and Capacity
Managing Demand
Being innovative, ambitious and exploiting technology
Developing Accountability
Developing Peoples Skills
Ensuring the early identification of RISK
Developing comprehensive wellbeing support

- 1.11 Updates to the Plan are managed via quarterly meetings and are also reported to the Programme Board.

Vision & Aims

- 1.12 In support of the Improvement Plan a clear Vision and Aim were set. The vision underpins the support to staff, Officers and the public of Suffolk to ensure the CCR is a centre of excellence and focuses on public safety 24/7, 365 days every year.

Suffolk Contact & Control Room

Our Vision is

Creating a service to manage all contact in a way that is consistent and that appropriately meets the needs of the individual.

Delivering a service that is intelligent, personalised, reassuring and effective at the earliest point of contact.

Our Aim is

to deliver contact management services which

- Delivers appropriate assistance to members of the public
- Prioritises those at greatest risk
- Effectively uses people and technology across an appropriate range of communication channels
- Achieves early resolution of call for service, deploying frontline policing resources where necessary
- Collaborates with others, ensuring that we protect and increase confidence in Policing



Live Chat

- 1.13 The Constabulary has been using live chat since the 22nd February 2021.
- 1.14 The system itself is very easy to use and would require minimal training for anyone in the Constabulary to use and it can be used through existing technology like Microsoft Teams. The system also has the ability for us to broaden our reach into the public by incorporating social media communications through live chat, including Facebook messenger, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. The system is web based and can be accessed by any machine and therefore can be used in an agile working environment
- 1.15 Since February 2021 using Live Chat:
- We have served over 4680 members of the public, and partner agencies
 - We have taken part in over 5350 'chats'
 - We currently have an average wait time to be answered of just 18 seconds
 - Staff have at times been managing up to 5 concurrent chats
 - We have received over 1220 survey results with a recommendation rate (would the user recommend the service to a friend or use it again) of over 94%

- The service has also been rated at nearly 92% Good (13.83%) or Very Good (78.64%)
- Over 55% of survey users said they would have called 101 if it wasn't for live chat (extrapolated channel shift of around 2500 calls from 101 to digital)

Resourcing and Recruitment

- 1.16 The CCR recruitment programme is continually under review to ensure staffing levels remain at an effective strength. The CCR currently has a funded budget of 115.28 full time equivalent (FTE) Control Room Operator police staff which includes an uplift of 5 FTE as a result of the growth plan as part of the CCR Improvement Project. Over the summer period there has been a higher number of staff retirements and staff transferring to other specialised areas within Suffolk Constabulary, increasing the current vacancies to 18 FTE. Recruitment Assessment Centres have been held and on the 11th October 13 new police staff joined the CCR to commence classroom training. Experienced Control Room staff are supporting their tutoring during this classroom period. The new Control Room Operators will join their teams by the end of December and will be further supported by experienced team members.
- 1.17 There are currently 8 FTE vacancies inclusive of the increased budget of 5 FTE. A further recruitment Assessment Centre is being held on the 17th October for the March/April Induction to fill these ahead of the summer high demand period. The training team is formulating plans for attendance at Recruitment Seminars/Open days, making better use of digital campaigns including LinkedIn advertising during 2022. This will ensure every opportunity is maximised to bring good candidates into the CCR.

Staff Wellbeing – COVID

- 1.18 The CCR continues to maintain a very good level of rigour for COVID hygiene controls which has been supported by the installation of desk screens along with the use of operationally converted meeting rooms to give extra working space to maintain good social distancing levels. Teams are kept apart as much as possible to protect all these working areas and reduce any infection spread.
- 1.19 For the majority of the summer the CCR has remained locked down to all but critical operational staff supported by lateral flow testing ahead of entry into the Control Room. Cleaning stations for wipes and anti-bacterial sprays are located upon entry and throughout the CCR estate. Masks wearing is mandatory for all areas unless seated. Desks, screens and equipment are continually cleaned at shift handovers throughout every 24-hour period. It is testament to the level of commitment of CCR staff upholding these COVID controls that to date there has not been any COVID outbreaks as a result of a positive test and infection spread throughout this pandemic.

SECTION TWO: WEBSITE UPDATE

1. WEBSITE PROJECT UPDATE

- 1.1 The website continues to be updated in line with what the business requires - ongoing communication is continuing with relevant stakeholders.
- 1.2 The website is in the progress of having a platform upgrade due to the existing platform no longer having support this will be completed by November 2021. As part of the upgrade the current content and accessibility standards will be reviewed.

2. CHANNEL SHIFT

- 2.1 The website continues to see an increase in online crime reporting. The table below also shows the year on year comparison and percentage increase from 2018-2021

Month	2018 crimes submitted	2019 crimes submitted	2020 crimes submitted	2021 crimes submitted	% increase 20-21
January	700	866	1,240	1,312	5.8%
February	694	795	1,433	1,512	5.5%
March	852	969	1,264	1,967	55.6%
April	970	1,001	2,523	1770	-28.8%
May	853	1,203	1,869	1725	-7.7%
June	967	1,077	1,745	1918	9.9%
July	1,243	1,332	2,066	2063	-0.1%
August	1,063	1,134	1,908	2095	9.8%
September	868	1,092	1,902	2156	13.3%
October	1,009	1,220	1,988		
November	992	1,217	2,122		
December	769	1,164	1,572		
	10,980	13,070	21,632		

- 2.2 Below is a breakdown on the individual breakdown of the crimes reported each month for 2021.

Crimes submitted 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
7. Crimes submitted	553	597	761	682	628	652	691	711	811				6,086
6. ASB	333	405	584	497	487	577	623	642	577				4,725
Dashboard Camera	22	34	55	56	70	81	73	77	69				537
8. Road Collisions	95	116	117	138	169	172	191	171	196				1,365
1. Retail theft	90	90	105	97	59	74	111	84	102				812
2. Theft	99	125	192	138	157	184	180	201	210				1,486
3. Criminal damage	84	101	99	125	103	104	119	132	115				982
4. Fraud													
5. Hate crime / incident	36	44	54	37	52	74	75	77	76				525
COVID-19 (live: 9 April)													
Total	1,312	1,512	1,967	1,770	1,725	1,918	2,063	2,095	2,156	0	0	0	16,518

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications that are not already managed through existing governance structures.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 4.1 No new risks have been identified. Risks relating to specific projects continued to be recorded in the project specific risk register.