Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner

Making Suffolk a safer place to live, work, travel and invest

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE	**PAPER NO: AP23/04**

SUBMITTED TO: **ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –**
13 JANUARY 2023

SUBJECT: **RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE**

SUMMARY:

1.   The period of this report covers **1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022.**

2.   This report provides an operational overview of how the Constabulary receives and manages calls to the emergency number 999 and the non-emergency number 101.

3.   It provides key performance information tracking both emergency and non-emergency call demand, call answering time and response time to attend emergency incidents.

4.   It provides an insight into call type increases in respect of 999 Call demand in the last 12 months.

5.   It provides updated information in relation to the Constabulary's programme of improvements to create a service to manage all contact in a way that is consistent and effective.

Chief Officer Commentary (T/Assistant Chief Constable Eamonn Bridger):

The following are the key strengths, issues and concerns arising from this report:

- Urban incident response attendance is very good at 91% of emergency incidents being attended within 15 minutes. Response in rural areas is more challenging and attendance has been reached within 20 minutes in 84.2% but this figure is well above 90% for under 25 minutes.
- The Contact and Control Room (CCR) Improvement programme continues to make progress and all recruitment has been completed to the CCA. Uplift into the main CCR will be achieved by April 2023 and operators will be trained by the end of July 2023. It is expected that this will be a great support to the call handling and incident resolution at source.

- The Livechat trial was a success earlier in the year, but further implementation was delayed until October 2022 due to the demand pressures during summer months.
- 999 call demand has remained at heightened levels despite moving out of the main summer demand period. There have been significant increases in abandoned calls, domestic non crimes and those that emanate from other agencies (Ambulance/ Mental Health services). Call demand in Suffolk is the 3rd highest in the MSG of forces.
- Current resourcing levels and demand pressures have seen performance around call handling fail to achieve optimum levels. It is anticipated that performance will be improved by the additional resourcing and efficiency initiatives that are planned for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is asked to consider the progress made by the Constabulary, and raise issues with Chief Constable as appropriate to the PCC's role in holding the Chief Constable to account.
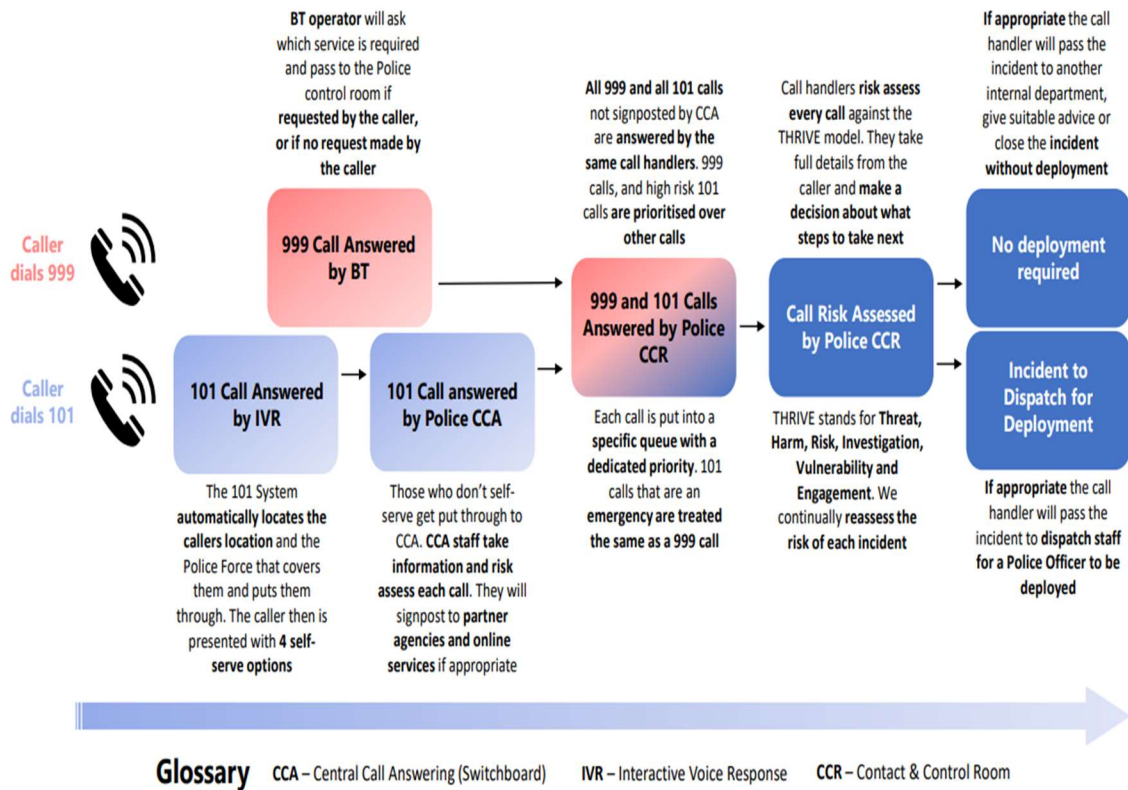
DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   This report covers the period **1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022** and provides detail in relation to the processes in place to manage emergency and non-emergency calls, performance data and an overview in relation to the Constabulary's programme of transformation to improve service delivery.

1.2   This paper supports the related commitment in the Police and Plan that the Constabulary will:

- •   Maintain, and where necessary enhance, its good emergency response and call-handling performance;
- •   Improve its processes for answering non-emergency calls and develop appropriate channels to report crime and contact the police.

1.3   With the easing of COVID restrictions in March 2021 the Contact and Control Room (CCR) has continued to experience a month on month increase in Emergency (999) calls, this report will look at the increase in 999 call demand. However, this should be considered in a National context, and not simply a Suffolk issue with the majority off UK Police Forces reporting increases in 999 demand alongside other emergency services.

**2.   EMERGENCY CALL (999) AND NON-EMERGENCY (101) CALL HANDLING PROCESS**

2.1   An explanation of how Emergency and non-emergency call handling processes operate is contained within Appendix 1 of this report. In summary, Suffolk CCR Call Handlers are responsible for answering both 999 and 101 calls.

2.2   The below diagram illustrates 999 and 101 Call Process:

BT operator will ask which service is required and pass to the Police control room if **requested by the caller**, or if no request made by the caller

All 999 and all 101 calls not signposted by CCA are **answered by the same call handlers**. 999 calls, and high risk 101 calls **are prioritised over other calls**

Call handlers **risk assess every call** against the THRIVE model. They take full details from the caller and **make a decision about what steps to take next**

If appropriate the call handler will pass the incident to another internal department, give suitable advice or close the **incident without deployment**

Caller dials 999

999 Call Answered by BT

999 and 101 Calls Answered by Police CCR

Call Risk Assessed by Police CCR

No deployment required

Caller dials 101

101 Call Answered by IVR

101 Call answered by Police CCA

Incident to Dispatch for Deployment

The 101 System **automatically locates the callers location** and the Police Force that covers them and puts them through. The caller then is presented with **4 self-serve options**

Those who don't self-serve get put through to CCA. **CCA staff take information and risk assess each call**. They will signpost to **partner agencies and online services** if appropriate

Each call is put into a **specific queue with a dedicated priority**. 101 calls that are an **emergency are treated the same as a 999 call**

THRIVE stands for **Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement**. We continually **reassess the risk of each incident**

If appropriate the call handler will pass the incident to **dispatch staff** for a Police Officer to be deployed

Glossary   **CCA** – Central Call Answering (Switchboard)   **IVR** – Interactive Voice Response   **CCR** – Contact & Control Room

3. EMERGENCY CALL (999), NON-EMERGENCY (101) AND EMAIL DEMAND

3.1 In the twelve months between **1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022** Suffolk Police CCR received:

Emergency 999 Calls	**123,655**
Non-emergency 101 Calls	**239,668**
Emails	**33,684**
Total	**397,027**

999, 101 & EMAIL DEMAND Oct 2021 to Sept 2022

■999 ■101 ■Emails
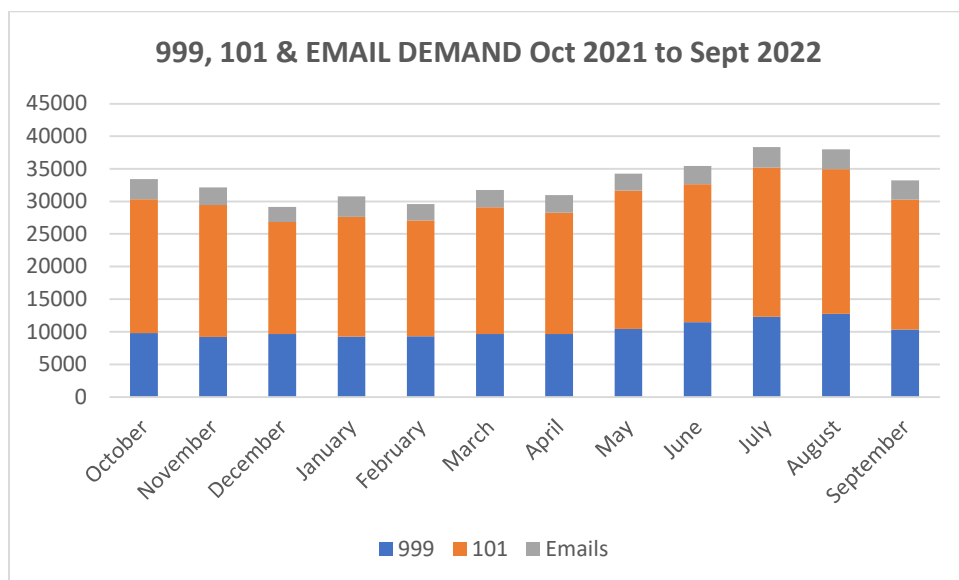
3.11   Emergency (999) calls have continued to increase during this reporting period whilst the volume of 101 calls has remained fairly static.

3.2   **Changes in 999 Demand**

3.2.1   There has been a significant increase in 999 demand in the 12 months between October 2021 to September 2022 compared to the previous two years. **The CCR has dealt with 22,786 more 999 calls compared with the previous period (2020/21) a 21.4% increase**.

3.2.2

Total 999 Demand	
Oct 21 - Sept 22	123,655
Oct 20 - Sept 21	100,869
Oct 19 - Sept 20	100,180
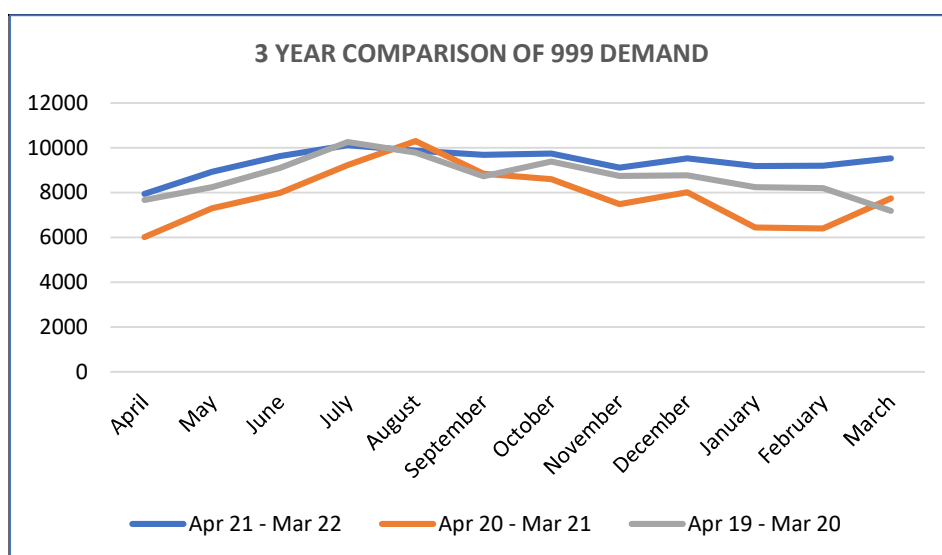
3.2.3   Periods of demand have become more unpredictable since the Covid pandemic. The CCR used to measure the high-water mark of demand as New Year's Eve – what was the busiest day of the year for 999 calls with call demand between 400 to 500 calls in the 24-hour period. During the Summer period the CCR regularly exceeded 400 calls to 999.

3.2.4   The table below shows a snapshot of 24-hour 999 Call demand (7am to 7am) in June 2022. This pattern of demand continued in July and August with 565 calls received on Friday 15th July, 592 calls received on Saturday 30th July and 462 calls received on Saturday 13th August. In 2019 the daily average in this same period were342 calls.

JUNE 2022	Number of 999 Calls (24hr period)
14th Tuesday	428
15th Wednesday	448
16th Thursday	472

17th Friday	**574**
18th Saturday	447
19th Sunday	342
20th Monday	414
21st Tuesday	434
22nd Wednesday	420
23rd Thursday	370
24th Friday	**528**
25th Saturday	422
26th Sunday	437
27th Monday	384
28th Tuesday	411

3.2.5   As previously reported 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.

3.2.6   To understand the increase in 999 Call volume in Suffolk a review of 'call type' has been undertaken looking at the descriptive code given by the caller taker when dealing with the 999 call. The following tables highlight the 'Top Ten' biggest increase in numbers of calls received:

Year on year - Biggest changes in CAD Numbers

Opening Codes	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	% Diff
ABANDONED CALLS	11493	15330	3837	33.39%
DOMESTIC NON-CRIME	5307	7043	1736	32.71%
CONCERN FOR SAFETY	8486	10152	1666	19.63%
PUBLIC ORDER	2046	2895	849	41.50%
HIGHWAY DISRUPTION	4792	5595	803	16.76%
ROAD RELATED OFFENCE	2897	3643	746	25.75%
MISSING/ABSENT	1340	2065	725	54.10%
VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSON	4216	4748	532	12.62%
RTC - DAMAGE ONLY	1922	2287	365	18.99%
RTC - PERSONAL INJURY	705	906	201	28.51%

*Over 200 Diff only

Pre-Covid comparison to 2021/22 - Biggest changes in CAD Numbers

Opening Codes	2018/19 PRE COVID	2021/22	Difference	% Diff
ABANDONED CALLS	11511	15330	3819	24.91%
CONCERN FOR SAFETY	6834	10152	3318	32.68%
DOMESTIC NON-CRIME	4219	7043	2824	40.10%
PUBLIC ORDER	1291	2895	1604	55.41%
MISSING/ABSENT	956	2065	1109	53.70%
MENTAL ILL HEALTH	1035	2080	1045	50.24%
HIGHWAY DISRUPTION	4856	5595	739	13.21%
CRIME - OTHER	1711	2419	708	29.27%
ROAD RELATED OFFENCE	2975	3643	668	18.34%
ADMINISTRATION	859	1228	369	30.05%

3.2.7 There is a significant growth in the number of '**abandoned**' 999 calls presented to the force by BT, the presumption being this is a consequence of the increase in demand, our ability to service that demand and caller behaviour.

3.2.8 Where a 999 call is abandoned, they are still dealt with as an emergency and enquiries are made by the CCR to identify the location of the caller, who the caller is, ascertain if there is any threat, harm, or risk to the caller. Based on the assessment the CCR will either call the caller back or deploy resources to deal. 999 abandoned calls can be time consuming to deal with and the CCR monitors repeat callers closely and will work with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams to deal with nuisance callers.

3.2.9 The follow table represents data taken from January 2022 to October 2022 (10 months) and illustrates the volume of abandon calls made from identifiable repeat callers who have called 999 over 10 times from a specific number and then abandoned the call. The colour highlights where the number used is different but person making the call is the same person. These type of repeat callers have a significant impact on the CCRs ability to answer other 999 and 101 calls, the effectively block the system. Each month repeat callers are highlighted through Force Tasking Process by the analysts and work is undertaken to reduce the demand by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT).

Calls from number with identified person calling	Total calls from same number (caller not identified – assumption that it is same person)
30	78
17	48
14	31
13	22
13	21
9	16
14	15
7	15
10	14
3	13
6	11
4	10
8	10
6	10
4	10
2	10
6	10
8	10

3.2.10 The second highest increase in volume of calls in the reporting period were those calls categorised as **'Concern for Safety'**. This type of call places considerable demand on police resources nationally and the frequency, and volume, has increased over time. Concern for Safety calls will encompass calls that also relate to the term 'welfare check' and are applied when a request is made that police visit someone who is believed to be vulnerable, or at risk for a wide variety of reasons. However, it should be remembered that checking welfare is not

solely the responsibility of the police; other agencies also have a role to play and may have more appropriate skills, resources, and legal powers.

3.2.11   Police will carry out a 'welfare check' when a request is made to police about any individual if it is an emergency and there is a real concern that something serious is about to occur, or has already occurred, to the relevant individual(s) on those premises. The police will respond because it enables a professional intervention if an individual is in need of immediate assistance due to a health condition, injury, a life-threatening situation or immediate vulnerability. Unless this threshold is reached, police have no duty, and therefore no power, to take any action.   However, in recent years there has been increasing pressure on the police to take action even when this threshold is not met and an increase in calls to police requesting, they carry out checks on behalf of other agencies. As a consequence, police are accepting responsibilities that sit with other agencies and in doing so accepting a duty of care. This has the dual impact of increasing demand on both 999 and 101 call takers and increasing demand on those officers deployed to attend 'concern for safety' call types.

3.2.12   The following table represents data taken from January 2022 to October 2022 (10 months) and illustrates the actual closing code for an incident following initial call. A number of these are resolved without police attendance and in some cases as previously stated police have attended when it is not our responsibility. Even if the call is resolved without police attendance, the call taker will be engaged for a considerable length of time dealing with the caller and therefore not available to take other calls.

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Month	Closing Code			Combined Total	Total Combined Graded D - No police attendance
	Collapsed, injury or trapped	Concern for Safety	Mental Ill Health		
Jan-22	120	1223	300	1643	473
Feb-22	121	1188	246	1555	390
Mar-22	130	1279	217	1626	403
Apr-22	130	1208	187	1525	345
May-22	145	1436	316	1897	529
Jun-22	120	1462	285	1867	445
Jul-22	158	1641	244	2043	521
Aug-22	133	1455	341	1929	542
Sep-22	130	1355	301	1786	553
Oct-22	151	1299	345	1795	613
Total	1338	13546	2782	17666	4814

3.2.13   This data also shows the demand placed on police from the Ambulance Service. Three months of data was examined to look at the volume of calls received to police and the reason for that call, the highest category was in relation to 'sudden death' and 'concern for safety'. There is a need for both agencies to work together to resolve incidents but with the increase in demand being experienced by the East of England Ambulance Service, police are being called more often in circumstances where it is not the responsibility of the police to deal with the matter or the police service is being left waiting for the other service to respond.

Month	Count
Aug	292
Sep	224
Oct	272
Total	**788**

Top Reason Code	Count
SUDDEN DEATH	164
CONCERN FOR SAFETY	161
COLLAPSE/ILNESS/INJURY/TRAPPED	146
RTC - PERSONAL INJURY	80
VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSON	60
MENTAL ILL HEALTH	50
DOMESTIC NON-CRIME	36

3.2.14 The increase in the reporting of **Missing Persons** has increased significantly in recent years. Missing persons are likely to be reported in the latter hours of the evening, usually increasing around 20:00 hours and peaking between 22:00 hours and midnight. Key demand peaks for the CCR for both 999 and 101 calls. It can take some 45 minutes currently for the CCR to take the details and generate the required reports.

3.2.15 There has been an increase by partner agencies passing over the responsibility of finding those in their care who are missing to police. Work being conducted nationally to address the issue of health, child and immigration settings passing some of their responsibilities to police. By way of example, children in care home settings that are reported missing at the time they fail to return for their curfew at 2200 hrs should not automatically be accepted as a missing child. If we ask ourselves, why has the risk of harm changed because they have failed to return and is there any additional information now available to that would suggest they are at greater risk at 2201 hrs than they were at 2159 hrs? Little would have changed, and the onus should remain on the provider as primary carer to make efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of that child prior to reporting them missing to police. The same circumstances can be applied to health care settings and asylum seekers whereby the correct agency should take and retain primacy until such time as there is sufficient risk that warrants launching a police investigation. There are multiple examples of care homes reporting children missing at the time they fail to report back for their curfew and the immediate response of the care home is to inform police, thereby passing on the responsibility and risk to the Constabulary to manage. There is currently work ongoing to review the Constabulary's approach to Missing Persons.

3.2.16 There is a similar issue in respect of calls to police linked to mental health, whether it is the person calling suffering with mental ill health, or a person calling about someone experiencing mental ill health. For example, the CCR will regularly receive calls from staff at care homes and houses of residence for young people or mentally vulnerable persons where there are agency staff and have less developed 'relationships' with people in their care – and then more likely to dial 999 if they are being aggressive and are unable to de-escalate the situation. An example of such a call given by a CCR Inspector recently involved a call from a care home member of staff stating a resident was threatening to damage property, at the same time the CCR received a call from the resident concerned stating they could overhear the call being made by the staff member and that it was not accurate, they were annoyed and had tried to

resolve the issue with the staff member and that they would leave them alone and wait on police arrival.

3.2.17   Likewise, both via 999 and 101 the CCR are receiving calls from individuals asking for help with mental health issues and they have called police as they have either been directed to or simply do not know who to get help from. It should be noted that the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT) will not accept referrals from police in regard to individuals police believe have mental health issues. Police can only provide guidance to either call the relevant help line or speak to their own doctor.

3.2.18   The consequence of increased 999 call demand is being seen in

(1) the length of time it takes for the CCR to answer a 999 call.
(2) a small portion of Suffolk 999 calls being redirected to other forces to answer during; and
(3) the availability of call takers to deal with the CCR 101 queues.

3.3   **The percentage of 999 calls answered in under 10 seconds**

3.3.1   In the twelve months between October 2021 to September 2022 Suffolk CCR answered on average 79.1% of its 999 emergency calls within 10 seconds (this does not include Emergency Redirect calls – those calls that have been received via 101 and redirected by the CCA call handlers to the CCR as an emergency call).
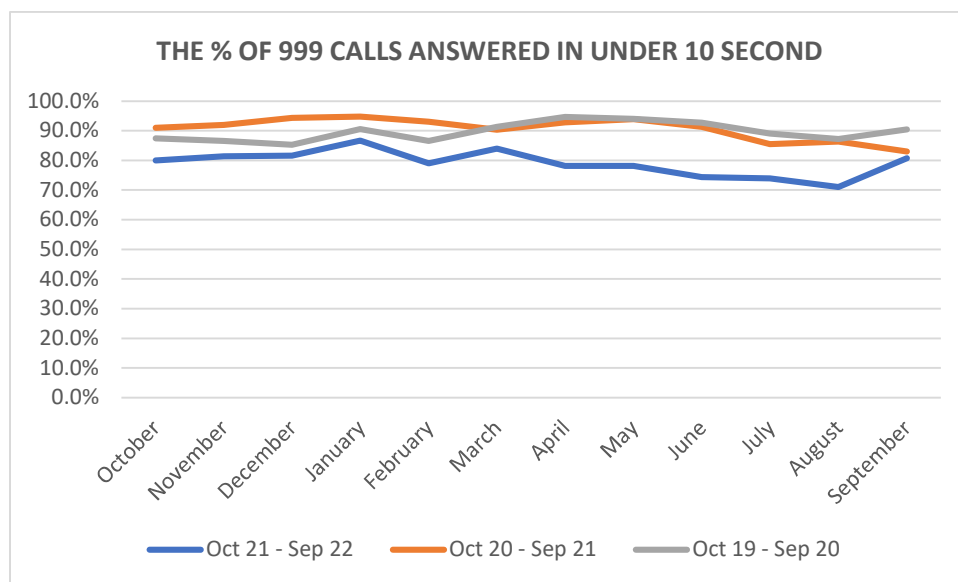
3.3.2   In the last 12 months there has continued to be a decrease in the monthly percentage of 999 calls answered in 10 seconds, this was particularly the case during the Summer months due to the volume of 999 calls being experienced. This has been the result of a combination of factors including the increase in volume of 999 calls, volume of calls received in a short period (often linked to a single incident such as a road traffic accident) and not enough staff to meet the growing demand. The Average Time to Answer for 999 calls in the twelve months to September 2022 was 11 seconds.

MONTHLY AVERAGE TIME TAKEN TO ANSWER 999 CALLS

A bar chart with y-axis labelled "SECONDS TO ANSWER" ranging from 0 to 18, and x-axis showing months October through September. Three series: Oct 21 - Sep 22 (blue), Oct 20 - Sep 21 (orange), Oct 19 - Sep 20 (grey).

Month	Oct 21 - Sep 22	Oct 20 - Sep 21	Oct 19 - Sep 20
October	11	6	7
November	10	5	7
December	10	5	8
January	7	5	6
February	11	5	9
March	8	6	6
April	11	5	4
May	11	5	5
June	13	6	5
July	15	9	6
August	17	8	7
September	11	10	6

3.4 Changes in 101 Demand

3.4.1 In the twelve months between October 2021 to September 2022 Suffolk Constabulary received 239,668 calls to 101. When dialling 101, callers are presented with a series of options. A number of these allow self-service Interactive Voice Response (IVR)). Out of the 101 calls received, 174,242 continued past this stage without selecting a self-service option and were answered by a switchboard operator. 23,459 101 calls were made directly to the CCR who operate the night service for 101.

| IVR (Interactive Voice Response)	41,967
CCA Switchboard	174,242
CCR Night Service	23,459
Total	239,668

3.4.2 101 Demand has been decreasing since 2019 each year. The rate of reduction has started to slow down over the last 12-month period. Some of this reduction can be attributed to 'channel shift' with other online options being made available in terms of improved advice, signposting, and information available through the Constabulary's internet page; alongside the ability to report incidents and crime online. There have also been regular media campaigns both locally ('Click before you Call') and nationally ('making the right call'). In addition, with the County now fully out of 'Lock Down' following the COVID Pandemic it is likely the calls to police regarding COVID related issues have also stopped. For example, any change in COVID regulations saw an increase in 101 calls to police seeking clarification and advice.

Total 101 Demand	
Oct 21 - Sept 22	239,668
Oct 20 - Sept 21	245,802
Oct 19 - Sept 20	286,148

3 YEAR COMPARISON OF 101 DEMAND

Legend: Oct 21 - Sep 22 ■ Oct 20 - Sep 21 ■ Oct 19 - Sep 20
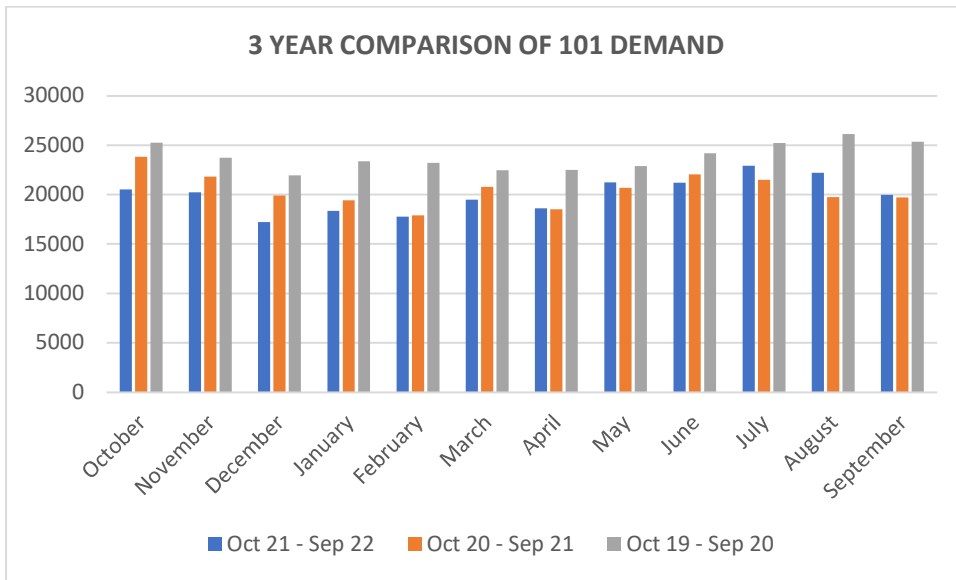
3.5   CCA (Switchboard) 101 Call Answering Times

3.5.1   All 101 Calls received into the CCA (Switchboard) are answered by one of the CCA Call Takers. They will assess the call to establish whether it can be handled entirely within the CCA, or whether the caller needs to be redirected into the CCR. In the last 12 months the average time to answer a call by the switchboard call takers was 17.8 seconds.

AVERAGE TIME TO ANSWER A CALL BY SWITCHBOARD

Legend: Oct 21 - Sep 22 ■ Oct 20 - Sep 21 ■ Oct 19 - Sep 20
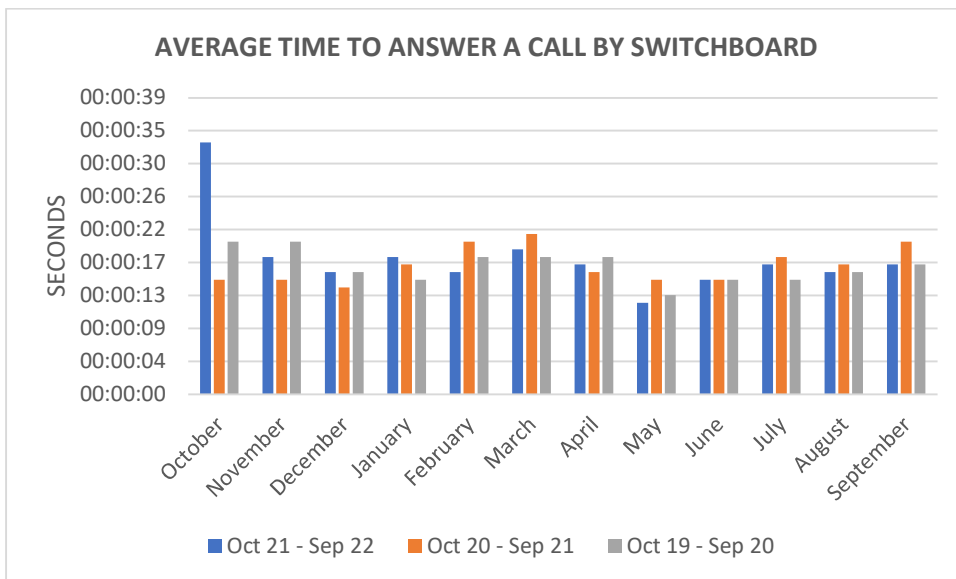
3.5.2   Between October 2021 and March 2022 the CCA had a budgeted staff of 9.88 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) and had been operating below this number. The peak in October 2021 is due to staff absences related to COVID. In April 2022 a new shift pattern was introduced in the CCA alongside a growth of 6.12 FTE CCA Call Takers and 1 FTE CCA Supervisor. Additional training was given to the CCA staff to support them to resolve calls earlier and prevent the need to transfer the call into the CCR.

3.5.3   Between October 2021 and September 2022 the CCR received 130,967 101 calls from either the CCA (switchboard) or directly via the 101 Night Service to answer and manage alongside all 999 calls.

TOTAL 101 CALLS PASSED INTO CCR VIA CCA OR DIRECTLY FROM NIGHT SERVICE
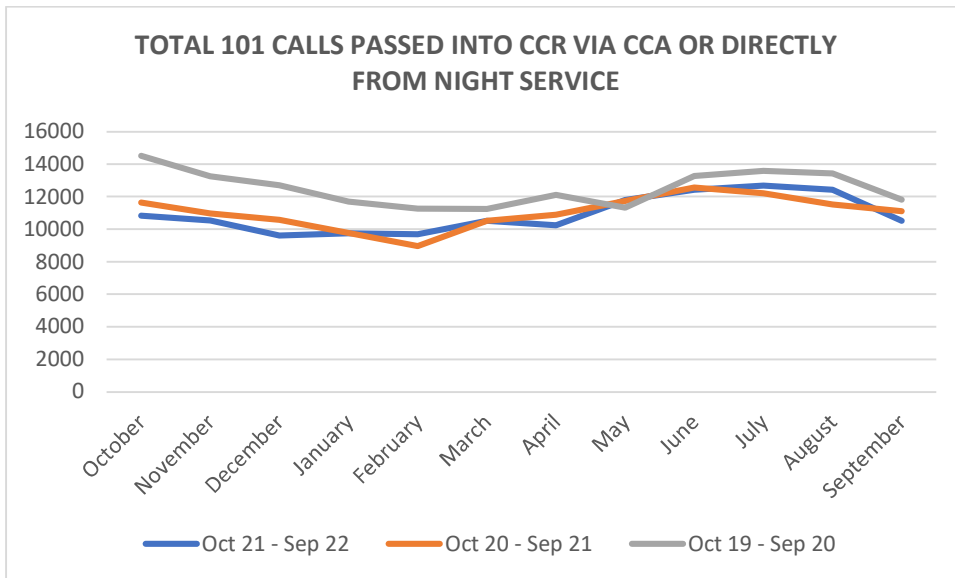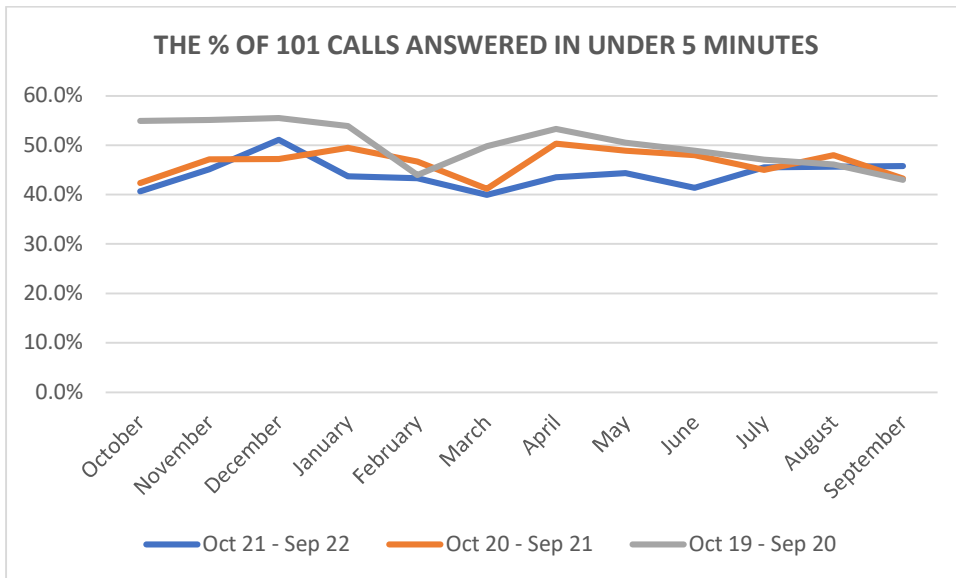

3.5.4 Examination of CCA only calls during peak demand periods showed that the staff in the CCA were resolving nearly 10% more calls than the previous period (shown in table below). Work continues with the CCA team to make improvements to support callers without the need to transfer them into the CCR 101 queues. This is not possible with all crime types but can remove non-police related calls, administrative based calls and those seeking advice. A full evaluation is being undertaken of the changes to ensure improvements continue to be made.

| July 2021 29.8%	July 2022 **37.4%**
August 2021 27.1%	August 2022 **37.7%**

3.6   CCR 101 Call Answering Times

3.6.1 The CCA Call Taker will pass the call into the CCR by placing the caller in a specific 101 queue according to the type of call and priority. For example, calls relating to Domestic Abuse or Hate Crime will be given a higher priority by the CCR call handler. However, the length of waiting time will be determined by the volume of 999 calls being received as they are being dealt with by the same call handlers. A CCR Supervisor monitors the queues within the CCR and will ensure more urgent 101 calls are prioritised whilst checking the type of call with the longest waiting times. The volume of calls waiting, and the longest waiting times are displayed within the CCR so that all staff are aware.

3.6.2 Between October 2021 and March 2022 on average 44.2% of 101 calls were answered by the CCR in under 5 minutes.

THE % OF 101 CALLS ANSWERED IN UNDER 5 MINUTES

Legend: Oct 21 - Sep 22 (blue), Oct 20 - Sep 21 (orange), Oct 19 - Sep 20 (grey)

3.6.3   Between October 2021 and September 2022 on average 5.8% of 101 calls were answered by the CCR in between 5-10 minutes.

THE % OF 101 CALLS ANSWERED BETWEEN 5-10 MINUTES
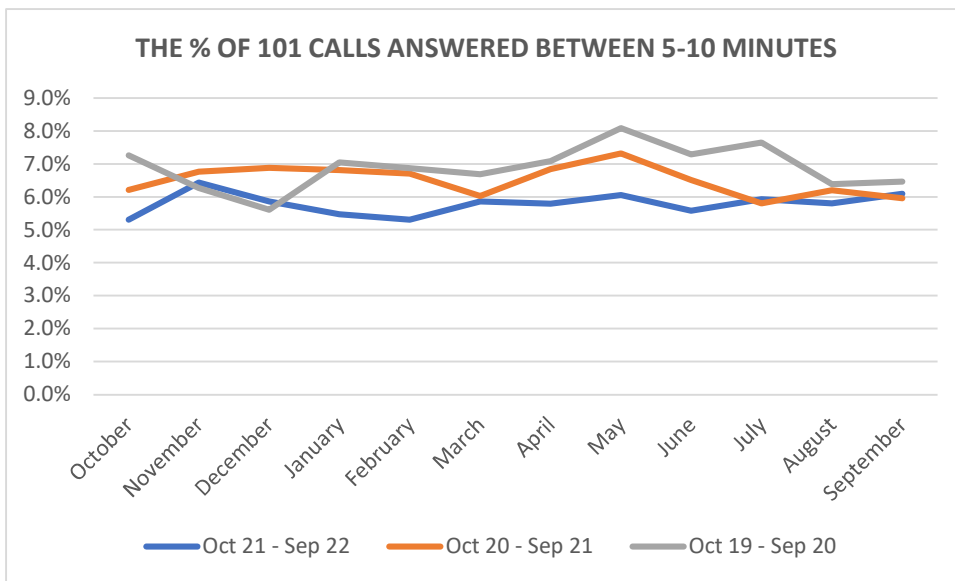
3.6.4   Between October 2021 and September 2022 on average 14.7% 101 calls were answered by the CCR after 10 minutes.

THE % OF 101 CALLS ANSWERED AFTER 10 MINUTES
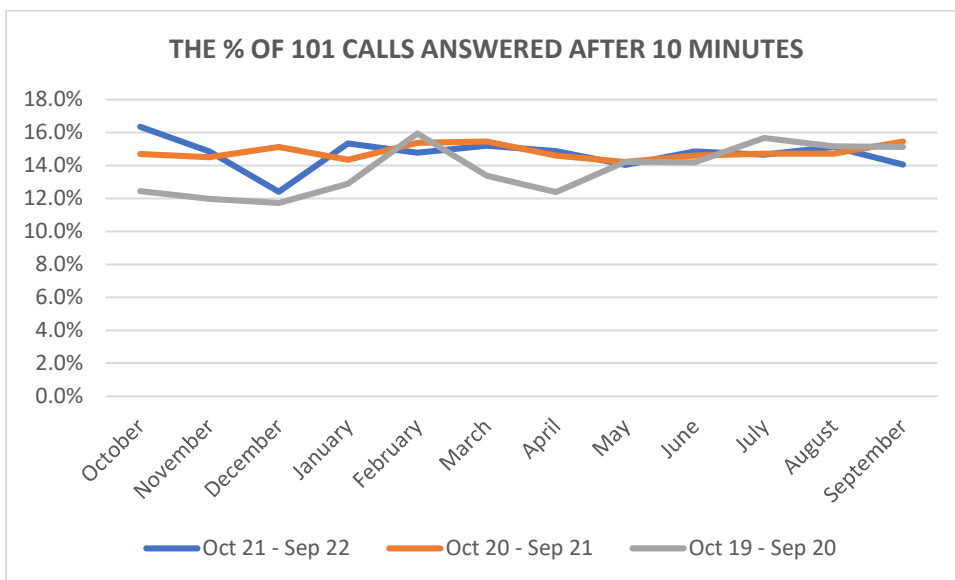
3.7   The percentage of 101 calls abandoned

3.7.1   Significant call answering delays continue to occur at various times in the CCR in relation to 101 calls transferred from the CCA and as a consequence a high percentage of 101 calls are abandoned. One of the main reasons for the abandonment rate is the volume of all calls being received by the CCR in comparison to the numbers of staff available to answer those calls.

3.7.2   There are two types of abandonment rates that are measured – short abandoned and long abandoned. For the purposes of this report, we focus on 'long abandoned' calls with the CCR 101 queues.

3.7.3   When a caller dials 101 they are greeted with a list of options before being put through to an operator. During this time, they are also advised to terminate the call and report the incident online (with the exception of Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Hate Crime, and the Public Safety queues). There is also an automated message advising the caller to dial 999 if the call is an emergency. This is known as a RAD - Recorded Announcement Device. This action can cause two types of abandonment of the call – short abandoned and long abandoned. Anything over 30 seconds is classed as long abandoned, i.e., it will appear in the statistics that the caller may have waited a considerable amount of time before terminating the call, when in fact they may have terminated after just only 60 seconds when they received the second RAD.

% CALLS ABANDONDED OVER 30 SECONDS IN THE CCR 101 QUEUE	
Oct 21 - Sept 22	34.2%
Oct 20 - Sept 21	29.8%
Oct 19 - Sept 20	27.0%

3.7.4   Research shows that some callers who terminated the 101 call did in fact go online and report the incident, this is referred to as 'channel shift'. In addition, audits of crimes and CADs has identified that callers have called back and reported the crime or incident at a later time. However, it is noted that many do not, and work continues to reduce 101 call waiting times in the CCR and provide the public with alternative methods to contact the police.
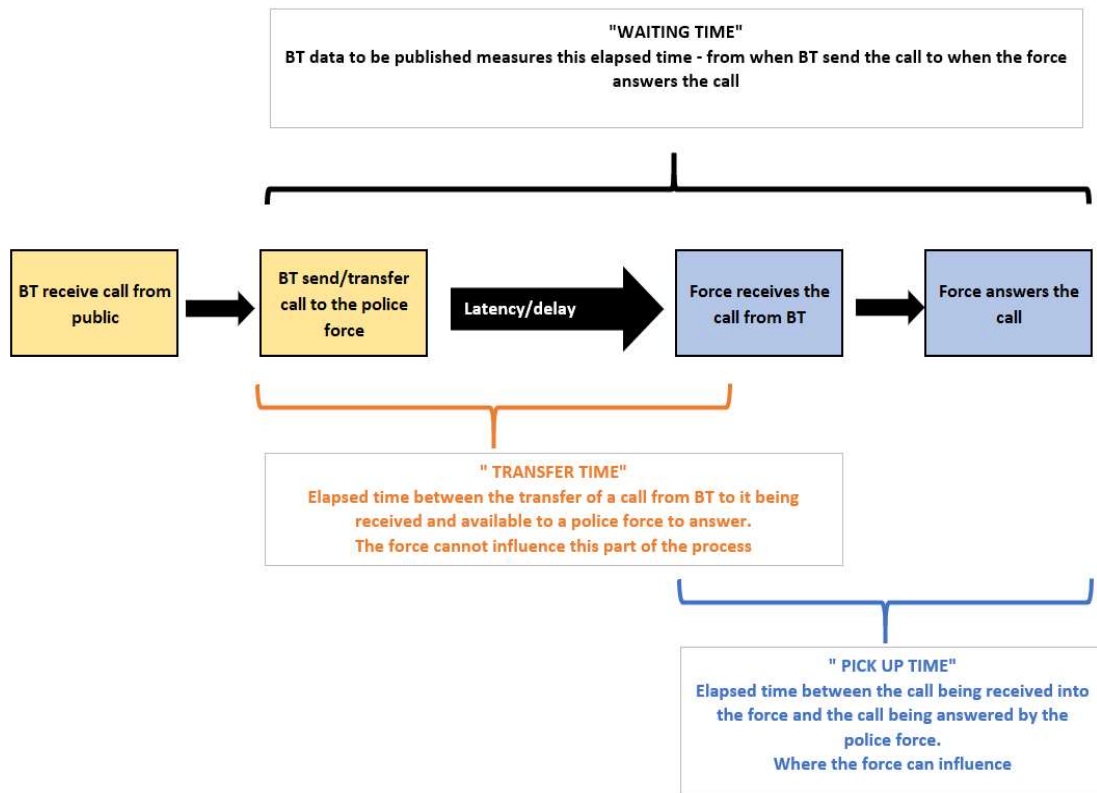
3.7.5   Between October 2021 and September 2022 there were a total of 25,449 online reports (relating to crime, ASB, Road Traffic Collisions and other incidents). Due to a recent website upgrade, it is only possible to provide data on how many people first tried to report via 101 since April 2022. Since April 2022, a total of 3,866 (29%) online reporters said that they first tried to report the crime via 101. This is out of a total of 13,269 reports made online in the same time frame. The CCR continues to look at digital options to reduce 101 call waiting times and give, those able, access to reporting options online.

3.7.6   The biggest impact on the 101 abandonment rates has been the increase in 999 calls in the last 12 months. This has resulted call takers simply not being able to answer the volume of 999 calls and service the 101 call queues in the CCR. In addition, the time taken to resolve a call correctly (obtain the correct information, complete the appropriate checks, and correctly 'THRIVE' the call) will impact on a call takers ability to deal with calls. Any new process or check required in the CCR can impact on call handling time and therefore on the volume of calls that can be dealt with. The below table highlights how the average 999 call handling time has been increasing:

Apr-19	00:04:06
May-19	00:04:19
Jun-19	00:04:04
Jul-19	00:04:13
Aug-19	00:04:10
Sep-19	00:04:17
Apr-20	00:04:43
May-20	00:04:33
Jun-20	00:04:40
Jul-20	00:04:27
Aug-20	00:04:29
Sep-20	00:04:28
Apr-21	00:04:43
May-21	00:04:35
Jun-21	00:04:27
Jul-21	00:04:29
Aug-21	00:04:31
Sep-21	00:04:24
Apr-22	00:04:32
May-22	00:04:44
Jun-22	00:04:39
Jul-22	00:04:25

4. National British Telecom (BT) emergency Data

4.1 In May 2022 the BT data was published on Digital Public Contact dashboard. This shows a complete picture of the public's experience when making a 999 call. However, to place the figures in context, it is important to emphasise there is a delay in the transfer of calls to police forces and the receipt of those calls. This is driven by local BT and force technology infrastructure. Suffolk Constabulary's own data shows the time between the force seeing the call presented from BT to it being answered.

4.2 The below diagram illustrates the call process from BT receiving a 999 call, transferring a 999 call to a police force and the call being answered:

"WAITING TIME"
BT data to be published measures this elapsed time - from when BT send the call to when the force answers the call

BT receive call from public → BT send/transfer call to the police force → Latency/delay → Force receives the call from BT → Force answers the call

" TRANSFER TIME"
Elapsed time between the transfer of a call from BT to it being received and available to a police force to answer.
The force cannot influence this part of the process

" PICK UP TIME"
Elapsed time between the call being received into the force and the call being answered by the police force.
Where the force can influence

4.3   There is an expectation that the time between BT transferring a 999 call to a police force and the call being answered – the waiting time – is as short as possible and ideally under 10 seconds. It has been acknowledged that there is often a lag in the system when transferring a 999 call from BT to a police force, which increases the overall time taken to answer a call. The length of the lag is unpredictable and can vary in different parts of the country, and at different times across the day. This has resulted in different effects for different police forces.

4.4   The data provided by BT shows that Suffolk received 112,693 999 calls in the eleven months between 01/11/2021 – 31/10/2022. The average answer time for this period was 21.4 seconds for a 999 call to be answered from the point that it was made, answered by BT, transferred and then answered by Suffolk CCR. This is the 13th lowest number of 999 calls across all 44 forces included in this dataset. However, this is the third highest across our Most Similar Force Group as seen in the chart below. When based on rates per 1,000 population for each force, Suffolk have one of the highest (148.1) call rate, only Warwickshire had a higher call rate per 1,000 population.

Suffolk MSGs				
Force Name	999 Calls	mid-2020 Population estimates	Call rate per 1,000 Population	Call Rate Ranking
Devon and Cornwall	260,052	1,785,300	145.7	6
West Mercia	162,371	1,298,400	125.1	4
Suffolk	112,693	761,200	148.1	7
Norfolk	110,334	914,000	120.7	3
North Wales	101,964	703,400	145.0	5
North Yorkshire	99,243	831,600	119.4	2
Warwickshire	91,582	583,800	157.1	8
Wiltshire	84,011	727,000	115.6	1

OFFICIAL

4.5   It has been noted nationally that there are significant differences between Force data and data provided by BT within the Digital Public Contact dashboard. The number of 999 calls provided by BT are consistently lower than the number of calls recorded from Force data. One hypothesis is that this data will not include 101 calls that are redirected from the CCA into the CCR as emergency calls. This issue is reflected nationally.

**5.   CCR EMAIL DEMAND**

5.1   The CCR Call Takers are also responsible for managing the Emails that come into the Constabulary. These are dealt with in the same way as a call with the details being THRIVED and resources being deployed to deal with them as appropriate. Data is only available since September 2020 but shows on average the CCR deal with approximately 3,000 emails each month.

EMAILS DEALT WITH BY THE CCR

Legend: —— Oct 21 - Sep 22   —— Oct 20 - Sep 21
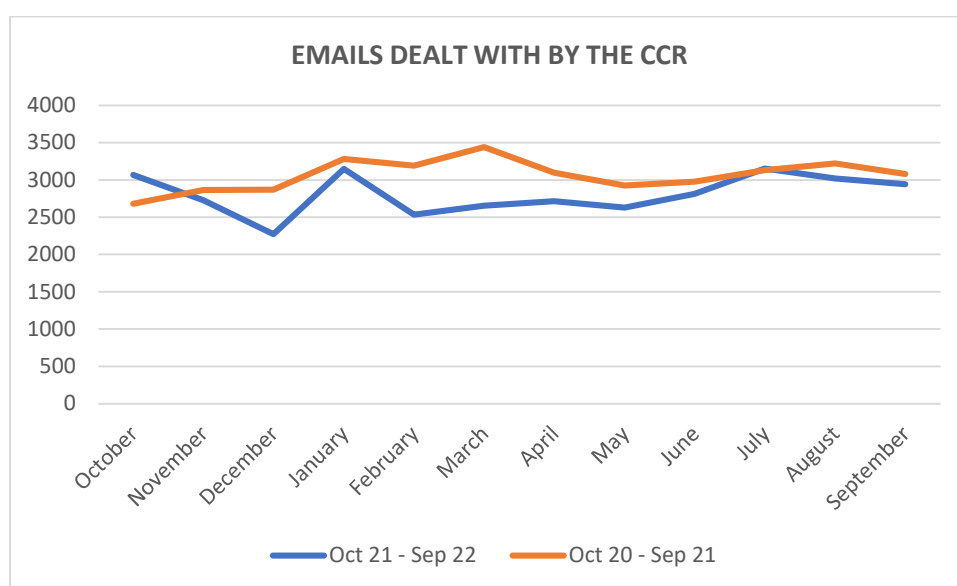
6.   CRIME CENTRE CO-ORDINATION (CCC) REPORTING

6.1   The CCR work with officers and staff within the Crime Centre Co-ordination (CCC) team to manage both the Online reporting and booking appointments for desk top investigations. The key function of the CCC is to carry out desk top investigations without the need for officers to be deployed. The CCR will "THRIVE" the report, create a computer aided despatch report (CAD) and allocate an appointment in an electronic diary system in accordance with the caller's availability. CCC will then speak with the victim, obtain details, and create a crime report. The crime is then subject to a quality assurance check by the Investigation Management Unit. The CCC will not take CADS whereby a named offender is identified upon first contact, a risk is identified that requires an immediate response or certain types of crimes such as Domestic Abuse.

6.2   The CCC will also manage crimes reported online making follow up contact with the victims. Officers within the CCC have been receiving training to work in the CCR to provide support to Call Takers in relation to reducing call waiting time in the '101 Crime Queue'.

CRIMES RECORDED BY CCC OCT 2021 TO SEPT 2022
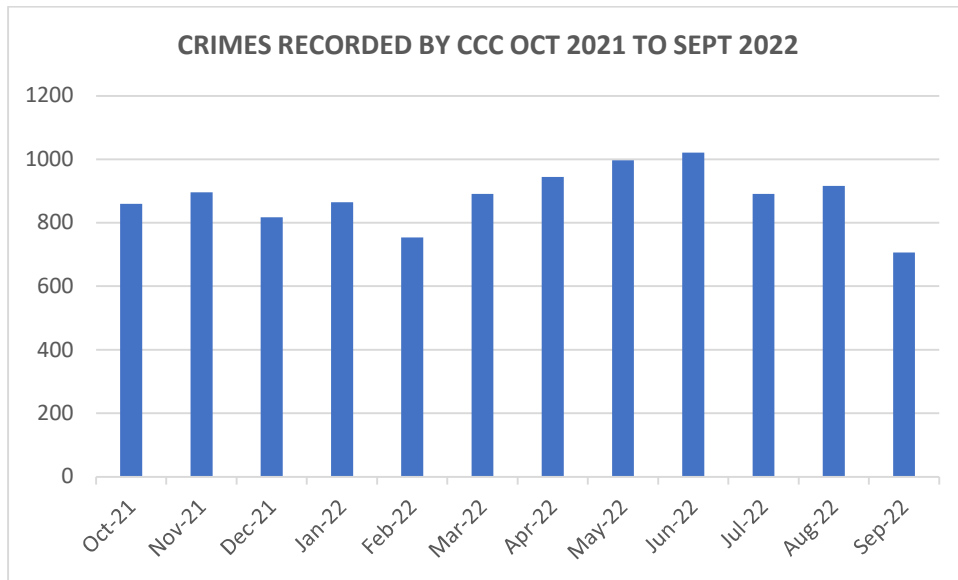
7. CALL RESOLUTION WITHIN THE CCA & CCR

7.1 Call Takers within the CCA and CCR will seek to resolve calls at the earliest opportunity. They must initially assess threat, harm, and risk as they obtain details in order to decide how the call needs to be dealt with. The staff require a breath of knowledge and skills to deal with increasingly difficult situations. But there are many calls they are able to simply deal with by directing the caller to the appropriate agency to call or giving advice and guidance. The nature and complexity of the call will also impact on the time it takes for the call handler to deal with the call. Between October 2021 and September 2022, the CCA and CCR combined resolved 50.59% (183,820) of calls without the need to deploy officers.

CALLS RESOLVED BY THE CCA & CCR - OCT 2021 to SEPT 2022
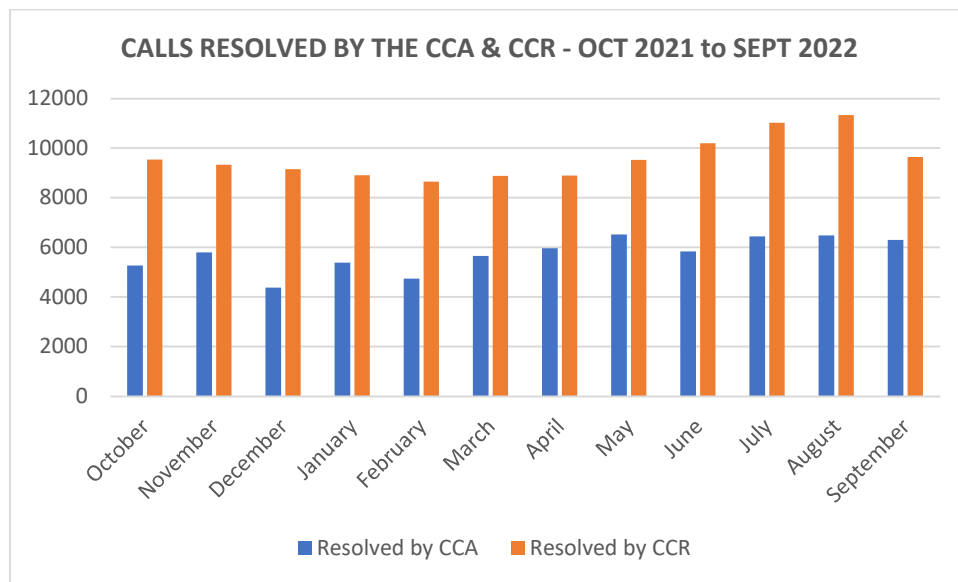
8. CALL GRADING & RESPONSE TIMES

8.1 Call Grading

8.1.1 In order to be aligned with National Management Guidance and to better prioritise our demand, the CCR adopted a change in the grading structure in June 2022. The main changes

related to the existing Grade B which previously had no target time for attendance. The existing Grade B has been subdivided into B1 and B2:
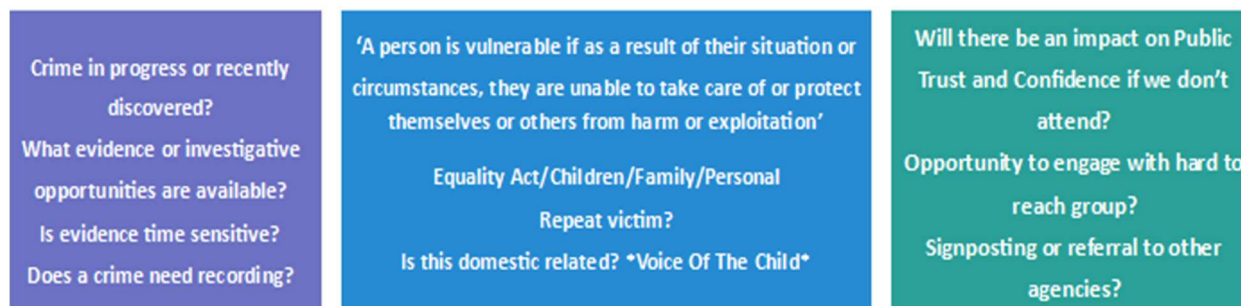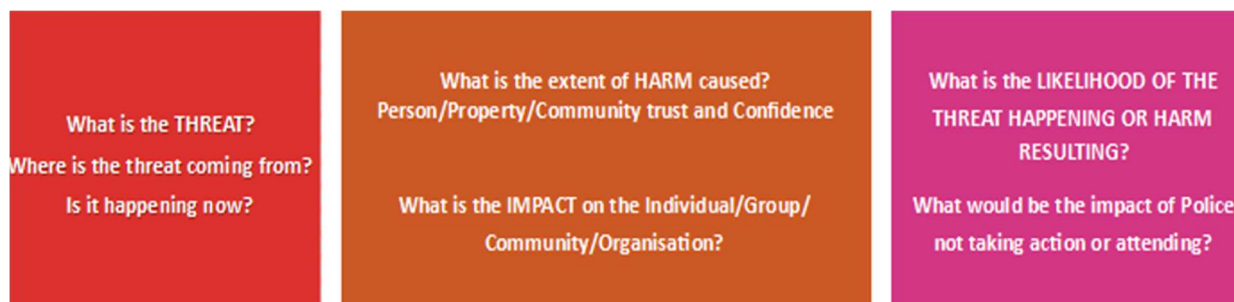
B1 will be an URGENT response with a target attendance time of up to 60 minutes.
B2 will be an IMPORTANT response with a target attendance time of up to 24 hours.

8.2   Call Grading Summary

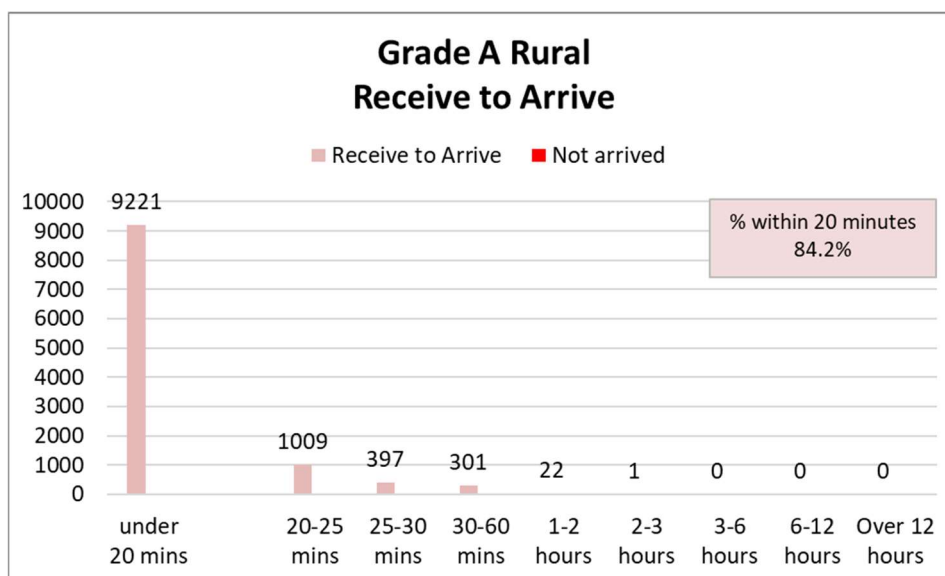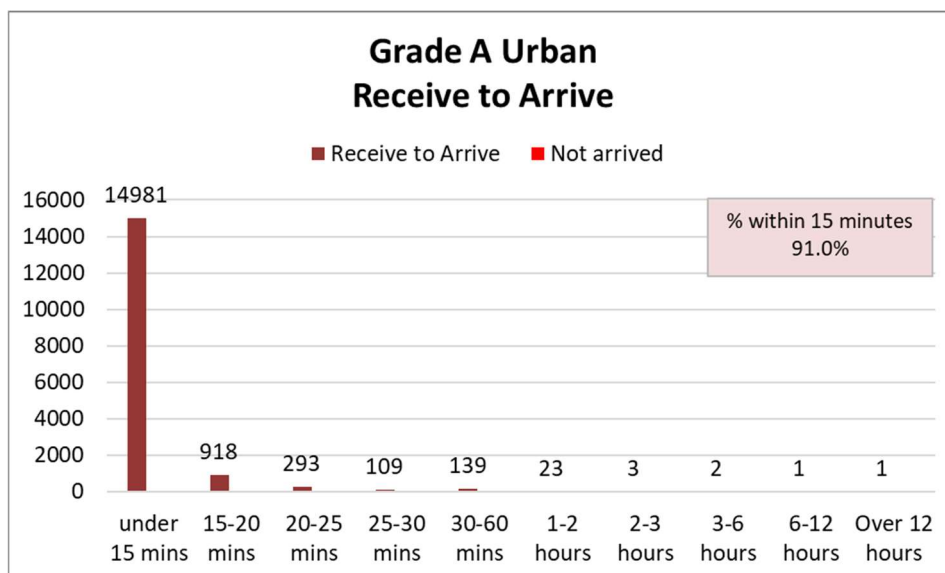| GRADES	Description	Target Response Times
A	IMMEDIATE	URBAN 15 Minutes RURAL 20 Minutes
B1	URGENT	Up to 60 Minutes
B2	IMPORTANT	Up to 24 Hours
C	SCHEDULED	N/A (appointment)
D	REMOTE RESOLUTION	N/A

8.2.1   All of our Grading decisions are based on the THRIVE principles with the rationale for the decision recorded on the CAD. THRIVE is a series of questions, information gathering and assessment that the call handler needs to consider when speaking to the caller before making a Grading decision. It focusses attention to the risk and welfare of the individual and public.

8.2.2   The below diagram highlights considerations the call handler makes in respect of 'THRIVE':


What is the THREAT?
Where is the threat coming from?
Is it happening now?

What is the extent of HARM caused?
Person/Property/Community trust and Confidence

What is the IMPACT on the Individual/Group/Community/Organisation?

What is the LIKELIHOOD OF THE THREAT HAPPENING OR HARM RESULTING?

What would be the impact of Police not taking action or attending?

THRIVE
THREAT HARM RISK INVESTIGATION VULNERABILITY ENGAGEMENT

Crime in progress or recently discovered?
What evidence or investigative opportunities are available?
Is evidence time sensitive?
Does a crime need recording?

'A person is vulnerable if as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation'

Equality Act/Children/Family/Personal
Repeat victim?
Is this domestic related? *Voice Of The Child*

Will there be an impact on Public Trust and Confidence if we don't attend?
Opportunity to engage with hard to reach group?
Signposting or referral to other agencies?

8.3   Response Times

8.3.1   In the period October 2021 to September 2022 the Constabulary attended 91.0% of the Grade A Incidents within the target attendance time of 15 minutes within an Urban area, and 84.2% of the Grade A Incidents within the target attendance of 20 minutes within a Rural area. This is within the national standard of 90% for Urban incidents but outside in respect of Rural incidents. Response Times are monitored daily and in respect of rural incidents the distance between locations is a key factor in arrival times. In addition, if a call is upgraded the time measured is not taken into account so this can automatically lead to a failure.

Grade A Urban
Receive to Arrive

■ Receive to Arrive   ■ Not arrived

% within 15 minutes
91.0%

	under 15 mins	15-20 mins	20-25 mins	25-30 mins	30-60 mins	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-6 hours	6-12 hours	Over 12 hours
Receive to Arrive	14981	918	293	109	139	23	3	2	1	1

Grade A Rural
Receive to Arrive

■ Receive to Arrive   ■ Not arrived

% within 20 minutes
84.2%

	under 20 mins	20-25 mins	25-30 mins	30-60 mins	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-6 hours	6-12 hours	Over 12 hours
Receive to Arrive	9221	1009	397	301	22	1	0	0	0

9.   CCR & CCA CALL TAKER RESOURCING

9.1   Resourcing within the CCA and CCR does not match current demand levels. In October 2021 the Budgeted (shown as 'est FTE' in below chart) Full Time Equivalent posts for the CCR Call Operators was 110.28 FTE and for CCA 9.88 FTE. Actual strength will vary and is impacted by leavers, retirements, and sickness. Currently the rate of leavers is 1.2 Per month.
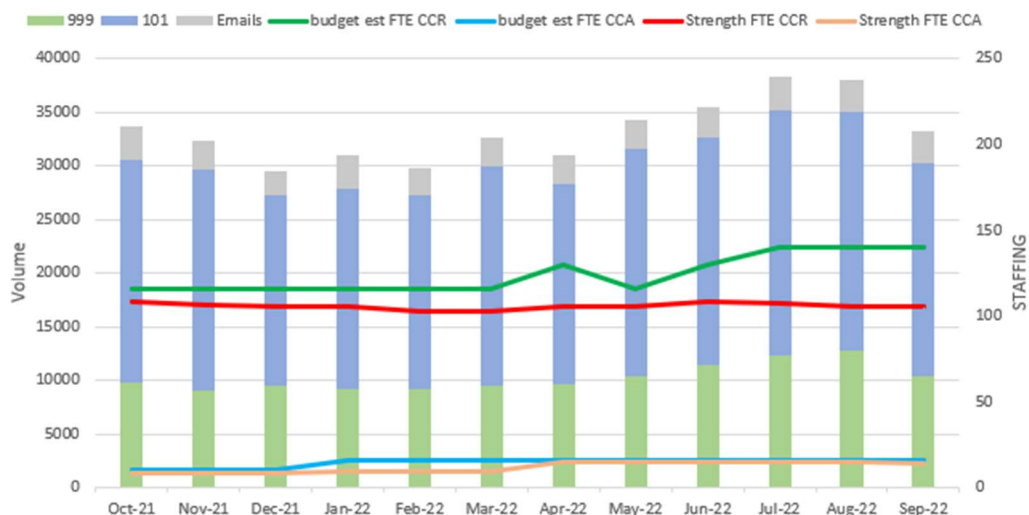
9.2 In addition to the Caller Operators there is also one Police Inspector and two Control Room Supervisors per team. The Inspector role is critical within the CCR as they have additional specialist training in respect of Tactical Firearms Command and Pursuit management. There are 5 CCR teams which work a shift pattern to provide 24/7 cover. On each CCR team there are approximately 22 to 25 Call Operators per shift who are responsible for answering calls and dispatching.

9.3 In April 2021 additional funding was identified for the CCR and CCA to support growth to manage call demand. This initial funding providing for an increase in 5 FTE in respect of CCR Caller Operators, 6.12 FTE CCA Call Takers and 1 FTE CCA Supervisor. This allowed for recruitment and training to take place. The first new staff were deployed into the CCR in December 2021 and April 2022.

9.4 Initial training for a CCR Operator takes approximately 12 weeks followed by a period of tutoring with the CCR. There will then follow a period of further training, once competent as a caller hander to complete the 'Dispatcher' training element of the role. There is a 12-month probation period for all new members of staff to allow them to learn and reach the required standards for the role.

9.5 In April 2022 following precept rises, an additional £1.4 million was made available to support improvements within the CCR. This is being over seen through the CCR Improvement and Transformation Board. This investment in the CCR has seen an increase of 24.72 FTE CCR Caller Operators.

9.6 Investment in training and recruitment remains an area of focus as part of the uplift in staff with expected intakes of 15 to 20 staff per intake in January 2023 and April 2023. The recruitment process has been reviewed and modernised, removing the traditional application form process and now includes an online eligibility test and booking process directly into Assessment Centres. A CCR video supports the online recruitment process which gives applicants a good insight into 24/7 working and preparation for duty across varied shift start times.

9.7 The precept investment has also seen the creation of 4 Sergeant posts within the CCR (bringing the total to 5). The sergeants will provide additional resilience to the Inspectors on each team. All have been recruited and awaiting release from current posts to coincide with attendance

on Tactical Firearms Courses which they will need to successfully complete before starting within the CCR.

10. CCR IMPROVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

10.1 In 2021 the Suffolk CCR Improvement and transformation Programme Board was set up to deliver the following outcomes and benefits:

- Improved workflow, processes and standards or service of the CCR to ensure that every contact, crime, or incident is managed as effectively and efficiently as possible, with the best outcome achieved and providing the best possible service to our communities and stakeholders.

- Increased public confidence and satisfaction by making it easier and quicker for the public to contact Suffolk police, with improved 101 call answering and digital opportunities for multi-channel contact.

- Maximised resources by having the right people with the right skills at the right time to match current and future demand.

- Improved morale, with officers and staff feeling valued and supported in an effective, efficient, and agile environment whilst meeting the demands of CCR.

10.2 Improvements, alongside the current growth in Call operator and CCA posts, that have been delivered as part of the programme include:

- *An increase of an additional 1 FTE Band E Trainer – post holder in post July 2021*
- *Improvements to the CCA function:*
    - *Introduced a new shift pattern with revised operating hours - implemented April 2022*
    - *New accommodation for CCA*
    - *Improved training for CCA staff to increase skills to resolve calls earlier*
- *Procurement of technology to improve the time it takes to create a missing person's report*
- *CCR working group established to review shift pattern and Business Case submitted for change and consultation completed – due to commence February 2023*
- *Improved working with CCC to support 101 Crime Queue*
- *THRIVE rationale recording on CADs implemented September 2021 – supported by training, Audit, and peer scrutiny*
- *Establishment of a CCR Call Scrutiny Group to improve quality of calls*
- *CCR Handbook published to support training*
- *CCR Domestic Abuse Working Group established & introduced new procedures*
- *New Process to support improved CAD Closure*
- *New Anti-Social Behaviour process introduced to improve response to callers*
- *CCR Mental Health Working Group established to review training and procedures*
- *Training delivered for THRIVE, Vulnerability, Domestic Abuse, Crime Scene Investigation and Hate Crime*
- *Well-being Plan created and Well-being Room opened for staff – The Mallard Suite*
- *Wellbeing Champions in place across all teams*
- *Probation period extended from 6 months to 12 months*
- *National Call Grading Policy implemented*
- *Increase of 1.09FTE in the Digital Support Team*
- *Creation of a Digital Support Team Supervisor*
- *Creation of a purposely designed CCR training area*

11. CCR DIGITAL SUPPORT & TRAINING TEAM

11.1   Between October 2021 and September 2022 the CCR Digital Support team has been working to find efficiencies both internally, and externally, to help the CCR answer calls more effectively, and dispatch officers timelier to the right jobs. This has included delivering the change to the current Grading Policy, working with internal ICT partners to review and make changes to our telephony system so enable the CCR to prioritise those calls that need urgent assistance. The team has also developed the use of Live Chat which was relaunched in October 2022.

Change	System	Benefit
Missing persons	Compact	Will make the process of managing missing person calls much more efficient leading to a better experience for the caller and more capacity in the CCR to take calls. Due to go live in December 2022
Risk assessment/grading	Storm, command & control	This will allow the CCR to better manage incident demand and respond to the correct incidents in the timeliest manner freeing up both CCR and Police officer resources. New Grading Process activated on systems in June 2022.
Anti-Social Behaviour	Storm, command & control	Change to bring the CCR risk assessment of ASB in line with other systems. This change has allowed the CCR to better identify victims of ASB and then deploy Police officers to those incidents that need our attendance the most.
Domestic Abuse	Storm, command & control	Changes have been made to the way the CCR manage Domestic Abuse calls to ensure call takers are asking the right questions, identifying victims and offences correctly and responding to those who need us the most. Changes made to system to support call takers.
101 Call management	Mitel, IP Telephony	Working to make changes to the Mitel telephony system, to improve management of 101 calls internally and therefore improve call answering times.
Audit Dashboard	Across Systems	A new, redesigned, CCR quality assurance system is currently being built using Ms Forms that will allow for more consistent, appropriate, and timely quality assurance checks within the CCR to make sure that we are delivering the best possible service at all times.

12. LIVE CHAT

12.1   In March 2021 the CCR launched a Live Chat trial for Suffolk Police. Live Chat is a form of customer messaging software that allows customers to speak directly with a company's representatives — in this case it allows the public to message the police. It works as a pop-up chat window within the Constabulary's website. It can translate more than 120 languages automatically and allows call takers to manage multiple chats concurrently, without a drop in service level, increasing efficiency. The service was made available between the hours of 0800 – 1700hrs Monday to Friday for questions, reports of non-urgent crime, ASB and more.

12.2   The trial ran from March to November 2021 and handled nearly 5250 unique users, over 6000 total conversations with an average of only 20 seconds to be answered by CCR staff. Each user was offered a questionnaire and from the responses (over 42% of users) over 91% of users rated the service as Good or Very Good and nearly 94% of users stated they would recommend the service to a friend or use it again.

12.3   Live Chat also promoted 'channel shift' with the movement of users from calling 101 to using the service. Over 55% of users stated they would have tried 101 'if it wasn't for Live Chat'.

12.4   The service also had victims of serious domestic abuse and historic sexual offences come forward to disclose abuse, something the victims said they wouldn't have done if it wasn't for Live Chat.

12.5   Due to 999 call demand the pilot was suspended however, it was switched back on 17th October 2022. Between 17th September and 31st October 2022 Live Chat had 236 unique users with a 32 second average wait to be answered. 60% of users said they would have tried 101 instead of Live Chat had it not been available. It was relaunched via the media in November 2022.

13.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1   Phase 1 Investment Overview

Post	Band	FTE	Year pay cost	Allowances	21/22 costs
Control Room Operators	D	5	£226,750	20% + 535.60 weekend	£132,271
CCR Trainer	E	1	£37,400	None	£28,050
Storm/compact interface			£5,000	n/a	£30,000
TOTAL FOR 21/22		**6**	**£269,150**		**£190,321**

Post	Band	FTE	Year pay cost	Allowances	21/22 costs
Contact Centre Supervisor (CCA)	E	1	£37,400	None	£12,470
Weekday Operator Central Call An:	C	6	£170,900	None	£42,730
Operator Central Call Answering	C	0.12	£4,320		£1,080
TOTAL FOR 21/22		**7.12**	**£212,620**		**£56,280**

Precept Funds approved for 2021/22	TOTAL Investment for 2021/22	Year on year costs	Benefits
£250,000	£246,601	£481,770	Increased resources Increased supervision Investment in technology

13.2   Phase 2 Investment 2022/23 Overview

Investment 2022/23	2022/23 Funds	Full year cost
Growth of 4.00 FTE CCR Sgts		253,690
14.72 FTE CCR Operators (Band D		614,320
1.09 FTE Support Officer (Band D)	£1.4m	36,220
1 FTE Support Supervisor (Band E)		39,160
Job evaluation of CCR Systems Manager role (from F to G)		8,000
10 FTE CCR Operators (Band D)		446,200
TOTAL		**£1,397,590**

Note: Costs are based on figures before the staff pay increase and therefore subject to slight amendments

Appendix 1

EMERGENCY CALL (999) AND NON-EMERGENCY (101) CALL HANDLING PROCESS

1 Nationally all 999 calls are directed to call centres and will be answered by British Telecom (BT) operators. They will ask which emergency service you need and then connect you to the relevant service. In terms of Police this will be a CCR determined by the location you are making the call from. If no service is requested but anything suspicious is heard throughout the process, BT operators will still connect you to the police.

2 All 101 Calls are received into the CCA. These calls are answered by one of the CCA Call Takers and assessed to establish whether they can be handled entirely within the CCA, or whether they need to be redirected into the CCR.

3 The CCA Call Taker will pass the call into the CCR by placing the caller in a specific 101 queue according to the type of call and priority. For example, calls relating to Domestic Abuse or Hate Crime will be given a higher priority. However, the length of waiting time will be determined by the volume of 999 calls being received as they are being dealt with by the same call handlers.

4 Call demand in the CCR can be unpredictable and call takers can see surges in demand on 999 calls linked to a single incident, for example a road traffic collision or an obstruction in the highway.

5 The CCR Call Takers are also responsible for monitoring the Emails that come into the Constabulary. These are dealt with in the same way as a call with the details being THRIVED and resources being deployed to deal with them as appropriate.