



## **RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:**

### **'A call for help**

#### **Police contact management through call handling and control rooms in 2018/19' (July 2020)**

#### **Police and Crime Commissioner's comments**

I welcome the HMICFRS report "A call for help" which brings into sharper focus the importance of control rooms, 'the engine rooms of a police force' as described by HM Inspector of Constabulary, Phil Gormley. The report highlights a number of observations ranging from evolving demand to the lack of agreed and consistent standards for how long it should take to attend an emergency. To address this issue, the report calls for the police service to agree a national set of response standards for emergency calls.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have set the strategic objective for the force to continue improving the crime and communication centre (CCC) to make sure that the needs of emergency and non-emergency callers are met in order to secure a quality police service that is trusted and efficient. Control rooms provide a direct link between police service and people who are in crisis and need help, and therefore on-going improvements in our crime communication centre are crucial to maintaining trust and confidence of our communities.

My first Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 outlined a number of Service Level Commitments for the CCC to drive up standards of customer service. I have also committed to investing in online and other digital communication channels to increase the ways in which the public can contact Wiltshire Police for non-emergencies. Moreover, I have proactively supported public campaigns to promote conversation with our communities about how they can best help the police over the busy months as well as supported the "Who you gonna call" campaign which guided people to call the police via 101 or 999 for the right reasons.

The recent figures published in my Annual Report show that 999 calls are received within an average of 6 seconds, 101 calls within an average of 10 seconds, and calls to the Crime & Incident Bureau within an average of 1 minute 9 seconds. Call

answer times are within the targets I set and continue to improve. All calls continue to be answered promptly and efficiently by informative and well trained staff. An additional six team members have been recruited to support an ongoing improvement plan. Our communities can continue to have confidence that the police can be contacted and will be there in emergencies.

The report points out that forces are beginning to offer alternative ways to enable the public to use different methods for non-emergencies. Wiltshire Police offers an online reporting system which received heightened attention during the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. The public was advised to use the newly introduced online form to report any concerns regarding how the Government measures to tackle Coronavirus are being adhered to in Wiltshire and Swindon. During the lockdown period (27/03 – 05/08) Wiltshire Police created 8,092 COVID-19 logs including online reports.

Wiltshire Police is currently in the process of implementing Single Online Home which will enable more online functions in line with the national approach to reporting crimes and for accessing non-emergency services. At the same time, the force is currently testing the Early Resolution Centre, which was designed to improve the management of low level investigations in order to reduce the demand placed on Wiltshire frontline services.

The report states that calls to 999 are increasing in volume nationally. Simultaneously, these calls are becoming more complex and the nature of the calls covers a variety of issues such as mental health concerns and other equally complex problems such as drug and alcohol dependency. Mental health related issues now account for about 20% of police time. Our officers respond to those with mental health problems with care and compassion. The Mental Health Triage team, which is commissioned by my office, continues to provide vital support to officers who are responding to incidents relating to mental health and ensures those involved are given the best support. Wiltshire Police is one of the few forces in the country to have its own dedicated 24/7 Mental Health Nurse to support staff and officers.

I would like to emphasise that there is still more work to do in the coming years. Threats to society as demonstrated by this pandemic continue to evolve and we need to continue to adapt the way in which the policing service is delivered. We need more than ever to be adaptable and I will make sure that Wiltshire Police is here to keep us safe and to help our communities to become even more resilient.

### **Chief Constable's comments**

The Chief Constable of Wiltshire is committed to addressing the recommendations highlighted within the recent HMICFRS report. In 2019 the force launched a significant change programme which saw the introduction of a new community policing model (The Community Policing Team Improvement Programme). Phase two of this programme was launched in May 2020 and one of the key work streams

is a wholesale review of the force approach to vulnerability, which encompasses how vulnerability is identified and dealt with right from the point of first contact into the force.

The force also has an ongoing change programme to review the Crime and Contact Centre Target Operating Model and a number of the work streams address the recommendations identified in the Call for Help report.

The Business lead makes the below comments against the recommendations.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Wiltshire response</b>
<p>Each force must be sure it effectively assesses risk at all points of contact with the public and the community. It should use this assessment to provide the best response to vulnerability.</p>	<p>All staff within the crime and communications centre are required to carry out a threat harm and risk assessment and the THRIVE+ assessment is used on all calls and incidents to ensure a correct response is given, this includes asking the vulnerability questions in order to complete a vulnerability risk assessment (VRA). The force accepts this recommendation and is continually seeking new and effective ways to improve risk assessments at all points of contact. This work is being driven through the Community Policing Team Improvement (part 2) Programme under the 'Vulnerability Review' work strand. This is led at bronze level by a Superintendent and is governed through the CPTIP change programme governance.</p>
<p>Each force where there is a vulnerability desk should make sure it makes a positive contribution to initial safeguarding.</p>	<p>Wiltshire Police do not have a vulnerability desk. The Vulnerability review (referred to above) is reviewing all aspects of vulnerability with a comprehensive delivery plan in place to drive forward improvements.</p>
<p>Each force should make sure its staff are trained, supervised and supported to be effective in their control room roles; this should include assessing the effect of better terms and conditions and career development for control room staff.</p>	<p>All training delivered to CCC is compliant with the National Contact Management Programme. Initial training covers all relevant practices and policies to ensure staff identify risk and vulnerability and deploy the appropriate resources. There is robust supervision in terms of THRIVE+ by supervisors in the live environment, this is supplemented by assessments carried out by our Call Quality Assessor. Training for staff in the new Vulnerability Risk Assessment is yet to be fully delivered as it was not possible to send all staff to the training session held across the force, engagement with People Development is ongoing to give bespoke training to Control Room teams. A newly</p>

	<p>developed Performance Framework captures many areas of performance enabling structure feedback to be delivered to staff by their line manager, as well as giving a team and departmental overview.</p> <p>One of the Vulnerability review development plan tasks is to 'complete a review of the training offer linked to vulnerability for the force. Identify gaps and agree next steps'.</p>
<p>We expect forces to invest in technology and work with each other to use it to inform and improve their risk assessments, their responses and their investigations to keep the public safe.</p>	<p>Wiltshire Police has delivered its own Online Crime Recording (OCR) system which mirrors that within SOH. The force is due to adopt SOH in March 2021 and business process mapping is underway. The force is due to refresh its telephony system used for 101/999 and will look to deliver more contact channels and adopt the social media reporting requirements that will come into effect in December 2020. Corporate Communications make good use of social media to educate the public what method (101 or 999) they should use to contact us and what is and isn't police business. The force is considering how it could use voice analytics to help identify its true demand and determine what is value, failure or shunt demand.</p>
<p>We expect all forces to make sure the service they provide to their communities meets the new national contact management strategy. We will assess how well forces adopt the contact management principles and practice as well as the learning standards during 2020/21 inspections</p>	<p>The force is currently working through the 3 principles of the NCMS, which are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Public Focussed</li> <li>2) Effective Channel Management</li> <li>3) Prioritisation of demand</li> </ol> <p>And are building a delivery plan to demonstrate what activities are currently in hand or being planned to meet those expectations.</p>
<p>We expect to see all 43 forces get involved in the single online home and the social media projects</p>	<p>Wiltshire Police are due to take SOH in March 2021</p>
<p>We expect the police service during 2020; to make sure it has effective national guidelines, quality assurance and assessment in place for resolution without deployment to make sure that it has agreed a standard for how quickly forces must respond to 999 calls. The absence of a national set of agreed response times for emergency calls means it is hard to make meaningful comparisons</p>	<p>These are not formally recorded in HMICFRS' recommendations monitoring portal, as these require national guidelines and standards to be set.</p> <p>There is no national position on how quickly forces must response to 999 calls. It is felt that there may not be a desire to address that. It has been raised with the 'Response' lead within the Local Policing Portfolio at NPCC</p>

	but it is not known if there is any ongoing work.
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Cc: Wendy Williams, HMI  
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