



# THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF CLEVELAND

## Force Control Room

Internal Audit Report 15.21/22

Final

21 June 2022

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Why we completed this audit

As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2021 / 2022, we have undertaken a review of the Force Control Room (FCR) to allow the Chief Constable of Cleveland to take a level of assurance with regards to the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems and procedures in place to manage FCR resources and how the Force handles demand and compliance with required performance targets. This is primarily related to the risk of the Force not being able to function effectively to fulfil its core obligations.

As a Police Force, Cleveland Police are responsible for handling both 999 and 101 calls from the public and then assessing and actioning each call, where applicable. This responsibility is conducted by the FCR who are assigned with the answering and directing of calls and ensuring the correct response for each call is taken. In order to effectively respond to and manage all calls, resources and staffing within the FCR needs to match or exceed demand in order to fully fulfil their responsibilities. As 999 calls relate to potential emergencies, the FCR operate a 0% target abandonment rate which means all 999 calls are required to be answered and handled to the conclusion of the problem – emphasising the importance of managing call demand and resource levels.

A new Superintendent for the FCR was appointed in 2020 to develop the processes and functions and provide oversight to the FCR. It has been noted throughout the audit that the appointment of the Superintendent has seen an improvement in many functions from reporting to demand management. Below we have outlined the differences between February 2021 and February 2022 performance figures relating to 999 demand and the 12-month rolling figures:

	February 2022	February 2021	Difference	% Difference	12 months ending February 2022	12 months ending February 2021	Difference	% Difference
<b>Contacts</b>	8,085	5,947	2,138	36.0%	104,175	89,776	14,399	16.0%
<b>Answered in time</b>	85.6%	83.4%	-	2.2%	81.9%	92.3%	-	-0.4%
<b>Abandoned*</b>	59	34	25	73.5%	659	1,052	-393	-37.4%
<b>Abandoned rate*</b>	0.7%	0.6%	-	0.1%	0.6%	1.2%	-	0.6%

\*Includes February 2022 BT pull back rate of 7 calls.

The new Superintendent is supported by a number of management staff including Inspectors and Team Leaders who run the FCR and manage available staff on a day-to-day basis as well as three Chief Inspectors who each have their own portfolio to manage within the FCR. Meetings are held between FCR management on a daily basis to ensure the FCR is fully operational and to allow any issues to be addressed in a timely manner.

A modelling project is currently ongoing to develop a fully functional model of the FCR, demand and resourcing using the Process Evolution system. The project was started in February 2021, is due to finish in June 2022, and has seen input and approval from management across the FCR. The model enables management to accurately predict required resources at any time across the week and allows for predicated resource levels given certain situations (such as a 10% increase in calls and a 15% increase in dispatches).

## Conclusion

During our review, we noted three instances of controls not operating as intended, with the remaining controls well designed and working effectively. Overall, we noted that the Force have a structured process in place for monitoring FCR performance and resources including regular meetings and reporting. We verified that several plans have been developed in the event of staff absences (such as zero-hour contracts and a set of bank staff) and that an accurate model has been produced to predict resource requirements depending on the time and the day.

One of the three areas in which further work is required relates to the full completion of assurance forms used to document the results of the monthly audits. The assurance form contains details such as the call handlers name, what type of call (999 or 101) and an assessment form to analyse the quality of the call. The detailed results and a summary can be found on the form and without a completed form, it may be difficult to assess the results of the audit to a high standard. The remaining two areas relate to ensuring training records are up to date and implementing a regular review and update of the training needs analysis used to help supervisors monitor staff training. As such, we have agreed **two medium** and **one low** priority management actions.

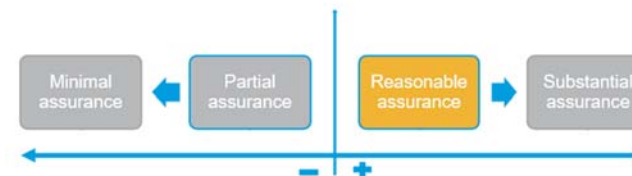
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### Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Chief Constable of Cleveland can take **reasonable assurance** that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk.

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## Key findings

We identified the following findings that have resulted in two medium priority management actions being raised:



A Quality Control Manager has recently been appointed on 4 April 2022 and at the time of the audit had not begun work on areas relating to quality control (focus has been on training). We therefore met with the Control Room Support Officer who had been undertaking quality control work and obtained the dispatch audits for January, February and March 2022 and call taking audits for January, February and March 2022. We noted that team leaders from each team shift are required to complete a sample of 10 random calls across the month for evaluation. However, there were instances where no sampling had been undertaken or parts of the template were not completed. For example, for dispatch monitoring, 50 samples are supposed to be selected each month and for the three months reviewed (of which 150 samples should have been taken), there were 48 samples across the months which had not been selected or reviewed.

There is a risk that if the audits forms are not fully completed, monitoring of the Force's outgoing communications may be insufficient and any ongoing problems may not be identified and addressed. **(Medium)**



We confirmed that all staff are given an initial 11-week training course with further refresher courses provided on a rolling basis across the year. We selected a sample of 10 staff members from the training needs analysis document provided; however, five of the selected no longer worked in the FCR, and this was not clear on the training records. From the remaining five, we noted that the correct training records were on file for three and were mostly correct for the remaining two apart from their Police National Computer (PNC) training. We noted that for the remaining two individuals, PNC vehicle training could not be located for these individuals. The FCR Trainer explained that this is most likely due to the trainer at the time (as both individuals joined in the 2000s) not informing the training admin team and subsequently not updating the training record. We were informed that these individuals had received the required training.

There is a risk that if training records are not kept up to date and older training records do not match the actual training completed, staff may not receive refresher training as required and be incorrectly viewed as not fully trained. **(Medium)**

Details of the further **one low** priority management action can be seen in section two of the report.

Our audit review identified that the following controls are suitably designed, consistently applied, and are operating effectively:



A set of performance measures have been implemented to monitor and manage the FCR. These requirements emphasise the importance of 999 calls and ensuring calls are not abandoned (with a 0% abandonment target) and are fully answered. During an onsite visit to the FCR, we spoke with numerous staff members including the Dispatch Team Leader, the Caller Team Leader, and the Chief Inspector – Contact Management, who all highlighted the importance of 999 calls as one of the main performance metrics and requirements. Other performance measures include 101 calls (though this is secondary to 999), absence rates and wrap up time (the time taken after the call has been completed to document and finalise the event details on the system) for calls.

With regards to the wrap up time KPI, the main purpose of this is to identify to management how long call handlers are taking and whether certain teams or individuals are taking too long or too little when compared to the average (which could indicate that the wrap up is not being accurately completed).



Operational performance reports, which include the aforementioned performance measures, are produced each month and provide a comprehensive summary of all performance measures that the Force use to manage and assess their performance. This includes metrics for both 999 and 101 calls as well as a comparison from previous months and a 12-month total. We have reviewed copies of the December 2021, January 2022 and February 2022 operational performance reports and confirmed they provide both a clear summary and an in-depth review of the total numbers for each month. We were provided with additional reports that went to other governance groups that included the data and KPIs from the performance reports. These reports include a regular report to the Local Policing Delivery and Assurance Group and the Safeguarding and Vulnerability Delivery and Assurance Group.

The FCR performance summary for December 2021, January 2022 and February 2022 is as follows:

Month	999 calls received	Percentage of calls answered in 10 seconds	Percentage of calls abandoned	Average wait time (seconds)
December 2021	9,182	88%	0.4%	4.4
January 2022	8,727	87%	0.4%	4.6
February 2022	8,085	86%	0.7%	5.3

Month	Non 999 calls received	Percentage of calls answered in two minutes	Percentage of calls abandoned	Average wait time (seconds)
December 2021	16,001	67%	12%	116
January 2022	17,198	69%	12%	112
February 2022	16,588	64%	13%	121



A model has been created to accurately anticipate future demand and to allow management to more easily manage resources. Upon review of the model, we confirmed that an accurate baseline has been produced which acts as the foundation for all future assumptions. This baseline has been presented and approved by senior management within the FCR as an accurate estimate for demand and resourcing. We undertook a walkthrough of the model and verified that it allows the Force to predict future demand and the resourcing required given certain situations and scenarios. We have not however verified the accuracy of the predicated demand and resourcing levels within these situations and scenarios as this would require an in-depth specialist review and is not part of the approved audit scope. We have instead verified that the baseline has been accurately produced and signed off as accurate by management.



A weekly HR sickness report is produced which contains all absent officers and we confirmed that this has been disseminated to relevant managers to ensure they are made aware of any resource limitations. This is supported by a monthly meeting between the FCR's HR representative and all Superintendents in which absent officers are discussed. For long-term absences, the Resource Management Unit (RMU) is responsible for ensuring appropriate substitutes can be found to match any missing resources.



In order to manage short-term absences, a daily 8:30am meeting is held to discuss staff shortfall and possible avenues to replace these gaps. The Control Room Support Officer explained that there are three main paths they can take:

- FCR employees on different shifts or annual leave;
- Zero-hour contracts and;
- Bank staff (typically officers working in other areas of the business who are trained in call handling and dispatch).

Through discussions with several Team Leaders and Supervisors responsible for the FCR, we were informed that this decision is normally made by them alongside the Inspector normally at the start of the day. We understand this is normally through a verbal discussion given the time pressures of the FCR and have therefore been unable to obtain documented evidence to confirm these decisions.



Within the FCR, the dispatch team are primarily responsible for interacting with other functions within the Force. During our onsite visit to the FCR, we spoke with several Inspectors and Team Leaders in charge of the control room including the Dispatch Team Leader and confirmed that a daily call sheet is used outlining the contact details of appropriate on-call individuals outside of the FCR. Some of these individuals include a Negotiator, a Tactical Advisor, a Crime Scene Supervisor and the Bronze, Silver and Gold Commander for the day. This call sheet is designed to allow the Inspector to contact the correct officer within other areas of the Force in a timely manner, especially given the nature of some of the emergency situations.

## 2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Risk: SR24 - Force Control Room not functioning effectively to fulfil our core obligations				
Control	A Quality Control Manager has been hired to oversee and complete quality control actions.  Quality control audits are completed on call takers and dispatchers work to ensure they meet the required standard.		Assessment:	
			Design	✓
			Compliance	×
Findings / Implications	<p>We noted that audits are currently being completed by the team leader for call handlers and dispatch handlers to ensure their work is to an appropriate standard. These involve the team leader listening to the recording and reading the transcript from a random selection of staff and determining the level they complete their calls.</p> <p>A Quality Control Manager has only recently been appointed to the position (4 April 2022) and at the time of the audit had not begun work on areas relating to quality control (and was instead training). As such, we have spoken to the Control Room Support Officer instead who has been undertaking quality control work whilst the Quality Control Manager has been recruited. We were provided with copies of the assurance form for the dispatch audits for January, February and March 2022 and the call taking audits for February and March 2022. Upon review, we noted that the team leader from each team shift is required to complete a sample of 10 random calls across the month and evaluate these against a set of statements to determine whether staff have responded to the call appropriately.</p> <p>We noted that whilst these reviews have been completed by the majority of the team leaders, there were instances where no sampling and reviews have been undertaken or parts of the template had not been fully completed. For example, the call taker audits completed in March 2022 do not seem to have fully completed the form as the final section (relating to the overall result and the action going forward) is blank. For call taker monitoring, 100 samples are supposed to be selected each month covering all shifts within the FCR. For the two months we reviewed, we noted that 33 samples in total had not been selected or reviewed by the supervisor (12 in February 2022 and 21 in March 2022). For dispatch monitoring, 50 samples are supposed to be selected each month covering all shifts. For the three months we reviewed (which should have a total of 150 samples), we verified that a total of 48 samples across January, February, and March 2022, had not been selected or reviewed.</p> <p>There is a risk that if the audits forms are not fully completed, monitoring of the Force’s outgoing communications may be insufficient and ongoing problems may not be identified and actioned.</p>			
Management Action 1	Team leaders will be reminded to fully complete the assurance form and complete audits for their team to ensure ongoing monitoring and identify any problems and training opportunities.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Chief Inspector	30 April 2022	Medium

## Risk: SR24 - Force Control Room not functioning effectively to fulfil our core obligations

<b>Control</b>	<p>A training needs assessment is used to identify the individual's required training and what is needed by the FCR.</p> <p>Training is provided to the individual to ensure they are up to date. This includes PNC training that is scheduled for once every 11 weeks.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <p><b>Design</b> ✓</p> <p><b>Compliance</b> x</p>
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>We were informed that new call handlers are subject to an 11-week initial training course which qualifies them as a dispatcher. During our onsite visit, we confirmed that several individuals were undergoing the 11-week training at the time and confirmed that they had been scheduled to attend Police National Computer (PNC) training after completing the 11 weeks.</p> <p>We selected a sample of 10 members of the FCR from a master training needs assessment document and checked to determine whether the training records matched the training needs assessment. In five cases, we were informed that the individuals no longer worked in the FCR; however, this was not clear from the training needs assessment document. For the remaining five, we confirmed that all training was on file for three of the individuals; however, for the remaining two individuals, there was no PNC training on file. We discussed this with the Control Room Support Officer who explained that PNC training is a one-off training session unless officers are inactive on the PNC for 12 months. We discussed this with the FCR Trainer who explained that these individuals had completed the training but that the trainer at the time (as both individuals all received their training in 2006 or 2007) had not informed the training admin team to update their training records. There is a risk that if older training records are not up to date, staff may not receive refresher training and be incorrectly viewed as not fully trained.</p> <p>We confirmed through review of training records that FCR training is provided to officers multiple times each year to ensure they are aware of any changes to processes, and they are to the standard required by the Force. Training is run once every 11 weeks and staff are rotated through this training. In particular, we noted through review of samples that officers typically have three or four FCR training sessions on their training record each year.</p> <p>As the training sessions are run on a regular basis once every 11 weeks, and staff are required to attend on a rotating basis, no other training is planned once staff pass the initial training. We did note that these training sessions are often bespoke and cover themes and areas that have been identified during performance reporting. We reviewed a copy of the training day schedule and noted that this extensively covers the FCR including using the Storm system, how to correctly input crime into the PNC and responding to domestic abuse calls – a current theme within the Force.</p> <p>To easily document the training that staff receive and to determine whether they can work in the FCR, a training needs analysis (TNA) has been developed. However, the FCR Trainer explained that this has not been updated since its creation in December 2021 and as such is not fully up to date. The Trainer explained that the FCR are planning to have regular monthly meetings to ensure the TRA is up to date so as to make sure supervisors can rely on the data when selecting staff to work in the FCR. There is a risk that if monthly meetings are not set up and used to update the TNA, the data used in this document will be out of date and staff that may not have had frequent training could be used in the FCR.</p>	



**Risk: SR24 - Force Control Room not functioning effectively to fulfil our core obligations**

<b>Management Action 2</b>	A reconciliation will be undertaken to ensure training records match actual training completed. Reconciliations will be carried out on a regular basis to ensure that training records remain up to date.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Force Control Room Trainer	<b>Date:</b> 31 October 2022	<b>Priority:</b> <b>Medium</b>
<b>Management Action 3</b>	Monthly meetings will be scheduled to ensure the training needs analysis is kept up to date.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Force Control Room Trainer	<b>Date:</b> 30 June 2022	<b>Priority:</b> <b>Low</b>

## APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

### Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Risk	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed actions		
					Low	Medium	High
SR24 - Force Control Room not functioning effectively to fulfil our core obligations.	0	(8)	2**	(8)	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

\*\* More than one management action has been raised against a given control.

## APPENDIX B: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

### Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following risk:

Objective of the area under review	Risks relevant to the scope of the review	Risk source
The Force has adequate and effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that the Force Control Room is adequately resourced to meet demand and required performance targets.	SR24 - Force Control Room not functioning effectively to fulfil our core obligations.	Force Strategic Risk Register

Cleveland Police's Force Control Room handles calls from the public to its 999 and 101 numbers. In order to meet its required targets in respect of responding to these calls, the Force must ensure that its control room is adequately resourced at all times.

Our review will focus on the following areas:

- Whether the Force has a clear set of performance requirements for its Force Control Room which are known and well understood by all relevant staff.
- How demand for the services of the Force Control Room are mapped to its structure and staffing levels across its shift patterns.
- How anticipated future demand is modelled.
- Whether assumptions made in respect of future demand and resource availability are based on sound criteria and subject to stress testing.
- How resourcing levels across the Force Control Room are monitored and reported, particularly in relation to absence.
- How decisions are made in response to actual or potential resourcing shortfalls.
- How training is planned and delivered to ensure that there are adequate levels of trained officers and staff, with particular reference to key areas including dispatch, Police National Computer.
- What quality control measures are in place and how the results of such activity is reported and considered in light of resourcing and training requirements.
- How the Force Control Room interacts with other functions of the Force.
- How performance of the Force Control Room is monitored and reported (e.g. calls handled, calls abandoned).

**The following limitations apply to the scope of our work:**

- The scope of this audit is limited to those areas examined and reported upon in the key risks and control objectives in the context of the objective set out for this review.
- Any testing undertaken as part of this audit will be compliance based and sample testing only.
- We will not confirm performance for responses to 999 and 101 calls will be achieved.
- We will not confirm THRIVE assessments have been completed, when required.
- We will not review or draw conclusions on the abandonment of calls.
- Our review will not consider whether the correct action has been taken by force control room officers and staff (for example, in relation to Victims' Code requirements).
- Our review does not guarantee a particular outcome from any inspection by HMICFRS and nor is it intended to replace any such inspection.
- Our work does not provide an absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

<b>Debrief held</b>	14 April 2022
<b>Last evidence received</b>	10 May 2022
<b>Draft report issued</b>	23 May 2022
<b>Revised Draft report issued</b>	17 June 2022
<b>Responses received</b>	21 June 2022

<b>Final report issued</b>	21 June 2022
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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

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