

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2022

Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Chief Constable and the Office of the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) with an overview of the 'Responding to Incidents' procedure, an assessment of how well Essex Police is doing at responding to 'high harm' crimes and a summary of the ambition set for future delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

This paper is for noting. No decisions are sought.

3.0 Executive Summary

Essex Police has a 'Responding to Incidents' procedure which is designed to ensure an effective, victim focussed response to reports of crime or other calls for assistance.

The procedure describes how Essex Police call takers assess threat, harm, risk, vulnerability/victims and engagement (THRIVE) to prioritise the response to incidents. The procedure also highlights the national standards the force seeks to adhere to including a standard for incident creations and a standard for crime recording.

High harm crimes – The Essex Police definition

Whilst there is no national definition, Essex Police have determined High Harm offences are those which most significantly impact on the public namely burglary of people's homes, robbery, rape, serious sexual offences and violence with injury.

Essex Police has a very clear policy position of the burglary of people's homes, we will attend all of them and aim to do so within one hour.

For the other high harm crime types the target response time is set accordingly the nature of the incident reported using the THRIVE methodology (see section 4.0).

Current performance headlines

Essex Police attended 82.8% of high harm incidents reported between 1st January 2021 and 10th October 2022.

The force has set the objective to attend 100% of high harm crimes and has made the necessary changes to dispatch policies to achieve this.

Of the high harm incidents attended, Essex Police met target response times for 84% of those graded as emergency response, 51% for those on a priority response and 85% for those on a routine response.

Essex Police has a better attendance rate and response times for high harm crimes that it does for other incidents.

4.0 Introduction/Background

The FCR take all emergency calls whilst non-emergency calls are shared between the FCR and RC. Recorded incidents are risk assessed at the earliest opportunity.

THRIVE is then applied as a risk assessment tool, used widely in England and Wales policing, that considers six factors to assist in identifying the appropriate response grade allocated to recorded incidents, providing a framework for assessing public need, vulnerability and other key elements of service delivery:

- **Threat** - communicated or perceived intent to inflict harm or loss on another person including the victim. Towards a person(s), property, public safety, community cohesion, service reputation of Essex Police.
- **Harm** - an assessment of the threat, including the victim. If carried out, identifying the level of harm caused.
- **Risk** - likelihood of the threat occurring.
- **Investigation** - Is there a need for an investigation? What level of investigation is proportionate? Are Police required at the scene? Refer to other agency if not a Police matter.
- **Victim and Vulnerability** – victim satisfaction and confidence are at the heart of our decision-making process. A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care or protect themselves, or others, from harm or exploitation.
- **Engagement** – with organisations and individuals, building positive relationships to forward policing aims, prevent offences and build trust and confidence in victims and the public.

The 'Responding to Incidents' policy sets out that incidents will be graded against the following criteria:

- **Emergency Response** (either grade 1 – urban or grade 2 – rural)
- **Priority Response** (grade 3)
- **Routine Response** (grade 4)
- **Resolution Without Deployment** (grade 5)
- **Appointment** (grade 6)

The National Contact Management Grades [NCMG] provides for two types of grades of contact, emergency contact where an officer is required to go immediately, all other contact is non-emergency contact.

An emergency response grading is given where the call handlers assessment of the incident would indicate that a person's life is in danger or where there is information to indicate someone is vulnerable to immediate violence, serious injury or serious damage to their property. In these circumstances it is vital for policing resources to be deployed and arrive on scene at the earliest opportunity, not only to safeguard victims of crime and members of the public but also to secure and preserve the scene of any crime, identify forensic opportunities and potential witnesses and apprehend suspects if still on scene.

Incidents graded as emergency shall have a police resource assigned immediately, this will include, where required, redirecting resources from non-emergency graded incidents.

Where it is determined that the necessity for an emergency response grading is not required but that there is still a degree of importance or urgency associated to the incident then a Priority grading will be given. A Priority incident indicates to the attending officers that there is a degree of urgency to arrive on scene at the earliest

opportunity, as whilst no one is in immediate danger there are investigative opportunities around evidence capture e.g. forensics, witnesses etc.

Where there is no urgency to respond to an incident immediately, but proportionate enquiries are identified which require the attendance of a police officer or other member of staff, then incidents are graded as a Routine response.

If a crime has been reported but attendance at the scene is not required, then the incident is graded as a Resolution Without Deployment and sent to the Resolution Centre. Following a crime allocation assessment, the investigation is then concluded with no further action, sent to the Case Investigators within the Resolution Centre for further investigation or allocated to the most appropriate department to investigate.

Where no immediate attendance is required, and the victims agrees to it, an appointment may be booked for an officer to attend at the earliest, most convenient time for the victim. Appointments will be attended by Local Policing Area officers via a diary system, which is managed by the Force Control Room. Following appointment, the attending officer and their supervisor will make an assessment as to the most suitable department to progress the investigation for the victim. This ensures a timely response to the incident in agreement with the victim and also that the most appropriate policing resource owns the investigation through to resolution.

The procedure outlines steps to be taken when re-grading incidents, including downgrading an incident; incidents will never be downgraded as a result of no deployable resource being available OR if the caller for a domestic abuse incident ends the call prematurely and contact cannot be re-established.

The target attendance time for each grading above is as follows:

Grade	Response	Attendance Target
1	Urban Emergency	15 minutes
2	Rural Emergency	20 minutes
3	Priority	Within 60 minutes
4	Routine	Within 48 hours
5	Resolution without Deployment	No attendance
6	Appointment	By appointment

Policing resources are deployed to incidents based upon their availability and proximity to the incident and most appropriate unit to attend the scene. The vast majority of emergency and priority incidents are attended by uniformed response officers from either the Local Policing Area or Operational Policing Command, including specialist resources such as Roads Policing, Dogs, Firearms, Operational Support Group and Marine Unit. Detectives from both the Local Policing Area CID also respond to incidents where available, especially residential burglaries and when responding to serious violence incidents to maximise investigative opportunities.

Performance Headlines

Essex police performance in relation to attending incidents (data January 2021 – October 2022)

How many high harm incidents do we attend?

The following table shows a breakdown of volumes and attendance rate for High Harm incidents versus non-high harm incidents.

	Total Calls	Attended Calls	Attendance Rate
High Harm Incidents	82480	68278	82.8%
Non-High Harm Incidents	332776	244306	73.4%

This table shows that we attended 82.8% of all high harm incidents in comparison to 73.4% of non-high harm incidents.

How quickly are we getting there?

The following table illustrates the response time grade of service for high harm incidents:

	Time Met Emergency	Time Met Priority	Time Met Routine
Burglary incidents	90%	48%	96%
Robbery incidents	85%	65%	95%
VWI incidents	86%	65%	86%
Rape incidents	70%	38%	95%
Serious Sexual incidents	70%	31%	67%

The following table illustrates the attendance grade of service for non-high harm incidents:

	Time Met Emergency	Time Met Priority	Time Met Routine
High Harm Incidents	84%	51%	85%
Non-High Harm Incidents	81%	67%	72%

Essex Police are attending emergency and routine graded high harm incidents quicker than non-high harm incidents. However in addition to attending all high harm crime, Essex Police are also striving to improve response times to high harm incidents, especially those graded as a priority response. Contact Management are driving a renewed focus around command and control from 26th September 2022 (Operation Clarity) to improve the response time attendance to all incidents, and

specifically high harm incidents. The objective of the operation is to provide a faster response to more incidents to better support victims of crime.

Essex Police will be focussing on prioritising early attendance at residential burglaries, not only to safeguard and reassure victims but also to establish an early investigative strategy, including identifying and securing forensic opportunities, witnesses and identification and apprehension of suspects. Every residential burglary is now automatically graded as a Priority response, requiring attendance as soon as possible or in any case within 1 hour.

High harm incidents are given an enhanced level of response where appropriate in the circumstances. For example, all street robberies, including attempts, which are reported to be in progress, or within 30 minutes of being committed, are subjected to our Op TIGRESS response plan and given an emergency response grading. The trigger plan includes a number of pre-defined set tasks which have been developed specifically by investigators to maximise evidential opportunities and lines of enquiries to identify, locate and apprehend the suspect(s), also known as the 'golden hour' principles.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

This section seeks to highlight the new policy for attending incidents following feedback from a peer review around Essex Police not being compliant with the NPCC National Contact Management Strategy – Principles and Practice.

The Principles and Practice give more detailed guidance to translate contact management strategy into operational delivery, for officers, staff and the public we serve. The guidance has been developed by the National Contact Management Steering Group and approved by the NPCC Contact Management lead.

This guidance has helped to inform a new 'Responding to Incidents' policy, which has been agreed in principle at the August Contact Management Programme Board.

The main changes of the policy will be updated response gradings, which will bring Essex Police in line with the national standards set by the NPCC National Contact Management Strategy – Principles and Practice. The policy also changes the mindset for use of STORM as a command-and-control system rather than an occurrence management system.

This is being worked through as a priority and will be presented to the Chief Officer Group soon to formally adopt. The new policy doesn't change the Essex Police approach to THRIVE assessments or our ambition to improve attendance rates and response times to high harm incidents.

Policy on high harm attendance

Essex Police will attend all High Harm incidents. There will be no specific response grading set for High Harm incidents; the response grading for each incident will be determined and prioritised based on the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability as per section 3.4 *Assessing the Risk* of the policy. The only exception to this will be

residential burglary incidents, which are automatically graded as a priority response requiring attendance within one hour.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

Noting the clear ambition the force has, the wider context around contact management nationally is set out in a number of strategic assumptions which directly influence policing capability to respond to incidents and these include;

- Contact will continue to rise.
- Contact will continue to be complex and will increase in complexity.
- Contact management staff will continue to spend increasing time resolving contact.
- Resolving complex contact will require increasing emphasis on partnership working and skills mix.
- Technology will continue to evolve and provide new means to contact the police service and the public will continue to expect a choice of contact channels for key services.
- Resources for policing will continue to remain constrained.
- Contact management will continue to be a key enabler for overall police service delivery.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Collectively we are known as Contact Management Command and are the face of Essex Police to the majority of people who come into contact with us.

The very nature of the work within the Force Control Room and the Resolution Centre touches upon all 12 priorities within the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 but in particular in relation to responding to incidents and especially High Harm incidents:

- Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse
- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Improving support for victims of crime

Through earlier and more effective assessment of threat, harm and risk our call handlers are identifying vulnerable victims at first contact, ensuring the most appropriate response grading is applied to every call.

Essex Police are attending every High Harm incident, thereby maximising opportunities to respond to, investigate and safeguard and protect those at most risk of harm.

Underpinning all of our public contact, we are putting the victims at the heart of what we do, taking time to understand their needs, and getting them access to the services or resources they need to help them in their time of need.

6.2 Demand

As per the content of the report.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

There are 2 force risks recorded in relation to contact management:

1130 If the Force is unable to manage existing and future demand through the use of technology and more efficient business processes it may not be able to provide an effective service that protects people from harm.

Contact Management Command will be moving to a new Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) in the autumn of 2023, a benefit of which will be greater flexibility and capacity for the handling and grade of service of public calls.

2659 Staff vacancies / absence & tech failure (Athena, iHub, MDT) risks RC workload exceeding staff capacity, not adhering to NCRS/HOCR & breaching Op Athena Red threshold. In particular, EP ability to record crimes within 24 hours, QA & Link investigation, allocate to LPAs & service 101 / internal police call demand. Undermining ability to meet force plan, respond to victims, maintain confidence.

Contact Management is one of the few commands within Essex Police where the ambition is to consistently maintain full establishment of staff with a zero-vacancy factor. The command is currently managing an unprecedented recruitment campaign which has seen the recruitment of 61FTE staff since April 2022.

Both risks are managed through the Contact Management Programme Board. There are a number of mitigating actions which focus on business process, staff recruitment, retention and development, technology and financial support.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

None identified

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

None identified

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

C/Supt Stuart Hooper 42001564 – Head Contact Management
Operational Support Team – Contact Management

8.0 Actions for Improvement

Essex Police have an ambition to attend 100% of all high harm incidents and to improve response times to all incidents. Work is currently underway to achieve this

through a renewed focus around command and control (Op Clarity), the objective of which is to get to incidents quicker to provide a better response to victims.

Essex Police have updated the policy for responding to residential burglary incidents to attend all such incidents within one hour.

We have improved our performance management framework including the use of performance dashboards created by the Operational Support Team within Contact Management which helps us identify our resourcing vs demand picture. This allows us to work towards having the right staff in the right place at the right time which will naturally lead to improvements in responding to incidents.

An enhanced level of scrutiny on daily performance by the command team has helped drive performance and focus our staff on priorities each day.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

Contact Management Command will be moving to a new Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) in the autumn of 2023, a benefit of which will be greater flexibility and capacity for the handling and grade of service of both emergency and non-emergency public calls.