

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2023

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 an overview of the ‘Responding to Incidents’ procedure, an assessment of how well Essex Police is performing at responding to ‘high harm’ crimes and a summary of the ambition set for future delivery. It should be noted that the last report was presented to the Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board on 26th October 2022. This report provides an update where there is new information, a change in performance, levels of risk or emerging issues.

2.0 Recommendations

This paper is for noting. No decisions are sought.

3.0 Executive Summary

The Responding to Incidents procedure is designed to ensure an effective, victim focussed response to reports of crime or other calls for assistance and describes how Essex Police call takers assess threat, harm, risk, vulnerability/victims, and engagement (THRIVE) to prioritise the response to incidents. Highlighting national standards, the force seeks to adhere to including a standard for incident creations and a standard for crime recording.

The Essex Police high harm definition and responding to Incidents Policy was covered in the October 2022 paper and should be referred to in conjunction with this report.

Although the high harm attendance is not at the required grade of service, this has not impacted on the high harm outcomes which have continued to increase under Operation Nightshade.

Current performance headlines

Essex Police attendance at high harm incidents has remained broadly at the same levels as reported in the October 2022 paper. (82.6% within the grade of service¹ reported between 1st January 2022 and 31st March 2023 compared to 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 incidents and has made changes to dispatch policies to achieve this which is being currently being met. (Outside of the grade of service requirement).

Of the high harm incidents attended, Essex Police met target response times for 70% of those graded as emergency response, 35% for those on a priority response for the time 2022/23. This compared to 2021/2022 of 77% and 22% respectively. (Data comparison one 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 and Comparison two 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023)

4.0 Introduction/Background

The 'Responding to Incidents' policy sets out how the incidents will be graded and managed by Contact management command. The full details of this policy can be found in the October 2022 paper.

As a reminder the target attendance time for each grading 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 including officers from Roads Policing, Dog Unit, Firearms, Operational Support Group and the 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.

¹ The grade of service is to attend 80% within the target time.

Performance Headlines

Essex police performance in relation to attending incidents is provided in this paper for the year ending March 22 and March 23 (Two data comparisons are given, the first for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 and the second 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023). The data for this paper has been drawn from the Analytics for Everyone (A4E) Crime journey. The A4E programme is available for all staff to understand high harm performance and productivity in the force.

Essex Police broadly recorded the same number of high harm incidents in the 12 months ending March 23 to the previous year.(56,925 in the 12 months to end March 23 compared to 56,910 in the 12 months to end March 22). Increases in reports on the previous year were seen in Domestic Abuse (1,079 offences) and Rape (82 offences) and decreases in Violence against the person with Injury (VAP) (283 offences), Other sexual offences (651 offences), Burglary (137 offences),) and Robbery (106 offences)

As a comparative during this time period urban emergency incidents have reduced by 1,345 incidents, rural emergency by 286 incidents, priority by 1,002 incidents and routine by 6,030, but resolution without deployment has increased by 2,138 incidents and appointment by 6,858 incidents which represents the largest change. The latter shows the improvement in the use of Demand car appointments for supporting victims of Domestic abuse.

In the 12 months ending March 2023, 40,090 Incidents required a response (Grade 1-4), this equates to about 3,341 incidents per month. During this period 70% of high harm incidents were attended within the emergency grade of service and 35% within the priority response (ER to VAP was the highest at 77% with sexual offences at 58% and Priority Response to VAP was 55% with DA at 24%). The median dispatch time was 225 seconds. All incidents of high harm were attended including those outside of the grade of service.

For the 12 months ending March 2022, 48,753 Incidents required a response (Grade 1-4), this equates to about 4,063 incidents per month. During this period 77% of high harm incidents were attended within the emergency grade of service and 22% within the priority response (Emergency Response to Burglary was the highest at 86% with rape at 69% and Priority Response to VAP was 47% with Burglary at 13%). The median dispatch time was 295 seconds. All incidents of high harm were attended including those outside of the grade of service.

The below table sets out the rolling 12 month high harm attendance, this shows a stable all high harm attendance but an improvement in burglary attendance post the change of force policy in October 2022.

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	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
All HH	76.0%	75.5%	75.2%	77.1%	75.8%	75.6%	76.4%	74.6%	78.7%	78.3%	76.3%	75.0%	76.2%
Burglary	75.8%	78.9%	79.8%	82.4%	83.7%	87.3%	90.9%	92.6%	91.5%	91.0%	88.8%	87.3%	86.2%
Robbery	71.8%	71.8%	70.7%	66.3%	62.5%	75.8%	76.4%	66.7%	64.0%	74.7%	69.6%	68.9%	70.1%
VWI	79.1%	78.6%	78.0%	79.9%	79.2%	78.7%	79.7%	77.2%	80.9%	80.9%	78.7%	78.5%	79.1%
Rape	49.6%	47.2%	42.9%	47.6%	42.1%	38.8%	39.1%	37.8%	42.7%	34.8%	44.1%	38.9%	42.1%
Sexual Assault	48.8%	53.5%	57.1%	55.2%	47.0%	52.6%	49.7%	50.3%	56.7%	57.7%	52.8%	51.5%	52.7%

This shows that although the number of incidents has reduced there has not been a comparative performance improvement, but there has been an improvement in the median dispatch time over the 12 months. The subcategory of high harm response has not significantly changed outside of burglary.

There will be occasions where we don't meet the performance expectation outcome because of the victims needs i.e., Rape and Serious Sexual (RASSO) Offences , and we accept this when balancing against the victim's satisfaction with service. Our research shows that one of the causes of differences in victim satisfaction levels can be attributed to where we prioritise early attendance against the needs of the victim.

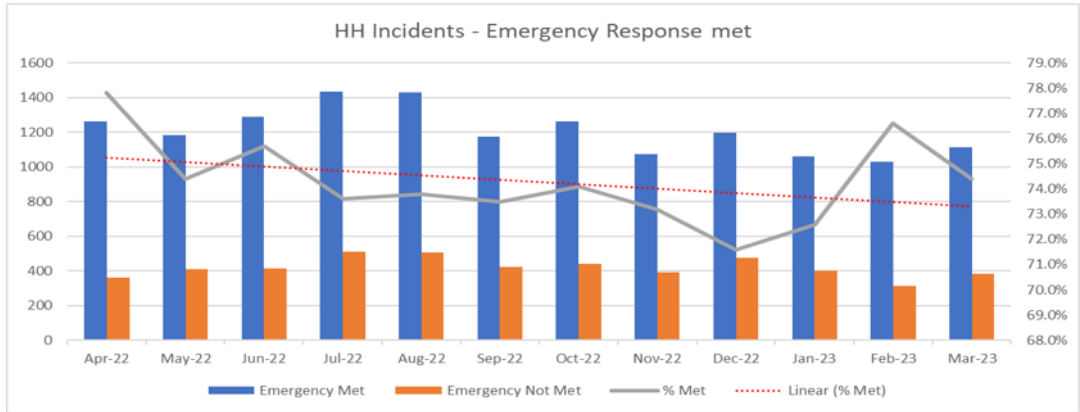
The Contact Management Command has driven a renewed focus around command and control from 26th September 2022 (Operation Clarity) to improve the response time attendance to all incidents, and specifically high harm incidents. The objective of the operation is to provide a faster response to more incidents to better support victims of crime, the operation works closely with local policing colleagues.

Emergency response

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.

The below chart sets out the rolling 12-month high harm emergency response. Despite the decreasing linear trend the chart shows an improvement in the response times met for the first quarter of 2023 following the Op Clarity relaunch.

The drop in emergency response performance Grade of Service in July 2022 could be attributed to Essex Police deploying a significant number of officers to the Just Stop Oil protests (July), which had an impact on our performance.



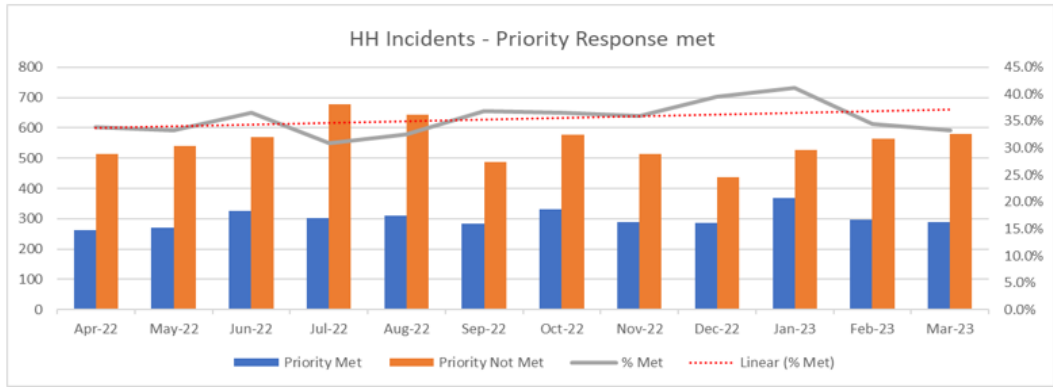
	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Emergency Met	1262	1183	1291	1433	1428	1175	1263	1074	1196	1059	1031	1114	14509
Emergency Not Met	361	408	414	513	508	424	441	394	474	400	315	383	5035
% Met	77.8%	74.4%	75.7%	73.6%	73.8%	73.5%	74.1%	73.2%	71.6%	72.6%	76.6%	74.4%	74.2%

Priority response

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.

The below chart sets out the rolling 12 month high harm priority response, the chart shows a consistent level of response throughout the period in this response category.

Attendance at priority response incidents needs to improve. Resourcing challenges and competing demands often create complexities around pulling an officer away from a current commitment to a priority incident and, even once redeployed, will still be required to travel some distance to arrive at the scene. All crimes reported are recorded and are subject to a proportionate investigation, even if the performance outcome expectation around response time isn't met.

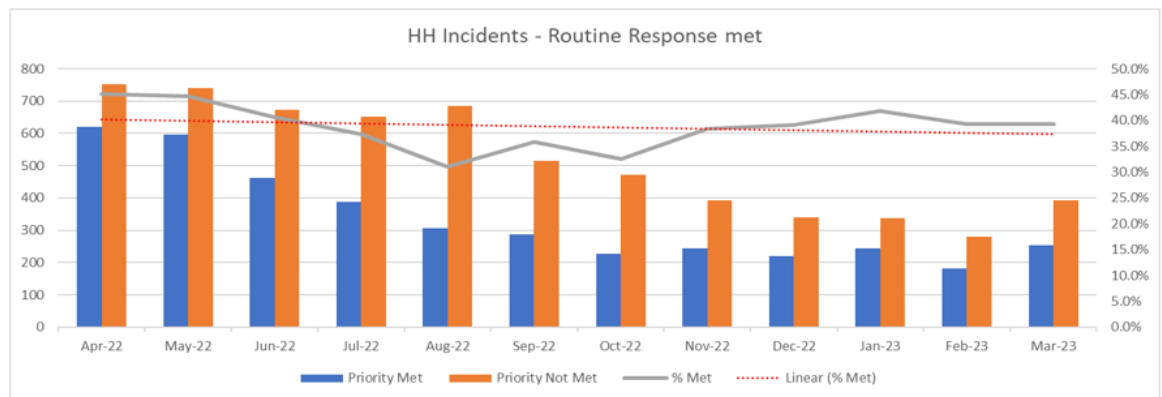


	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Priority Met	263	269	327	303	310	283	332	288	286	369	297	289	3616
Priority Not Met	513	540	569	678	644	487	576	514	437	528	565	580	6631
% Met	33.9%	33.3%	36.5%	30.9%	32.5%	36.8%	36.6%	35.9%	39.6%	41.1%	34.5%	33.3%	35.3%

Routine response

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.

The below chart sets out the rolling 12 month high harm routine response, the chart shows a consistent level of response throughout the period in this category.



	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Priority Met	621	597	462	387	307	287	228	245	219	243	181	254	4031
Priority Not Met	751	739	673	651	684	514	471	393	340	337	280	392	6225
% Met	45.2%	44.7%	40.7%	37.3%	31.0%	35.8%	32.6%	38.4%	39.2%	41.9%	39.3%	39.3%	39.3%

5.0 **Current Work and Performance**

The new contact management strategy was discussed on 13th November 2022 by Chief officers and has supported the development of the new target operating model which is part of the Force change programme.

New performance dashboards have been developed in the command to highlight team productivity which provide oversight by the senior leadership. This also enables good practice to be identified such as dispatcher desk selection and rotation.

The change in response gradings discussed in the October 2022 paper will not be amended until the end of 2023 in line with the IT command and control change programme. This may impact on the performance comparison in subsequent papers.

The Operation Beaumont Findings (2022) identified gaps in Essex Police processes around identifying vulnerability, threat, harm. The principal training gap that was identified within the FCR was that Contact Handlers did not input intelligence around repeat callers or threats made from an individual that would not constitute the recording of a crime. Access to Athena is not an issue as Contact Handlers already have log on and as a result combined THRIVE/NDM refresher training is being rolled out immediately and mandated for all FCR staff. Contact Management Command (CMC) has reviewed its training and completely overhauled all training packages being delivered. The Force sought support from Sussex Police in this process due to their advanced position in this area. The critical areas which are being delivered include a THRIVE refresher, Athena intelligence report inputting and the Quick Input Form (QIF) for crimes which may improve those incidents resolved without deployment.

The new launch of Rapid Video Response (RVR) is likely to see an improvement in priority and routine Domestic abuse incidents. This volume improvement should see an overall improvement in the high harm performance attendance as well as victim satisfaction and outcomes (Based on Kent academic research).

Increased driver training courses have enabled the Force to improve the perfect profile² of response trained staff thereby increasing the number of response trained officers.

Policy on high harm attendance

There has been no change in the policy on high harm attendance. For reference Essex Police will attend all high harm incidents. Dwelling Burglary incidents are graded as at least priority grading, for other crimes there will be no specific response grading set; the response grading for each incident will be determined and prioritised based on the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability.

² Perfect Profile is an assessment of requirements for the skill in an area and the current status against it to focus training

6.0 Implications (Issues)

There has been no overall improvement in achieving the required grade of service for high harm attendance in the Force despite the reduction of offences. The Force change programme will set clear ambitions around attendance and in the interim Op Clarity seeks to provide an improved service.

There have been some early improvements in 2023 with the priority response for high harm incidents increasing to 63%.

Challenges for other public services such as hospitals, social care, ambulance, and Mental Health units continues to result in additional calls for service on policing. Calls for service are increasingly complex and span across multiple agencies.

The journey of the victim is a focus point for the Force. The new Victim's Bill 2023 will govern the Force's delivery of the Victim's Code of Practice (VCoP), which highlights 12 victim rights and the impact on dispatch.

Contact management has seen large scale recruitment and training in recent months, this included 151 new members of staff, an increase of 81 percent from 2021. The impact is a prolonged period of experienced staff tutoring rather than contributing to business-as-usual tasks. Contact Management's percentage of establishment with less than 1 years' service is 19 percent, in FCR this is 25 percent. By comparison, the overall percentage of the Force with less than 1 years' services is 9 percent.

There are some challenges recruiting into dispatch due to the demand on Operational Support team (OST) for recent large-scale recruitment, prioritising the FCR uplift and FCR / RC gaps. Furthermore, the pool of those applying for dispatch positions internally as part of natural career progression is currently reduced, with such high numbers of call handlers having less than 1 years' service.

Future IT developments around the command-and-control system which is used to record incidents and dispatch resources (SmartSTORM Call Scripting and Diary) will provide efficiency improvements in the operating model.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The Contact Management Command is the face of Essex Police to the majority of people who come into contact with us.

The 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 and this can be seen in the improvement of high harm outcomes.

Essex Police aspire to move to a point of achieving 90% performance expectation outcomes for all response grades, with the exception of RASSO.

The new Contact Management strategy as mentioned earlier underpins all our public contact, and puts 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

Call for service have remained stable between the two assessment periods; the subcategory of high harm has remained stable in this but the gradings of incidents has changed as described in the paper.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

There are 2 force risks recorded in relation to contact management, these have not changed since October 2022:

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 and tech failure (Athena, iHub, MDT) risks RC workload exceeding staff capacity, not adhering to NCRS/HOCR and breaching Op Athena Red threshold. In particular, EP ability to record crimes within 24 hours, QA and Link investigation, allocate to LPAs and 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.

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 in the writing of this report. An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken in the development of all new Essex Police Policies.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

None identified in the writing of this report. Health and Safety implications are considered in the development of all Essex Policies and responding to incidents.

6.6 Consultation/Engagement

C/Supt Stuart Hooper 42001564 – Head Contact Management
Operational Support Team – Contact Management
Chief Officer Group.

6.7 Actions for Improvement

As reported in October 2022, 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 which has been signed off at the contact management programme board and has been embedded since the October 2022 paper.

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 has been embedded in the command and is used by first line managers. 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.

The planned development of the target operating model and potential IT development will assist with further performance improvements in this area.

7.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

Essex police are developing the thinking around the target operating model for contact management which is part of the Force Major change programme in Essex.

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.