



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

9 October 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

A call for help. Police contact management through call handling and control rooms in 2018/19

I welcome this report which identifies inconsistencies in the policing approach to call handling and sets out eight steps all forces should implement in adopting national contact management principles and practice, to keep people safe and to deal with contact from the public effectively.

The force has carried out a self-assessment against the eight steps set out in the report and has identified that it is making progress in all the areas, but that further development work is required to be as fully effective and efficient as possible while providing the best service possible to the public.

There has been significant investment in public contact infrastructure. Staff have recently moved in to the new/purpose built Operations & Communications Centre (OCC). The two primary digital platforms utilised by the force have been changed with ATHENA (Crime management) & Saab Safe (command and control) systems being introduced.

The force is committed to the effective use of a Threat/Harm/Risk based assessment against calls for service. THRIVE is utilised by call takers on each & every call but the force recognise that the recording of the decisions and rationale as to how a call has been graded has been inconsistent but steps are in place to improve both supervision and training to address this.

The force is committed to enhancing the service it provides to the most vulnerable members of our community. The new command and control system SAAB provides the opportunity to gain a better understanding of vulnerability and a richer picture of

demand and use this to shift and mitigate demand as it occurs.

The report sets out that 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.

In West Mercia's OCC all training so far in 2020 has been utilised for the new command and control system. Prior to this, OCC staff took part in a training exercise lead by West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit. This training ensured staff now feel better equipped to fulfil the requirements of their role should West Mercia be required to respond to this type of incident. A recent review of the two job roles within the OCC has been undertaken which enables those who prefer to remain in a call handler role to do so, however progression opportunities will still remain where postings allow. Staff welfare was one of the considerations for this change.

In my role as Police and Crime Commissioner, the performance of the OCC and its impact on the service to the public has been subject to regular scrutiny as part of my holding to account programme. I will be holding a specific meeting this week looking at public contact performance including the impact of the new command system, the use of channel shift and resilience in the OCC. .

As Commissioner I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account, to ensure the force addresses the steps set out in the report as part of my ongoing commitment to ensuring West Mercia police deliver the service our communities need to be safe and feel safe

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia