

Dated: 2/12/2024

POLICY TITLE: Contact Handling Policy

OWNING DIRECTORATE: Communications

AUTHOR: Head of Communications Department

CONTACT DETAILS: 101

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Complete

AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (APP) NATIONAL GUIDANCE: No

AIM OF POLICY: To provide the public with an effective and efficient contact management process that embraces the concept of customer focus and tailors the access offered and the service provided to users' actual needs and expectations.

BENEFIT OF POLICY: Supports the aims of the Quality of Service Commitment (QoSC) to improve the level of service given to members of the public and to ensure the same high quality of service whenever they contact the police and to increase customer satisfaction.

REASON FOR POLICY: Northumbria Police is committed to the aims of the Police and Crime Plan 2021 -2025 and the QoSC, and this commitment includes all contact from members of the public. The aims are repeated in the NPCC National Contact Management Strategy (2019).

When handling public requests for service or advice, Northumbria Police will deal with all calls promptly and 'in accordance' with National Call Handling Standards by:

- Giving priority to genuine emergency calls and processing them in line with best practice.
- Processing less urgent calls in a consistent and appropriate manner.
- Operating a Single Call Resolution Model in which callers are answered by trained and knowledgeable contact handlers, who will endeavour to resolve calls at the first point of contact.

Northumbria Police will provide clear guidance to all staff within the Force on how to deal with callers in line with the above standards using a THRIVES (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigative, Vulnerability, Engagement, Safeguarding) methodology, National Call Handling Standards, National Standards of Incident Recording and National Crime Recording Standards to deliver a risk assessed based approach to all contact for service.

This is linked directly to the force targets on answering emergency calls, non-emergency calls and attendance / resolution times for all incidents.

This policy refers to the following forms of contact:

- 999 calls (including the 999-text service)
- 101 and other non-emergency calls
- Direct Dial Inwards (DDI)
- SMS (community text messaging)
- E-mail
- Internal calls
- Weather phones (located at stations force wide).
- Face to face
- Digital Reporting (including Single Online Home, Webchat, social media (Orlo))
- Single Online Home:
 - The aims of the Single Online Home as a digital contact are to offer an online crime reporting and secondary triage option for the public.
 - National crime reporting standards and THRIVE are followed as they would be if the contact was via telephone.
 - Web submissions that carry potential risk are marked in the title with an IR - allowing potential emergency/high risk incidents to be actioned first.
 - Service Level Agreement (SLA) for actioning most web submissions is 48 hours, any reports containing domestic violence or sexual assault have a 24-hour SLA.
 - Web submissions are regularly risk assessed, to confirm they do not need immediate action. Mailboxes monitored 24 hours a day.
- Webchat:
 - Offers a platform online for live conversation with a member of the customer service team - with options to report, triage and advise.
 - National crime reporting standards and THRIVE are followed as they would be if the contact was via telephone.
 - Reports are recorded at the first point of contact - rather than signposting to Single Online Home or 101/999.
 - Conversations ideally remain on the digital function unless phone contact is necessary.
- Social Media:
 - Aims to increase engagement between Northumbria Police and the public, offering another avenue for reporting via direct messages.
 - Monitored and Risk assessed 24 hours a day.
 - Accessed by Customer Service Centre, Contact Handlers, Team Leaders, Communications and Engagement and the Media team.
 - Acts as a hub for any incoming social media contact from the public, also allowing outgoing posts to be made by the Media team.

- Reports are recorded at the first point of contact - rather than signposting to Single Online Home or 101/999.
 - Digital policy - linked to the National Police Chiefs' Council 'Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2020-2030'.
 - Supporting consistency across digital ways of working, which will enable seamless digital enabled experiences.
 - Using digital technology to help deliver earlier and more precise approaches to protect the vulnerable.
 - Establish digital leadership in order to ensure staff are equipped with the right capabilities.
 - Using digital tools to establish better relations with partner agencies and the private sector, to ensure we work together towards public safety.
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SOURCE DOCUMENT: National Call Handling Standards, National Contact Management Strategy 2019, Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2020-2030.

GROUPS AFFECTED: All staff

ACCESS AND DISCLOSURE RESTRICTIONS: None
