

# **Review of Quality of Service Team – March 2019**

## **Strategic Change Directorate**

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**Date: 10 March 2019**

**Unit: Quality of Service Team**

**Contact: Claire Heath / Lisa Scally**

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress and work of the Quality of Service team following the decision for the team to manage low level concerns and dissatisfaction in accordance with the decision of the PFCC in June 2017.

## **2.0 Executive Summary**

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 gave Police and Crime Commissioners the option of new powers to bring the management of low level complaints into their offices, should they choose to, or to have a stronger role in overseeing them. The changes would co-ordinate and professionalise the management of low-level dissatisfaction with police forces and enables PCC's/PFCC's to take on other functions within the complaints system, giving them the option of taking on responsibility for the front-end of the complaints system and the responsibility for all duties regarding contact with the complainant.

In preparation for the changes to the Policing and Crime Bill in 2017, it was agreed that the Quality of Service team would complete a pilot to centrally manage low level concerns on behalf of the PFCC. The pilot commenced in September 2016 and the results were presented to the Strategic Board on the 15 June 2017. A full report of the pilot and its outcomes along with the subsequent PFCC decision sheet is attached at Appendix A.

After the successful pilot the PFCC Strategic Board agreed that the management of Low Level Concerns would remain within the Essex Police Quality of Service team.

This review looks at the impact the refocused Quality of Service team has had on the Low Level Concerns and Dissatisfaction process since it was refreshed in June 2017.

Prior to the Quality of Service refocus of work in June 2017, the primary role of the small team (4 members of staff) was to find out more about the quality of service provided by the Force Control Room (FCR), Crime Bureau (CB) and investigating officers by completing '1 in 3 quality checks' with victims of crime. Victim feedback was passed to departments and functions across the force to improve the way services were designed and delivered.

This provided a retrospective assessment of the service provided and did not seek to capture and resolve low level concerns of dissatisfaction at the point of contact. There was no opportunity to resolve a low level concern before it escalated to PSD.

Prior to the pilot there was no central function and capture for dissatisfaction and low level concerns and members of the public and victims of crime reported being 'bounced around several teams' and making multiple contacts before finding an answer to their enquiry.

The previous structure made learning lessons more difficult to achieve and therefore service improvements were not identified, evidenced and measured as they are today.

## 2.1 Pre-Pilot - Before Quality of Service Refresh

Initial base lining work estimated that the original team of 4 staff received an average of **500 telephone and email contacts from the public each month, 10% (50) of which were resolved at the 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact**, the balance were forwarded to LPA officers and other HQ departments for resolution.

In addition to the victim call backs, the Quality of Service team completed the following tasks;

- BAME victim satisfaction surveys
- Quality assurance of Crime Bureau and Switchboard telephone calls
- Quality of calls scored and outcomes flagged to line managers
- Victim Right to Review recording
- 'Mystery Shopping' with Police Station front counters and website contact

## 2.2 Post-Pilot - After Quality of Service Refresh

Post pilot the team deal with **around 8,500 contacts from members of the public, 46% (3,900) are resolved at the first point of contact.**

After the initial pilot and as a result of the increased volume of public contact agreement was given to increase the size of the team by two members of staff. Job descriptions were reviewed and developed to meet the new requirements of the team and a small internal restructure replaced the old team supervisor with a dedicated Service Improvement Manager. This new role has responsibility for leading the team, developing, improving and maintaining a new performance reporting framework and ensuring organisational improvements are made as a result of the feedback from members of the public and victims of crime.

The Quality of Service team of 6 staff now provide Essex Police with an independent assessment and resolution of public dissatisfaction and low level concerns. These provide a valuable source of feedback and provide opportunity for Essex Police to improve its service and in turn public confidence and trust.

The team provides a central point of contact for dissatisfaction, low level concerns and victim enquiries across the county. It is ideally placed to provide an early warning of failures in service delivery, identify areas for improvement, deliver business change and monitor outcomes to ensure continuous improvement. A suitable performance framework has been developed to drive the service improvement programme.

The Quality of Service team deal with all low level concerns and dissatisfaction raised by the public to;

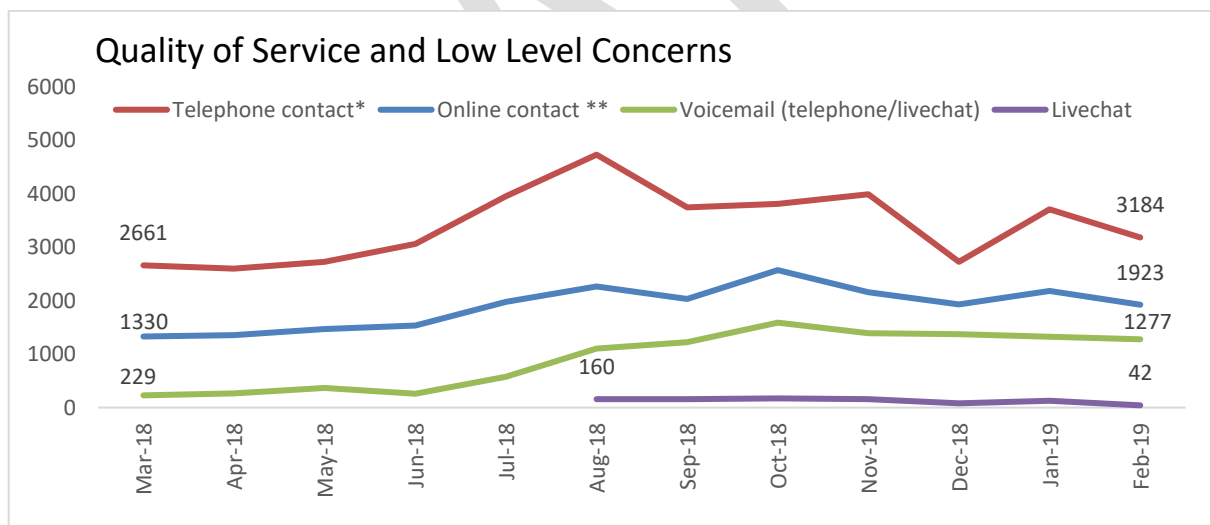
- Resolve these 'there and then' or as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the complainant reducing unnecessary escalations and the volume of formal complaints.
- Monitor escalations to ensure that the enquiry is resolved in a timely manner

- Introduce a continuous improvement process to ensure that low level concerns are resolved and the root cause identified and change delivered to improve the experience of future service users.
- Assess the impact of other force change on low level concerns and dissatisfaction.

The level of public initiated contact has increased since the refocus of the team which is now more accessible than ever before with the introduction of more channels for the public to raise concerns and seek resolution about the service received including:

- Telephone via 101 interactive voice recognition (IVR) where the Quality of Service team are accessed direct under option 3
- Online via complaints and dissatisfaction webpages as well as across the force website advice pages
- Live Chat or instant messaging allowing the public to talk in real time with a member of the Quality of Service team
- Promoting the team and the service across the force by including direct contact details on burglary packs, victim contact cards, rural crime information and crime prevention advice
- Victim letters going to every victim of crime introduce the Quality of Service team, methods of contact and the service it provides.

The graph below shows the level of public contact across all contact channels.



\* Changes were made to 101 in Nov 17 to support a better service to the public.

\*\* Online contact is inclusive of 'Live chat offline contact'

Processes in the Quality of Service team are clear and straightforward, it is readily accessible to members of the public with skilled team members so that decisions are taken quickly, things put right where necessary and lessons learnt for service improvement. The team work closely with the PSD and ensure members of the public are supported in making a complaint when it is appropriate and right to do so.

Formal published complaint data demonstrates the Essex Police improved nationally moving from 21<sup>st</sup> in 2016/17 to 17<sup>th</sup> in 2017/18 in relation to allegations per 1,000 employees<sup>1</sup>. During this time Essex Police made it easier for members of the public to report a complaint due to improvements in the online reporting process on the force website.

### 2.3 Current position

The team which previously dealt with 6,000 contacts per annum will deal with over 100,000 public contacts in 2018/19. Of the total contacts dealt with by the Quality of Service team **46%** were dealt with at the 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact, without referral to anyone else for resolution, thereby reducing the abstraction of local officers to deal with concerns from the public.

Performance data is produced monthly and includes details of what the public are contacting us about. This data is shared monthly through the DCC Victim Focus and Public Confidence Board and the ACC Demand Management board and is used to inform service improvements.

In addition to the above, the Quality of service team also undertake the following activity;

- Support Victim Surveys
- Draft 'Public Thank you Letters'
- Co-ordinate Victim Right to Review's

### 2.4 Business Benefits

The decision to refresh the Quality of Service team and expand their remit to deal with dissatisfaction and low level concerns in June 2017 has delivered significant benefits to Essex Police. The table attached at Appendix B summarises the high level benefits already delivered and those planned for 2019/20 including:

- Improvements in the way members of the public can report concerns about the service received and seek an early resolution.
- The introduction of an independent central point of contact allowed for formal performance monitoring and analysis to capture why people are dissatisfied with the service.
- Over half of the contacts are now resolved by a professionalised service team saving time and relieving the pressure on front line services.
- Organisational learning gained from this independent function is shared through the DCC / ACC boards who are able to escalate and resolve identified issues and drive service improvement across the force.

### 2.5 Costs / Value for money

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<sup>1</sup> *Allegations per 1,000 employees* This is a direct transfer of data from <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/tags/essex-police-report-bulletins>, [Performance data - Q4 2016 bulletin](#) and [Performance data - Quarter 4 2017 bulletin](#).

The team estimate that due to the high demand 100% of their time is spent dealing public contact. It should be noted that the manager and supervisor function do not usually handle calls or emails as their focus stays wholly on management and service improvement.

The current cost of the team is attached at Appendix C and is based on the 2018/19 ready reckoner recommended for use in business cases.

The annual cost of the Quality of Service team who deal with public contact is £142,460. This cost divided by the number of contacts completed in 2018/19 (102624) provides a **cost per contact / resolution of £1.40**. It is clear that the Quality of Service team deliver excellent value for money when compared to national benchmarking of resolution teams which gives an average cost of £3.64 per contact as shown in Appendix D.

This is strengthened by the level of contacts resolved by the Quality of Service team, centrally each month. For example, 46% (47207) of 102624 contacts by members of the public have been resolved by the Quality of Service team this year. Assuming it takes an officer just 15 minutes to resolve a query, means the Quality of Service team saved front line officers over 11,801 hours of work or £289,143 if it is assumed this is all done by PC's at £24.5 per hour<sup>2</sup>.

This delivers a saving each year making the entire Quality of Service team including the management function cost neutral.

There have been no recorded complaints about the action taken by the Quality of Service Team or the service they have provided.

Essex Police have a dedicated central point for capturing concerns and low level dissatisfaction providing assurance to the Chief Officer team that matters are dealt with effectively by skilled and trained staff. This is reflected in regular internal and external feedback about the team. In addition the insight is reviewed by the DCC and ACC led boards to ensure the public feedback is used to inform improvements to the way services are designed and delivered.

### 3.0 **Background**

The Quality of Service team provide Essex Police with an independent assessment of public dissatisfaction and low level concerns. The structure and work of the team was refocused in the summer of 2017 and now provides a central point of contact for dissatisfaction and low level concerns across the county. It is ideally placed to identify areas for improvement, deliver business change and monitor outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.

The key benefits of this change are shown in appendix B and include;

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<sup>2</sup> Based on 2018/19 Ready Reckoner, Internal rates for constables.

- Improvements in the way members of the public can report concerns about the service received and seek an early resolution.
- The introduction of an independent central point of contact allowed for formal performance monitoring and analysis to capture why people are dissatisfied with the service.
- Over half of the contacts are now resolved by a professionalised service team saving time and relieving the pressure on front line services.
- Organisational learning and insight from public feedback can be shared through the DCC / ACC boards to escalate and resolve identified issues and drive service improvement across the force.

#### **4.0 Improvements to the response given to members of the public**

##### Operating Environment and Team Structure

A review of demand and the team structure was undertaken in the summer of 2017 and the team structure, opening hours and skills were changed and improved to better meet the demand. The new structure provides clear opportunities for development with opportunity for the whole team to contribute to service improvements as outlined in the teams rolling programme of work shown in Appendix E.

##### Organisational Learning

In order to better understand the work of the Quality of Service team a new customer contact recording process was introduced. This ensures that the team records what they do and the outcomes and learning are shared across the organisation via a monthly report. The latest report (February 2019) is attached at Appendix F and summarises the volume and category of public contact and the reasons for dissatisfaction together with what is being done to identify and remove barriers to effective service delivery.

##### Public Access

To improve public access to the Quality of Service team the interactive voice recognition menu (IVR) was updated to ensure any caller with a concern about the service they have received is directed immediately to the Quality of Service team. No other force offers this service via a direct access at the first point of contact or has made it so easy for the public to report dissatisfaction on line.

The Quality of Service team have worked hard to promote the department to ensure that victims, witnesses and the public are able to get the help they need. This was evidenced by the introduction of Live Chat in August 2018.

In addition to the IVR and Live Chat direct access to the Quality of Service team online has improved. The team has a large online presence in several areas on the force website, complaints, advice, and victims' right to review.

Supporting information added to victim of crime letters and other victim communications like the Burglary Packs, Victim Care Cards, and Victim Survey supporting information all refer victims to the Quality of Service team.

#### Mental Health Training

The Quality of Service team attended a bespoke training day with Mind in December 2017 to improve their skills and training to support callers who present with mental health related concerns. This training supported by a better understanding of Mental Health services across the county proved so successful that it is being repeated in May 2019 to include new Quality of Service staff.

The training along with visits to the Samaritans and a closer working relationship with Mind gave the Quality of service staff the necessary skills and confidence to deal with members of the public who have mental health issues. Overall the department saw a reduction in repeat callers from 30 to 40 frequent callers a month to 5. These numbers do fluctuate and often the team receives no repeat calls.

#### Travellers and Unauthorised Encampments

The Quality of Service team received training from the county traveller unit in order to provide better information to callers with questions about travellers and unauthorised encampments in preparation for the summer months.

#### Rural crime Identification and Recording

New promotional information and reporting mechanisms have been introduced to support information about concerns from members of rural communities. These are reported through the Quality of Service team and outcomes can be discussed at the Rural Crime Forum.

#### Intelligence Identification and Recording

Quality of Service team members received training to identify and record intelligence from contact with members of the public. In the first instance the team refer members of the public to crime stoppers, however if members of the public insist and are happy to provide their personal details then the Quality of Service team complete an intelligence record on Athena.

#### Vehicle Recovery

The Quality of Service team identified an increasing pattern of dissatisfaction with members of the public who have had their vehicles seized and their ability to seek an update regarding the release of their vehicle.

As a result of service improvement implemented by Vehicle Recovery the Quality of Service team took over the customer services role. This change has significantly improved customer dissatisfaction in this difficult area of business and in February 2019 196 customers contacted the Quality of Service team to discuss their vehicles after which only 9 remained dissatisfied with the service they received.

#### GDPR training and Compliance

The Quality of Service team have worked to understand, implement and comply with the new GDPR regulations. An independent peer audit and inspection was commissioned in December 2018 with good outcomes.



## 5.0 Improvements to the response given to victims of crime

### Supporting Victim Surveys

The Quality of Service team use their skills and understanding of victims to complete surveys on behalf of Essex Police. In addition they support county wide victim surveys by providing a central contact point for victims who want to ask questions about the survey they completed, are concerned about the use of their data or have a general enquiry.

Recently the team have completed a victim survey on behalf of the Basildon District. Supported the current Domestic Abuse and Voice of a Child (VOC) surveys being completed by Leicestershire Police and Public Protection team volunteers.

### Action Fraud Victim Journey

Reports of fraud which occur in Essex are referred to Action Fraud. Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime where the public report fraud when they have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber-crime.

This means that when the public contact Essex Police to report fraud they are referred to Action Fraud and their initial report is not recorded on Essex Police systems. This can have a negative impact on victims who don't understand why Essex Police are dealing with their crime.

As a result the Quality of Service team along with the cybercrime unit mapped the victim journey through the national fraud investigation process identifying learning and ways in which we can improve the service for low risk Essex victims without the need for extra resources.

A full review was completed and learning implemented, specifically a new victim letter was developed for all residents in Essex reporting fraud direct to Action Fraud. The letters explain the processes and provide support and introduce the Quality of service team. The Quality of Service team have received suitable training and can explain the process to victims as required.

### Victims Right to Review

A review is to examine how effective the force is at managing the Victim Right to Review (VRR) scheme and to identify any areas for improvement in relation the process which will increase victim satisfaction and support the best use of police resources was completed in September 2018. Six recommendations were identified which are being implemented by the victim services manager including:

- Officers to be reminded to notify victims in qualifying cases of their right to seek a review and make a record on the victim contact log in Athena. A tailored 60 second brief to support officers in their communication of decisions to victims will be designed to support the closing of an investigation.
- Introduction of a VRR information leaflet accessible on the external webpage and available for officers to share with victims.

- DCIs or nominated reviewing officer to ensure that all communications relating to their review decision are copied into the enquiry log of Athena (if emailed) or stored within document management if a letter is sent. This will help support any further inspection process and ensure that all information pertaining to an investigation is stored correctly.
- Sample templates for VRR decision letters should be available on the intranet to support the reviewing officer.
- The reviewing officer should consider opportunities for learning and best practice that can be shared to help improve the quality of investigations and victim satisfaction. (e.g. GO2 webpage)
- Quality of Service team to extend the VRR data analysis shared in the Low Level Concerns and Victims Code Performance Reports to support early identification of any patterns or concerns to support organisational learning.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

The Quality of Service team develop customer service professionals with a great knowledge of Essex Police and Essex Police systems. It is very difficult to retain staff as these skills are very sought after by other service departments all of whom can offer a higher pay scale. The Quality of Service team have two vacancies and we expect this number to increase to four in April 2019.

These vacancies are reflected in the team's current call abandoned rate. Two new members of staff have been recruited and are awaiting vetting. Once in post it will take a couple of months to complete the initial training programme at which point the abandoned rate should reduce as long as other staff do not move on.

## **6.1 Risks/Mitigation**

At the time of writing there is only one risk for the Quality of Service team in respect of vacancies, the time it takes to recruit new staff and the impact this has on the abandoned rate.

A full impact assessment has been completed, mitigation has been implemented in respect of overtime, working hours, sharing staff with other departments.

## **7.0 Future Development Work**

**The following planned projects are currently being scoped for 2019/**







### Victims of Business Crime

A joint project with LPSU to find out how the service to victims of business crime can be improved

### Social Media Service

A research project to scope the possibility of responding to service issues raised through public Social Media.

## Appendices

<b>Appendix A</b>	 068-17 Changes to the Handling of Police
<b>Appendix B</b>	 Business Benefits Appendix B.docx
<b>Appendix C</b>	 Cost of Quality of Service team 2018 A1
<b>Appendix D</b>	 Value for Money Appendix D.docx
<b>Appendix E</b>	 Service improvement list 280
<b>Appendix F</b>	 2019-02 QoS and Low level Concerns