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POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER

**Police and Crime
Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys**

**Scrutiny Panel
Dip Sampling Exercise**

Review of 2018/19 Quarter 3 (October – December 2018)

Force Communication Centre Calls

Use of Force

Panel Members' Findings & Feedback

December 2018

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1.0 Overview

At the ninth meeting of the Commissioner's Quality Assurance Panel held on 17th of December 2018, Members reviewed a random dip-sample of calls received by the Force Communication Centre (FCC) and a random selection of incidents where police powers of force were used.

2.0 Background, Purpose and Methodology

The background and purpose of the Panel along with how the dip sampling is carried out and what the Panel is asked to consider is detailed in the Quality Assurance Panel handbook, which is available on the [PCC's website](#).

3.0 Force Communication Centre Calls

The Panel reviewed a random selection of calls from November 2018 which were played to the Members via the meeting room's speaker system. Members noted any observations during the playback. The group also had the opportunity to collectively discuss any queries, with notes and key observations being taken by a member of staff from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

Prior to looking at the calls the Panel received an input from the Public Service Unit Supervisor regarding the new way in which supervisors now review and quality check calls that come into the FCC. It was explained that each month a pair of Supervisors review around 500 calls; including both recorded calls and live calls. It was explained that they also listen in to live calls allowing the staff to receive instant feedback and advice.

The Panel last reviewed FCC calls back in November 2017 and an action which came from that meeting was for the Panel to receive an input on the remit of the then newly created Incident Crime Allocation Team (ICAT). A Sergeant from ICAT attended the meeting to provide the Panel with an overview of their role in dealing with scheduled (non-emergency) calls for service.

The Panel reviewed four calls received by the Force Communication Centre, three received via 101 and one via 999.

Call 1

- Members noted that the call handler remained calm throughout the call, providing regular reassurance to the caller that help was on its way.

- Due to the vulnerability of the female caller it was felt that questions regarding how she was feeling and the description of the male suspect could have been asked sooner. A description was asked to be given 19 minutes into the call.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

This has been feedback to the Force Communication Centre management to assess whether there is a requirement for the staff member concerned to be provided with CPD update.

- Although Members recognised that it is very difficult to assess someone's vulnerability over the phone, it was noted that the caller was not recorded as being vulnerable until 27 minutes into the call, which possibly could have been identified sooner. The victim mentioned that the suspect had specific needs, with Members querying whether more questioning could have followed this to help identify both the caller's and the suspect's needs.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

Whilst recognising each call is different in its nature, this does raise a valid query relating to vulnerability. As an organisation Dyfed-Powys Police is seeking to improve its assessment relating to this issue, and this has progressed significantly over the past 12 months. FCC management have been asked to review.

- The Panel felt that there was too much emphasis early on in the call on obtaining the caller's home address and personal details. The Panel recognised that capturing these details is important, however due to the nature of the situation and the individual not being at home at the time, it was felt that more questioning regarding the situation and their safety should have been prioritised. One Member queried if there was a procedure in place to provide advice to the caller in order to support the caller to deal with the situation at hand whilst awaiting officer attendance.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

There is a set process flow to obtain details of a caller wherever possible. In most circumstances this will be vital in case the line is dropped/lost. However Call Handlers do need to be dynamic in assessing whether this is the right thing to do. Staff are given inputs, which form part of their yearly CPD, in relation to Call Management and providing the right information and guidance for the duration of an incident if required.

Call 2

- This call related to an incident reported earlier that morning. It was noted that the caller stated that she was told to contact the police if a particular individual approached the premises again. The Panel felt that more questions were needed to link this call with the morning's events. However, it was acknowledged that possibly the call handler was already aware of the past events and therefore able to create the appropriate links.
- It was noted that the caller stated that there was a concern that the individual could have been drinking and was currently sitting in a car. The Panel felt that more questioning around this concern may have been useful, for example, why the caller believed the individual had been drinking.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

On review of the incident this feedback is correct, and has been fed back to the FCC Management.

- The Panel did feel that the call was professionally dealt with, and all relevant details had been correctly recorded.

Call 3

- The Panel stated that this call was dealt with appropriately and that all details had been recorded efficiently and correctly.
- The Panel did feel that due to the severity of the case and the risk that someone may have taken an overdose that it may have been useful to ask if the caller was aware of any nearby friends, families, neighbours or key holders that may have been able to help gain access to the property and check on the individual prior to the police's arrival.

Call 4

- The Panel felt that this call was handled positively with no areas of concern being raised.

A separate meeting was held to listen to calls into the Force Communication Centre through the medium of Welsh. Ten Welsh 101 calls were reviewed.

Call 1

- It was felt that the call handler used appropriate questioning. The call was handled well with no issues being identified.

Call 2

- This recording of this call was cut off after 2 minutes 52 seconds and was therefore not able to be reviewed in full. This appeared to be a recording issue as the written call record went on further. However, it was noted from what was heard of the call, the handler had started to deal with the situation well especially as the caller was difficult to understand, utilising systematic questioning in order to try and gain clarity of the situation.

Call 3

- It was noted that this call handler was very patient and understanding with the caller, all key elements of the situation were noted down and recorded accurately. The caller requested a call back from a Welsh speaker and this was recorded clearly on the log more than once by the call handler; however the record showed later that the caller received a call back from a member of ICAT who was not a Welsh speaker.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

ICAT will progress the investigative lines of enquiry and will seek to do so at the most relevant time, in order to maximise the efficiency of the investigation. On this occasion there was no Welsh Speaking member of ICAT available to assist which was explained at the time of the call back to the caller. We will endeavour to respect the requirements of our callers particularly when it relates to their rights regarding the use of Welsh.

Call 4

- No issues were identified and the call was dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Call 5

- It was noted that this call was dealt with appropriately, the handler confirmed details and checked their understanding of the situation with the caller. The caller was clearly informed about the next step, explaining clearly that someone would be in contact within the next 24 hours. It was noted that the caller seemed very satisfied with the service they had received on the call.

Call 6

- It was noted that when the caller was put on hold for the call handler to seek guidance, it sounded as though the line may have gone dead. A question was raised whether any background noise was heard by the caller to show that they are still connected to the call. The caller was placed on hold for two minutes which felt like a long time when the caller may be unsure if they were still connected.

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

When callers are put on hold for a transfer there is a background noise i.e. music. However when on hold for other matters this is not the case. This will be addressed when the FCC introduces a new telephony system over the coming months.

- Overall the call was dealt with appropriately, with the next step being explained well and the role of action fraud being explained clearly.

Call 7

- It was noted that the call was handled to the caller's satisfaction, with the handler identifying the caller's vulnerability quickly and advising them to call again if needed.
- It was noted however that the call could have been drawn to a conclusion a little sooner.

Call 8

- The recording for this call was cut off after 2 minutes and therefore was unable to be reviewed. From the log it was noted that the call lasted for 7-8 minutes.

Call 9

- This call was handled well with no areas of concern.

Call 10

- The caller had phoned to ask for help in obtaining a number for a Citizen's Advice. The handler asked the caller whether there was anything that the Police could do to help. The group was undecided as to whether the situation was suitable for police involvement and whether it was appropriate to extend the call by asking if police would be of help. However, the group also noted that the caller did seem anxious about their situation. Due to the uncertainty as to whether the call could have been ended by answering the initial query of providing the Citizen's Advice number, it was noted that it may be useful for a supervisor to review the call and provide feedback to the Panel.

Force Communication Centre Department comments

Following a review it has been established that the circumstances did warrant Police involvement, as there were concerns for the caller and the circumstances described i.e. potential neighbour dispute. This does not mean that Police would be attending but allows for signposting etc. to be undertaken if required.

- It was also noted that this individual was placed on hold for approximately 3 minutes; again it was asked whether music is played to reassure caller that they are still connected. The caller did not want to take the reference number of the call which was being offered by the handler. It was felt that the purpose of having this reference number was not explained clearly i.e. if they phoned back with further information they would be able to add information to the individual's record.
- The handler provided regular reassurance to the caller and did eventually answer the initial query regarding the number.

3.1 Key observations for the Force

<u>Key observations – English Calls</u>	<u>Related cases</u>
All four cases reviewed were found to be handled professionally, with details being taken and recorded efficiently and accurately.	All four
Members felt that it was clear from the calls that operators are required to follow a set procedure for taking details. It was noted that in an emergency this could be seen as overly bureaucratic and unnecessary. One Member queried if there was a procedure in place to provide advice to the caller in order to support the caller to deal with the situation at hand whilst awaiting officer attendance.	Call 1
<u>Key observations – Welsh Calls</u>	<u>Related cases</u>
It was noted that in all Welsh calls the handlers communicated well and created a positive rapport with the caller, with many calls ending with advice and reassurance.	All Welsh calls
It was felt that two calls might have been dealt with quicker with more appropriate questioning.	Welsh Calls 7 and 10

Questions raised:

- Do callers receive music if placed on hold to reassure that they are still connected to the call?

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

Currently if a caller is on hold to be transferred there is music played, however if the caller is on hold for the call taker to seek advice this is not the case. This will be rectified with the introduction of a new telephony system in the coming months.

- Are 999 calls which are dealt with through the medium of Welsh flagged as such?

Force Communication Centre Department comments:

999 calls are always received in English due to the nature of the handover between the BT emergency operator and Control room. The Call taker will always revert to English when taking these calls, and record all details in English. This is simply down to the emergency nature and overriding aim to save life. Where possible a Welsh Speaking Call handler will use Welsh if required to do so by a Caller, based on the specific circumstances of the call/incident. There is no currently no methodology for flagging these up.

4.0 Use of Force

The Panel were given seven use of force incidents to review, with six being accompanied by a selection of recordings taken from the body worn video cameras in addition to the completed use of force forms. Having this footage available greatly assisted the Panel in assessing the use of force being used and how it was subsequently recorded.

An Operations Inspector attended this section of the meeting to discuss the feedback from when use of force was last reviewed. The Inspector was also able to assist the Panel with any questions that they had whilst reviewing some of the incidents.

Members reviewed each case as a group by viewing the body worn video footage available followed by a detailed discussion of each incident, ensuring that all feedback was collected before reaching a general consensus of each case reviewed.

Case 1

For this case there were four body worn video recordings of the incident and three use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, ground restraint, spit and bite guard, unarmed skills, irritant spray and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- The Panel felt that this incident had been dealt with well and that reassurance was given throughout to the individual. Members felt that officers were patient and helpful in a very challenging situation.
- The Panel noted the use of force was necessary and reasonable under the circumstances, with the method of force being proportionate and the minimum necessary.
- It was felt by the Panel that the term "PAVA" (irritant spray) may not be recognised by members of the public, although it was understood that the warning is for the officers' safety rather than the individual.

Use of Force lead comments:

The warning is for other Officers who are within the locality.

- The Panel noted that on one occasion an officer swore at the individual which could have been avoided to ensure professionalism.

Use of Force lead comments:

Police Officers and Staff have a duty to act with professionalism at all times. However in some circumstances Officers will swear, particularly in circumstances such as these. On occasions members of the public will react and comply when terminology they are accustomed to is used.

Case 2

Within this case the Panel viewed two body worn videos and the corresponding forms. Force used within this case included unarmed skills and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- The Panel felt that this incident had been dealt with well and there were no concerns over the use of force used.
- It was noted that the incident was dealt with dignity and respect and the method of force was proportionate.

Case 3

For this case there were five recordings of the incident on the body worn video cameras and two use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, unarmed skills, taser and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- The Panel had no concerns over the use of force used in this incident. The Members noted that the situation was handled well, with officers remaining calm and professional in a challenging situation.

Case 4

For this case there were two video recordings of the incident and two use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, drawing/aiming of taser and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- It was noted that the address for the subject was different on the two forms, although the forms were both based on the same incident and individual.

Use of Force lead comments:

It appears that this is an oversight in the recording by one of the Officers. Feedback has been provided.

- It was felt that the use of force used was necessary and proportionate.

Case 5

For this case there were four recordings of the incident and six use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, unarmed skills, ground restraint, drawing of taser, limb/body restraints and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- Members felt that the situation was handled very well with officers checking the welfare of the individual throughout the incident. The individual was well looked after by the officers, was taken to hospital and frequently provided with reassurance.
- The Panel noted that the address for the individual was different on the forms.

Case 6

For this case there was no body worn video footage available and two use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, unarmed skills, and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- The Panel raised no concerns with the details recorded on both use of force forms.

Case 7

Within this case the Panel viewed three body worn videos and two use of force forms. Force used within this case included; handcuffing, drawing of taser and tactical communication.

Panel Members highlighted the following:

- The Panel felt that the use of force used was appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances.
- It was noted that the location of the incident address was different on both forms.

Use of Force lead comments:

This matter is being reviewed as it is likely there is a systems error for this incident, relating to the locations recorded.

- The Panel also noted that the annual personal safety training of one of the officers involved was completed more than five years ago.

Use of Force lead comments:

This has been reviewed and it is an inaccurate recording by the Officer, who has received Training within the past 18 months.

4.1 Key observations for the Force

<u>Key observations</u>	<u>Related cases</u>
It was found that the use of force was consistently necessary, reasonable and proportionate.	All seven
It was found that there were some discrepancies in the information recorded on the forms, with personal details such as addresses differing on forms based on the same incident.	Cases 4, 6 and 7
Panel Members suggested that the Force review the personal safety training record of the officer involved in case 7 to establish if their training had indeed lapsed.	Case 7