



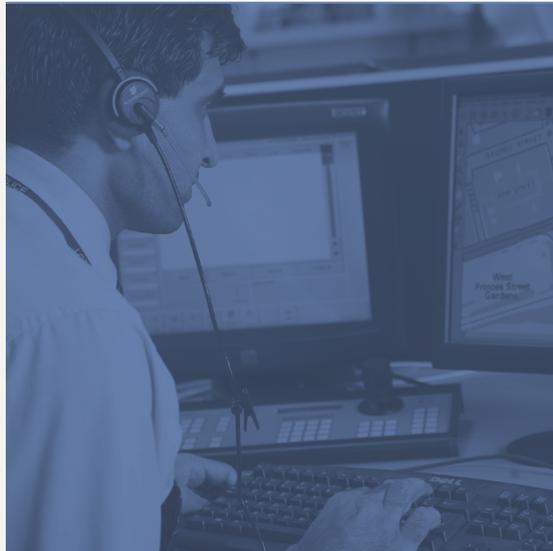
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HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND

# Independent Assurance Review Police Scotland – Call Handling Final Report

November 2015

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A report of an inquiry directed by Scottish Ministers under section 74(1) of the Police and Fire Reform  
(Scotland) Act 2012 and laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 78(3) of that Act

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# HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

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HM Inspectorate for Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and has wide ranging powers to look into the '*state, effectiveness and efficiency*' of both the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA).<sup>1</sup>

We have a statutory duty to ensure that the Chief Constable and the SPA meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, we can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the SPA or Police Scotland as they consider appropriate. We also have an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

- Our powers allow us to do anything we consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of our functions.
- The SPA and the Chief Constable must provide us with such assistance and co-operation as we may require, to enable us to carry out our functions.
- When we publish a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must also consider what we have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit.
- Where our report identifies that the SPA or Police Scotland is not efficient or effective (or best value not secured), or will, unless remedial measures are taken, cease to be efficient or effective, Scottish Ministers may direct the Authority to take such measures as may be required. The SPA must comply with any direction given.
- Where we make recommendations, we will follow them up and report publicly on progress.
- We will identify good practice that can be applied across Scotland.
- We work with other inspectorates and agencies across the public sector and co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing and will do this through independent scrutiny and objective, evidence-led reporting about what we find.

Our approach is to support Police Scotland and the SPA to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.<sup>2</sup>

**This assurance review is an inquiry directed by Scottish Ministers under section 74(1) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 78(3) of that Act.**

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 11, Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

<sup>2</sup> HMICS, *Corporate Strategy 2014-17* (2014).



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## Our review

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This assurance review has been directed by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice following the tragic incident involving the deaths of John Yuill and Lamara Bell. This review sits alongside the independent investigation directed by the Lord Advocate and being conducted by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) into that specific incident.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that HMICS has not investigated the circumstances surrounding this tragic incident and does not offer any specific comment on why a telephone call made to Police Scotland on Sunday 5 July 2015, which reported their car was off the road, was not followed up. These are matters exclusively within the scope of the PIRC inquiry and will be covered in detail within her final report to the Lord Advocate. What our review provides is a wider independent assurance of the operation, systems and processes in place within police Contact, Command and Control centres across Scotland.

The background to this review, the objectives and methodology are outlined within the Terms of Reference,<sup>4</sup> which were published on 22 July 2015. At that time, HMICS committed to providing Scottish Ministers with a full report by the end of October 2015. An Interim Report was published on 3 September 2015.

The Interim Report provided an update on the progress of the review, including a summary of our activities, emerging findings and key areas of interest where further assurance would be sought. At that time, we made one interim recommendation to Police Scotland on the future direction of police Contact, Command and Control centres across Scotland.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice clearly set out expectations of the areas to be reviewed by HMICS, namely:

- the **capacity** of the systems and the human resource available within the control centres to manage, receive, answer and prioritise calls;
- the **capability** of the systems and the suitability of the training provided to those who manage, receive, answer and prioritise calls; and
- the **process** within the control room to ensure that all calls are handled and dispatched appropriately.

We have sought to meet these expectations by objectively assessing the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the processes for call handling within Police Scotland. Our terms of reference also set out that we will examine the underpinning elements of leadership and governance, planning and process, resourcing, training and performance in order to assess daily business, the impact of restructuring to date and the wider change programme.

This is our final report which details our methodology and approach, explains the call handling process and outlines our key findings, conclusions and recommendations for improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> PIRC investigation: death of couple following recovery of car at Bannockburn on 8 July 2015.

<sup>4</sup> HMICS, *Police Scotland – Call Handling: Terms of Reference for HMICS Assurance Review* (2015).



HMICS acknowledges that this review is being undertaken whilst Police Scotland continues to pursue reform on a national level. The complexity and challenge of such change is recognised. We would like to thank Assistant Chief Constable Val Thomson, Chief Superintendent Alan Speirs and their staff for their co-operation and support during this review.

Our review was led by Tina Yule supported by Laura Paton, Justine Menzies, Frank Gallop, John Bainbridge, Paul Unsworth, Sukhbir Singh, Jacqui Rennie, Irene Magill, Emyr Rhys-Jones, Sheila Kelly and Joanne Ross. Executive lead was provided by Derek Penman, HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland.



# Executive summary

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## Introduction

I was directed to carry out this assurance review by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, following the tragic incident involving the deaths of John Yuill and Lamara Bell. He requested that I provide an **independent assessment of the operation, systems and procedures in place in police Contact, Command and Control (C3) centres across Scotland**. In carrying out this review, I have focussed on the capacity, capability and processes within all of the current centres. I have also reviewed the approach taken by Police Scotland in developing its call handling model to assess how key areas of governance, leadership and performance are currently placed to successfully deliver the remaining stages of the C3IR project.<sup>5</sup>

We have conducted an in depth review of call handling within Police Scotland over the past three months. **We have spoken to more staff and conducted more interviews and focus groups than any of our previous reviews**. Our team of inspection staff has been drawn from a diverse range of skills and experience. We launched our first online questionnaire to provide opportunities for the public and other stakeholders to engage in the review process and also completed a statistically significant audit of calls to 999 and 101 numbers. I acknowledge that at the time of our review, **Police Scotland was only part way through the implementation of major change within C3 and pursuing wider policing reform on a national level**. The complexity and challenge of such change is recognised.

## Interim Report

My Interim Report set out one key recommendation that **Police Scotland should consolidate and stabilise its staffing, systems, procedures and processes in both the East and West service centres and area control rooms**. I stated that detailed planning for the previously agreed rationalisation of service centres and control rooms should continue, with consideration given to accelerating the recruitment of staff and early commissioning of the North Area Control Room. However, I also highlighted that the **centres in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee should be maintained and staffed appropriately until the other key elements of the end-state model are fully in place**.

Following publication of our Interim Report, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice made a statement to the Scottish Parliament<sup>6</sup> and committed to providing Police Scotland with an **additional £1.4 million in this current financial year to support the implementation of our recommendation**.

I was clear in my Interim Report that **improved governance and independent assurance processes must be put in place**. This remains a priority for Police Scotland and it has committed to provide the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) with evidence that key elements around people, systems and processes will have been professionally planned, tested and will be ready before the relocation of call handling from the North. Whilst the **SPA and Police Scotland have taken a narrow approach to scrutiny of major change projects**, proposals have recently been developed that should be put in place after the ongoing Review of Police Governance. I believe that my initial recommendation will assist Police

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<sup>5</sup> The Contact, Command and Control Integration and Remodelling (C3IR) project is a staged programme of rationalisation and change across all service centres and control rooms in Scotland, including transfer and relocation of functions, closures and implementation of new processes and ICT systems.

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Parliament Official Report, 3 September 2015, Column 36.



Scotland in strengthening its current call handling model and that it will be better placed to successfully deliver the agreed national model. However, the **SPA should not approve any further stages of the call handling project until it receives independent assurance that Police Scotland is ready.**

### **Assurances and key findings**

In this final report, I have provided a comprehensive assessment of how Police Scotland has designed and implemented its national call handling model. The service has co-operated fully throughout our review and **senior managers have been strongly committed to engaging with inspection staff and acting on any emerging issues** that we identified. I welcome this approach and would like to **acknowledge the progress that has been made by Police Scotland** since our review first started. I have made reference to these developments throughout this report, but would note that I have not yet had the opportunity to fully evaluate their effectiveness and will consider these as part of any follow up to this review.

On the basis of the evidence we have gathered, I can offer some specific assurances and key findings around the current state, effectiveness and efficiency of C3 in Scotland:

**My first assurance is that staff at all levels are committed to providing a good service to the public.** Our audit of calls confirmed that service advisors were polite, helpful and professional, delivered effective customer service and were generally strong at **capturing all relevant information, with a 98% accuracy rate.** Staff told us they wanted more opportunity to be meaningfully engaged in influencing decisions which affected them and to contribute to the development of the service. As with the recently published Police Scotland staff survey, we have found that there is a heavy reliance on email and the intranet as a primary means of communication.

**My second assurance is that staffing levels within C3 are now stabilised.** I found that initial assumptions on C3 staffing levels were limited by a lack of legacy information and there were **insufficient staff in place when work transferred from both Stirling and Glenrothes.** This resulted in low levels of performance. However, Police Scotland has made considerable efforts to address this, with the **full complement of staff now in place across Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen.** This has resulted in grades of service targets currently being met at these locations. **Challenges remain in terms of staffing in the North,** although Police Scotland remains committed to maintaining staff levels until such time as services can be relocated to the new National Virtual Service Centre.

Police Scotland's **overall approach to workforce planning requires to be strengthened to address previous weaknesses in assessing demand and ensuring that sufficient staff are in place at critical stages.** I have already stated in my Interim Report that some staff were under unacceptably high levels of pressure during critical stages of the C3IR project and made clear that improved governance and assurance is required before proceeding with implementation of Stages 5 and 6 (relocation of work from the North).



**My third assurance is that basic processes are in place.** Given that the change process is only part completed, this is to be expected. **However consistency, understanding and definition of these processes all need to develop further.** My interim recommendation highlighted the **need to consolidate and stabilise processes to support a national model of operation** prior to moving forward with implementing any further changes. Quality assurance is also a key process which validates both compliance and accuracy. Although again there are processes in place, **further work is required to implement robust quality assurance processes.** Police Scotland has already received approval to set up a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit for this purpose.

**My fourth assurance is that that the grading, prioritisation and dispatch of officers works well for emergency and high priority calls.** Our online questionnaire tells us that emergency calls are answered quickly with a prompt response from officers. However the handling of **lower priority calls can be affected by a lack of available officers to attend incidents and weak divisional management of these incidents,** particularly in the East. Whilst this issue goes beyond the remit of this review and is an issue for local policing divisions rather than C3, I have commented in my recent report on local policing in Edinburgh on resource challenges.

**My fifth assurance is that risk and vulnerability assessment is strong within the area control room environment,** with ongoing re-evaluation of levels of risk as incidents are dispatched and managed. I have however found that this process **could be strengthened by an increased focus in the service centre environment.** Service advisors rely on their own experience to assess risk and vulnerability and whilst supporting ICT systems provide information and guidance, the **process lacks a more systematic approach.**

**My sixth assurance is that training is in now place for all new staff.** Training in legacy forces varied greatly in duration, coverage and quality. **Further work is required to develop a comprehensive, nationally consistent approach** which also supports ongoing professional development of both police staff and police officers in both the service centre and control room environments. **Police Scotland has begun to address this.**

**My final assurance is that the interim ICT solution in place is generally fit for purpose in terms of basic functionality.** However, **the stability of these systems remains in question while network performance continues to affect day to day operations.** The suitability of the current address 'look up' gazetteer, internal directory and access to other systems were a common source of concern for staff. **Police Scotland has committed to the installation of a new dedicated C3 network** and the procurement of a new suite of ICT systems, as well an improvement in the quality of internal directories. **Service centre staff are able to bypass key ICT systems to support business continuity,** although Police Scotland has recently introduced processes to monitor and manage this. **Police Scotland has effective business continuity planning to respond to ICT system failures or outages.**

There was a **lack of clarity around the strategic vision for the national C3 model, with no alignment to wider policing strategy.** The programme focused on meeting deadlines and increasing productivity and savings at the expense of effective staff engagement and thorough process design. While **Police Scotland has achieved annual savings of £1.8 million in staff costs, it has increased police officer and overtime costs.** Identifying the true costs of the project and exact level of savings has not been possible and there is **no clear framework in place to measure the benefits of the new model.**



## Next steps

We recognise that over the past six months, a more structured approach has been developed to manage 'business as usual' and plan the next stages of the change process for C3. However, the **need to independently assure and scrutinise progress is one of a number of steps which will be required to fully re-establish public confidence in the service.**

**There will always be a level of risk which must be managed in the operation of police call handling.** However, Police Scotland now has it within its power to significantly **improve processes to mitigate against these risks in the future** and has an opportunity to become a class-leading service. Stage 7 of the project and the procurement of new integrated technologies will create opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of call handling across Scotland. However, this is a major undertaking and brings with it many of the challenges faced in previous stages. It is **essential that Police Scotland and the SPA learn from their experience** to date and ensure that robust governance, programme and project management, staff engagement and independent review are core elements of their approach to the delivery of significant and complex change in the future.

Whilst I have been able to provide some key assurances, I have highlighted a number of weaknesses in the approach to the development of the new national C3 Division. **Although Police Scotland and the SPA have already begun to address many of the issues raised, I have made 30 recommendations which I expect to be addressed as a priority.**

As a consequence of this review, **Police Scotland will be asked to produce an action plan with clear timescales for delivering our recommendations.** This action plan should be agreed with the SPA and **subject to regular reporting and public scrutiny at SPA meetings.** HMICS will maintain a close interest and regularly monitor progress against our recommendations.

**I will also undertake a further independent, statistically significant audit of call handling and will schedule this once Police Scotland has implemented Stages 5 and 6 of its project.** Importantly, this audit will allow me to provide an assurance as to whether the new call handling model is providing a quality of service to communities across Scotland.

I remain committed to the improvement of policing across Scotland and supporting the service to further develop, and as such will offer to provide further improvement advice and assurance on call handling to the SPA and Police Scotland.

**Derek Penman QPM**

HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

November 2015

# Key findings

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## Outcomes

- 94.2% of 999 calls are currently answered within 10 seconds in the West. This compares with 93.0% in the North and 91.7% in the East.
- 92.4% of 101 calls are currently answered within 40 seconds in the East. This compares with 91.8% in the West, and 81.7% in the North.
- Calls to 999 fell by 2.4% and calls to 101 fell by 4.6% between 2013-14 and 2014-15.
- Almost 30% of 999 calls made to Police Scotland were an inappropriate use of the emergency service.
- Whilst there were significant issues with poor call handling performance in the East in early 2015, performance has since improved considerably. Performance in the North continues to be variable.
- Whilst there were delays in answering some 999 calls in Bilston Glen between November 2014 and April 2015, this has now been resolved.
- Police Scotland has yet to develop national service standards for contact management although work is ongoing in establishing national systems and processes which will support such standards.
- C3 performance has been regularly reported both internally and externally since April 2015.
- The current C3 performance framework lacks detail on quality of service, cost and outcomes.
- C3 does not currently operate a benchmarking framework or have an overarching improvement plan in place.

## Leadership and governance

- Police Scotland is only part way through a highly complex programme of change which offers the opportunity to develop a class-leading call handling service.
- Police Scotland has sought to maintain a focus on consistent service delivery to the public, common systems and interoperability of systems, but has also focussed on productivity and achieving savings.
- The Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland have taken a narrow approach to the scrutiny of major change projects.
- Governance of the change process has been weak with key risks and project issues not being highlighted through existing structures.
- There is a lack of clarity around the strategic vision for the C3 service, with no alignment to wider policing strategy.
- Police Scotland has yet to develop an overarching customer contact strategy and has not adopted national contact management standards, principles or practice.
- There is no clear framework in place to measure the stated benefits of the new C3 model.



- Some staff occupying key project board roles have limited experience of and training in programme and project management.
- Current arrangements for risk management within the C3IR project and C3 Division are not robust.
- At times, there has been confusion between business as usual and delivery of the C3IR project.

## People

- C3 staff are strongly committed, in often challenging circumstances, to providing a good service to the public. They demonstrate considerable flexibility in their working practices whilst endeavouring to meet call demand.
- Staff across Police Scotland were keen to engage with HMICS during our review with 1,754 officers and police staff responding to our online questionnaire. A further 300 members of C3 staff contributing directly to our fieldwork.
- Staff engagement and consultation by Police Scotland during the C3IR project could have been more effective.
- Initial assumptions on C3 staffing levels were limited by lack of legacy data and comparators.
- There were insufficient staff available in Bilston Glen when work transferred from Stirling and Glenrothes in early 2015, resulting in low levels of performance.
- Consistent training is now in place for all new staff, with the introduction of a 'Training Academy', but further work is required to develop a nationally consistent approach for all staff.
- Staffing levels within C3 have now stabilised with a full complement of staff in the East and West. Performance is now being maintained in these locations. Staffing challenges remain in the North.
- There is accurate demand forecasting and planning in place to inform staffing levels.
- There has been limited use of police officers in service centres to provide cover as a short term measure to address staff shortages.
- Levels of absence within C3 Division are reflective of the average figure for Police Scotland.
- Staff affected by future relocation or closure have been subject to significant uncertainties and some had not received direct wellbeing, redundancy, retirement or employment support.

## Resources

- The decision to implement an interim ICT solution and to delay the procurement of major new technologies reduced the complexities and risk associated with the rollout of the C3IR project.
- The interim ICT solution in place is generally fit for purpose in terms of basic functionality. However, the stability of these systems remains in question: while network performance has improved, this continues to affect day to day operations.
- Business Continuity Planning across C3 sites has been tested regularly, and although still reliant on some legacy force plans, has proven to be well managed and maintains service and performance during periods of down time.



- At a cost of £15m, the procurement and implementation of an integrated suite of new technologies will be critical to the future delivery of call handling and presents an opportunity to improve productivity, realise savings and deliver the full benefits of the project.
- While Police Scotland has already achieved savings of over £1.8 million per annum in staff costs, it has increased police officer and overtime costs.
- Although service centre staff are able to bypass key ICT systems to support business continuity, Police Scotland has recently introduced processes to monitor and manage this.
- The current address 'look up' gazetteer and Police Scotland internal directory do not fully meet operational requirements.
- While there are defined arrangements for ICT governance and testing in place, there was limited awareness amongst some senior managers of C3 ICT issues.
- The C3 approach to information audit is not currently providing the necessary levels of assurance required.
- Identifying the true costs of the C3IR project and exact levels of savings has not been possible.

### **Planning and process**

- Basic call handling processes are in place although consistency, understanding and definition of these processes all need to develop further.
- Currently there are no systematic processes for recording adverse incidents or 'near misses'.
- The lack of investment in process mapping and capturing local variances has been a weakness in the C3 change approach.
- More can be done to support service centre staff in assessing initial risk of calls and vulnerability of callers.
- Grading, prioritisation and dispatch of police officers works well for emergency and high priority calls, but lower priority calls can be affected by a lack of available officers to attend incidents and weak divisional management of these incidents.
- Risk and vulnerability assessment is strong within the area control room environment with ongoing re-evaluation of levels of risk as incidents are dispatched and managed.

### **Audit of police call handling**

- The majority of people who contact the police via 999 and 101 received effective customer service.
- In 96.9% of calls we audited, the service advisors were polite, helpful and professional. Service advisors generally delivered an effective and efficient service in often challenging circumstances, and dealt with calls with patience and empathy.
- Where we found the service advisor not to have been polite, helpful and professional, this was due to the service advisor being impatient, interrupting the caller unnecessarily, failing to ask sufficient follow-up questions or providing poor advice.



- In a few cases, service advisors did not strike an appropriate balance between listening to the caller and capturing all relevant information, and ending the call promptly so the service advisor is available to receive another call.
- The call result was appropriate in 95.1% of the calls we assessed, with service advisors seeking to resolve the caller's query at the first point of contact. Where calls were not resolved appropriately on first contact, additional and unnecessary demand on the service was created.
- There was some inconsistency in the way service advisors responded to similar or the same incidents.
- We listened to several calls where the caller was frustrated that officers had failed to update them on the progress of their case. In a few cases, some callers eventually became unco-operative with the police due to a lack of communication.
- The customer relationship management system was not used consistently across service centres and service advisors. This poses risks to the quality of the data on the system.
- Police Scotland made considerable efforts to trace abandoned or silent 999 calls.
- In 98.0% of the calls we audited that resulted in an incident, the service advisor accurately recorded what was said by the caller.
- The best opening code was used for 96.5% of the incidents we audited and the best closing code for 92.6% of incidents.
- 95.1% of incidents were closed correctly and in accordance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard. This is higher than the compliance rate achieved by Police Scotland in our Crime Audit 2014 (92%).
- While 93.9% of incidents were graded correctly, there was some inconsistency in grading practice across Scotland.



## Recommendations

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### Recommendation 1

Police Scotland should commission further work to identify and reduce failure demand. This should include marketing and public communication around appropriate use of 999 and 101 numbers, targeting high volume callers and working across all Police Scotland divisions and with external partners to reduce demand and improve performance.

### Recommendation 2

Police Scotland should review and identify any learning around 999 call performance that can be taken forward into the planning and governance of Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project. This should include continued proactive engagement with BT to monitor 999 performance immediately prior to and during the implementation of these critical stages.

### Recommendation 3

Police Scotland should develop a balanced performance management framework for C3 Division which aligns to both organisational and divisional strategic objectives. This should include qualitative, cost and outcome measures.

### Recommendation 4

Police Scotland should review and standardise its C3 complaint handling processes as part of Stages 5 and 6 of the C3IR project. This should promote the consistent recording of quality of service issues and focus on identifying learning and improvement.

### Recommendation 5 (*from Interim Report*)

Police Scotland should consolidate and stabilise its staffing, systems, procedures and processes in both the East and West service centres and area control rooms. While this is being progressed, detailed planning for the previously agreed end-state model should continue, with consideration given to accelerating the recruitment of staff and early commissioning of the North Area Control Room in Dundee.

### Recommendation 6

Police Scotland should articulate a clear vision for its Contact, Command and Control (C3) service and develop an overall strategy for customer contact. This should involve engagement with communities and key stakeholders and lead to the publication of standards of service.

### Recommendation 7

Police Scotland should appoint an experienced and qualified programme manager with immediate effect to manage the remaining stages of the C3IR project. It should also ensure that key project board members are appropriately trained and experienced.



### **Recommendation 8**

Police Scotland should continue development of its Contact, Command and Control (C3) leadership and governance arrangements in order to ensure clear delineation and accountability between the C3IR project and 'business as usual'.

### **Recommendation 9**

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should urgently review and strengthen their overall approach to programme governance and establish transparent processes for commissioning independent quality assurance reviews for critical stages of all major projects. This should initially focus on improved governance and scrutiny over the C3IR project and independent quality assurance over Stages 5, 6 and 7.

### **Recommendation 10**

Police Scotland should continue to review its risk management process within C3 Division including a review of existing C3IR project and corporate risks. This should also include the development of a separate 'business as usual' risk register.

### **Recommendation 11**

Police Scotland should strengthen its commitment towards programme and project management and the management of cultural change. It should mainstream its improvement approach into existing project and 'business as usual' planning and review its use of Gold Groups.

### **Recommendation 12**

Police Scotland should develop a workforce planning model which supports the C3 strategic vision and provides an evidence based assessment of required staffing levels.

### **Recommendation 13**

Police Scotland should review the use of staff at the Information Resources Unit for call handling to ensure that effective support and training are in place to maintain skills, awareness and understanding.

### **Recommendation 14**

Police Scotland should develop a training strategy for C3 Division which is supported by an appropriately skilled and resourced single national training unit.

### **Recommendation 15**

Police Scotland should further develop its approach to communication and engagement for the C3IR project and include this as a specific workstream with key deliverables within its implementation plans for Stages 5, 6 and 7.

### **Recommendation 16**

Police Scotland should review the use of ad hoc 'scribble pads' by service advisors within C3 Division and provide definitive guidance on their use, issue and proportionate supervision.



### **Recommendation 17**

Police Scotland should ensure that the new suite of integrated technologies procured under Stage 7 of the C3IR project includes a detailed independently assured specification which supports streamlined national processes, improves compliance and reduces the risk of staff bypassing critical systems. These new systems must also support robust quality assurance processes and audit.

### **Recommendation 18**

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should implement strengthened ICT governance and independent quality assurance reviews for key deliverables within Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project.

### **Recommendation 19**

Police Scotland should engage with the Scottish Government, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service to explore the feasibility and joint development of a bespoke emergency services address gazetteer for Scotland.

### **Recommendation 20**

Police Scotland should implement a robust information audit approach which should include an immediate review of data quality and information security. Functionality and accuracy of the gazetteer and internal directory should be addressed as a priority.

### **Recommendation 21**

Police Scotland should continue to progress the development of a single suite of business continuity plans for C3 Division, replacing remaining legacy site plans.

### **Recommendation 22**

Police Scotland should improve financial management and reporting for the C3IR project. The Scottish Police Authority should consider the level of scrutiny and due diligence applied to change project budgets and projected financial benefits. Identification of explicit savings against project costs (both revenue and capital) should be regularly monitored as part of business case review and overall benefits reporting.

### **Recommendation 23**

Police Scotland should define and document its key processes within C3 Division and update its standard operating procedures. This should be supported with immediate investment in process training and guidance for all existing and new staff.

### **Recommendation 24**

Police Scotland should adopt a more formalised risk and vulnerability assessment model for service advisors, reflecting this in both general and specialised awareness training.

### **Recommendation 25**

Police Scotland should establish a Quality Assurance Framework as soon as possible. This should include regular call audits undertaken by the Quality Assurance Unit and the results shared with the Scottish Police Authority and local policing scrutiny committees.



### **Recommendation 26**

Police Scotland should promote an improvement culture where staff are encouraged to report adverse incidents or 'near misses' and introduce processes as soon as possible where these can be recorded, assessed and any improvement identified and implemented.

### **Recommendation 27**

Police Scotland should ensure there is a clear and consistent vision for the role, responsibilities and resourcing of Public Assistance Desks.

### **Recommendation 28**

Police Scotland should ensure that any changes impacting on the Service Overview function are fully risk assessed and included with the appropriate governance for Stages 5 and 6 of the C3IR project.

### **Recommendation 29**

Police Scotland should include a specific workstream within its Stage 5 and 6 plans of the C3IR project to co-ordinate the collation and transfer of all major incident plans onto a single system and embed processes for their ongoing management. This should also include training for staff in their use.

### **Recommendation 30**

Police Scotland should ensure there is a clear and consistent vision for the role, responsibilities and resourcing of the National Systems Support function.

## Context

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1. Making direct contact with the police can be a major step for the public. Information obtained through such contact fundamentally contributes to providing an effective policing service. Therefore, it is important that all calls are effectively managed and callers' experiences are positive, maintaining public confidence in policing.
2. 999 is the UK telephone number which allows the caller to contact emergency services for urgent assistance.<sup>7</sup> The contract for 999 services is maintained by the UK Government and is currently let to BT.<sup>8</sup> It provides a number of services as part of this contract including the operators who initially answer the calls and transfer them to the relevant emergency services, staying on the line until the call is answered, and being recalled if required.
3. 101 is the UK single non-emergency number for contacting the police and was launched in Scotland in March 2013. The number was launched in England and Wales in 2011. The number is intended to offer the public a single way to contact the police, to report a crime that does not need an emergency response, to get advice, or to speak to a local officer. The new number was also intended to make police more accessible to communities and reduce pressure on the 999 system, as well as helping police to cut crime by making it easier for the public to pass on information.
4. Calls to 101 (from both landlines and mobile networks) cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day, or how long the call lasts. The full cost of the call goes to the telephony providers and no income is received by Police Scotland, or the UK and Scottish Governments. Police Scotland pays a pence per minute rate for every 101 call that it receives. Vodafone currently supply fixed line and mobile services to Police Scotland. This includes wide area network services, connection to the Police National Network, 101 and various other services.
5. The majority of public contact with the police is by telephone through police Contact, Command and Control (C3) centres. These centres receive circa 600,000 emergency (999) calls and 3,600,000 non-emergency (101) calls per annum.<sup>9</sup> As at June 2015, there were 1,427 staff working in Police Scotland's C3 Division, comprising 325 officers and 1,102 staff. The people budget for the division is circa £51.46 million per annum.<sup>10</sup>
6. C3 is a national division and is led by a Chief Superintendent as the divisional commander. An Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) has oversight of the division and is responsible for the national functions of custody, criminal justice and contact, command and control, which all support local policing. The ACC reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) for Local Policing.

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<sup>7</sup> 112 is commonly used as the emergency contact number in the EU and if dialled in the UK, is routed in the same manner as 999.

<sup>8</sup> Level 3 currently provides the 999 service for the rail network.

<sup>9</sup> Police Scotland, *Management information 2014-15*.

<sup>10</sup> Police Scotland, *Contact, Command and Control Proposed Strategic Direction* (paper to the SPA Board, 30 January 2014).



7. Throughout this report, we will use a number of terms which describe the core functions of C3:
  - Service centre: Where calls are received from the public using either 101 or 999. These centres are typically staffed by service advisors. Calls are assessed and decisions are made as to what type of police response is required.
  - National Virtual Service Centre (NVSC): Integrated call handling across a number of different sites, in effect acting as a single service centre for Police Scotland.
  - Area Control Room (ACR): Receives incidents from the service centre and is responsible for the command and control of those incidents which involves dispatching officers on a priority basis to calls and locations.
  - Public Assistance Desk (PAD): Typically located alongside service centres and staffed by police officers. PADs respond to calls from the public which can be dealt with over the phone and which do not need officers to attend. PADs are typically able to initiate crime enquires, providing more specialist advice and support to callers.
  
8. Prior to the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013, all eight legacy forces operated contact, command and control centres. As part of police reform, C3 has undergone and is still undergoing a significant change programme.<sup>11</sup> This has seen the relocation and transfer of work from the following sites:
  - Dumfries – 27 May 2014
  - Stirling – 27 January 2015
  - Glenrothes – 16 March 2015
  - Glasgow Pitt Street – 16 March 2015.
  
9. The new C3 model is currently being implemented and will consist of three operational sites and a systems support base at the following locations:
  - *National Virtual Service Centre* – Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen
  - *West Command Area Control* – Govan and Motherwell combined
  - *East Command Area Control* – Bilston Glen
  - *North Command Area Control* – Dundee
  - *Inverness* – National Systems Support Base for C3.

Across these sites, the following services will be offered: answer emergency 999 and non-emergency 101 calls from members of the public and partner agencies; and provide Police National Computer (PNC) checks and other database checks through public assistance desks (PADs).

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<sup>11</sup> The Strategic Direction approved by the SPA on 30 January 2014 (see note 24) sets out a staged programme of rationalisation and change across all service centres and control rooms in Scotland, including transfer and relocation of functions, closures and implementation of new processes and ICT systems.



10. Work will incrementally transfer from the North by the end of the 2015-16 financial year, with all call handling in the North to transfer to the virtual service centre comprising Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen. Incident management for the North will transfer to the ACR in Dundee, and Inverness will then be established as the new National Systems Support Base for C3 Division.
11. The SPA approved C3 Strategic Direction proposals at its Board meeting on 30 January 2014.<sup>12</sup> There has been continuing oversight of call handling through public updates to the full SPA Board, with other updates provided at relevant stages to the SPA ICT Scrutiny Forum and updates and approvals sought at the SPA Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC).
12. The change programme and the relocation of local C3 centres have prompted interest from local and national politicians and communities and have featured in both local and national media. There has also been more recent parliamentary interest and media reporting regarding concerns over the time taken to answer calls from the public and calls potentially not being answered or responded to. Concerns have been raised by trade unions and staff associations about resourcing levels within service centres to deal with call demand. The morale of staff has also been highlighted.
13. Following discussion of these issues in the Scottish Parliament in March 2015, further assurance was sought from the SPA and Police Scotland regarding the performance at the service centre sites (Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen).
14. Since May 2015, Police Scotland has provided weekly performance reports to the SPA. The SPA subsequently undertakes an assessment of these reports, which are then forwarded on a weekly basis to the Scottish Government.

## Methodology

15. We carried out our inspection between August 2015 and October 2015. We sought evidence from a range of sources including a public online questionnaire; an audit of calls; a review of documents; observation of meetings; and more than 85 interviews and 34 focus groups with police officers and staff, senior management and partners. The statistical and performance data cited in this report was the data available at the time of our review, but it should be noted that performance may have changed since our review took place. The results of our audit of calls and our online questionnaire are included as separate sections of this report (at pages 101 and 115 respectively). Our full methodology is set out in Appendix 1.

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<sup>12</sup> Police Scotland, *Contact, Command and Control Proposed Strategic Direction* (paper to the SPA Board, 30 January 2014).

### Key findings

- 94.2% of 999 calls are currently answered within 10 seconds in the West. This compares with 93.0% in the North and 91.7% in the East.
- 92.4% of 101 calls are currently answered within 40 seconds in the East. This compares with 91.8% in the West, and 81.7% in the North.
- Calls to 999 fell by 2.4% and calls to 101 fell by 4.6% between 2013-14 and 2014-15.
- Almost 30% of 999 calls made to Police Scotland were an inappropriate use of the emergency service.
- Whilst there were significant issues with poor call handling performance in the East in early 2015, performance has since improved considerably. Performance in the North continues to be variable.
- Whilst there were delays in answering some 999 calls in Bilston Glen between November 2014 and April 2015, this has now been resolved.
- Police Scotland has yet to develop national service standards for contact management although work is ongoing in establishing national systems and processes which will support such standards.
- C3 performance has been regularly reported both internally and externally since April 2015.
- The current C3 performance framework lacks detail on quality of service, cost and outcomes.
- C3 does not currently operate a benchmarking framework or have an overarching improvement plan in place.

16. Previous reviews of police call handling<sup>13</sup> have set out the need for national strategy and consistent processes and ICT systems, as well as national performance reporting. The need to create and publish details of the service members of the public can expect, depending on their location, when they call the police is also the subject of an ongoing HMICS recommendation to Police Scotland (see paragraph 106).<sup>14</sup>
17. Present day call handling standards can be traced back to a number of inspection reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) between 2001 and 2007. These reports examined the role of police visibility and accessibility in public reassurance, baseline assessment of policing performance across England and Wales and police contact management. These reports ultimately led to development work led

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<sup>13</sup> Audit Scotland, *Police call management: An initial review* (2007)

<sup>14</sup> HMICS, *Review of legacy inspection recommendations* (2014).



by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) including national standards for incident recording, a national contact management strategy, and national contact management principles and practice. These documents are still considered as best practice across the majority of forces.<sup>15</sup>

18. However, Police Scotland has as yet to develop national service standards and work is still ongoing in establishing national systems and processes which will support such standards.

## Performance management

Table 1 – Police Scotland 999 and 101 statistics

|  | 2013-14   | 2014-15   | 2015-16 YTD |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Total 999 calls received</b>  | 512,859   | 500,306   | 248,745     |
| <b>Total 101 calls received</b>  | 3,321,390 | 3,168,181 | 1,565,906   |
| <b>Incidents recorded</b>  | 1,732,302 | 1,653,314 | 839,216     |
| <b>Crimes recorded</b>   | 230,369   | 218,550   | 130,450     |
| <b>Abandoned calls</b>   | 139,057   | N/A*      | 52,538      |
| <i>* Police Scotland unable to provide abandoned call figure for East due to lack of complete annual statistics from Bilston Glen.</i> |           |           |             |

19. During 2013-14, Police Scotland received 512,859 calls for service via the 999 emergency system. This number of calls fell to 500,306 in 2014-15, a reduction of 2.4%. BT estimates that it filters between 45-50% of 999 calls before being transferred to emergency services.
20. In 2013-14, Police Scotland also received 3,321,390 calls via the 101 non-emergency system, which fell to 3,168,181 in 2014-15, a reduction of 4.6%. The number of calls for assistance which were recorded as an incident has been consistent over the last two years with 45.2% in 2013-14 and 45.1% in 2014-15.
21. The number of crimes being recorded as a proportion of incidents has been consistent over the last two years with 13.3% in 2013-14 and 13.2% in 2014-15.
22. In 2013-14, 4.2% of 101 calls were discontinued before a service advisor could answer however this figure cannot be accurately determined for 2014-15 due to integration and remodelling changes. The latest data provided by Police Scotland shows 3.4% of 101 calls were discontinued.

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<sup>15</sup> National Policing Improvement Agency and Association of Chief Police Officers, *National Contact Management Principles and Practice* (2012).



Table 2 – Police Scotland regional 999 and 101 performance

**2013-14**

|                             | <b>West</b> | <b>East</b> | <b>North</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>999 Received</b>         | 252,800     | 161,566     | 98,493       |
| <b>999 Grade of Service</b> | 98.1%       | 94.9%       | 94.1%        |
| <b>101 Received</b>         | 1,291,177   | 1,133,433   | 896,780      |
| <b>101 Grade of Service</b> | 91.0%       | 90.7%       | 80.6%        |

**2014-15**

|                             | <b>West</b> | <b>East</b> | <b>North</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>999 Received</b>         | 235,394     | 165,002     | 99,910       |
| <b>999 Grade of Service</b> | 94.3%       | 91.1%       | 93.9%        |
| <b>101 Received</b>         | 1,324,102   | 1,042,661   | 801,418      |
| <b>101 Grade of Service</b> | 81.9%       | N/A*        | 80.8%        |

\* Police Scotland unable to provide 101 Grade of Service figure for East due to lack of complete annual statistics from Bilston Glen.

**April-September 2015**

|                             | <b>West</b> | <b>East</b> | <b>North</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>999 Received</b>         | 118,053     | 81,838      | 48,854       |
| <b>999 Grade of Service</b> | 94.2%       | 91.7%       | 93.0%        |
| <b>101 Received</b>         | 710,405     | 481,680     | 373,821      |
| <b>101 Grade of Service</b> | 91.8%       | 92.4%       | 81.7%        |

23. These figures show that the 999 grade of service fell in 2014-15 compared to the previous year with a reduction of 3.8% in both the East and West and 0.2% in the North. While grade of service has improved to date in the East by 0.6%, it has fallen by a further 0.1% in the West and by 0.9% in the North.
24. These figures also show that the 101 grade of service fell in 2014-15 compared to the previous year with reduction of 9.1% in the West. There was a slight improvement by 0.2% in the North. Police Scotland has been unable to provide data for the East in 2014-15. In the six months between April and September 2015, grade of service has improved to 91.8% in the West, which reflects only a marginal 0.8% increase since 2013-14. Grade of service has also improved in the North by 0.9% to 81.7%. In the East, grade of service is 92.4%, improving by 1.7% since 2013-14.
25. Performance in the North is a combined figure for Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. It is worth noting that performance is variable across these three sites. This represents a grade of service in the six months between April and September 2015, of 70% in Dundee, 85% in Aberdeen and 90% in Inverness.



26. The time taken to answer a call is calculated from the point where it is physically possible to answer the call and speak to the caller. This means that for 101 calls, the time to answer is taken from the point where the call has passed through all of the touch tone options in use (*'Press 2 for Custody Enquiry, 3 for Lost Property etc...'*) and is placed in the queue waiting to be answered. When a 101 call is going through the touch tone options, it is not possible to answer and speak to the caller until they have made their selection.
27. Touch tone is the name given to providing the menu options for 101 call routing as the caller has to touch one of the numbers on the keypad of their phone which in turn produces a tone that is recognised by the system and used to route the call. Measures have been taken on how long it takes for a call to go through the touch tone and it has been found to be no more than 35-40 seconds. Calls also spend a minimum of 25 seconds routing through the 101 system before they are presented to the service centres. This time is consistent across the whole of the UK as the script used is nationally agreed.
28. Force targets<sup>16</sup> for both 101 (non-emergency) and 999 (emergency) calls are currently being met across the main C3 sites in Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen. These figures have improved over the past months and continue to show they have stabilised.
29. HMICS notes that there were significant issues with poor performance in the East in early 2015. These issues have since been addressed and performance has now stabilised. Performance in the North continues to be variable. HMICS acknowledges that a number of mechanisms have been put in place by Police Scotland to support call handling in the North, but pressure of call demand on remaining staff remains unacceptably high, often affecting call performance.
30. Police Scotland currently reports a range of performance indicators which focus around call handling. Internally, statistics are produced both daily and weekly for consideration by C3 senior management. They are also now supplied on a weekly basis to the SPA and copied to the Scottish Government. C3 Division has also been publishing monthly call handling information since April 2015 on the Police Scotland website.<sup>17</sup>
31. We observed a number of daily and weekly meetings where performance was openly discussed and reviewed. The current reporting framework includes for each grade (1 to 3), by local policing division:
  - number of incidents
  - number of incidents achieving grade of service
  - percentage of calls achieving grade of service<sup>18</sup>
  - average incident handling time\*

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<sup>16</sup> Police Scotland Grade of Service Targets are 90% of 101 (non-emergency) calls answered within 40 seconds and 90% of 999 (emergency) calls answered within 10 seconds. These targets were originally set by ACPO(S) prior to the creation of Police Scotland.

<sup>17</sup> Police Scotland, [Management Information: Call Handling Reports](#).

<sup>18</sup> Grade of Service is the percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds or the percentage of 101 calls answered within 40 seconds.

- average dispatch time
- average resource deployment\*
- overall response time\*
- only numbers of incidents are shown for Grade 4 and Grade 5 calls.

*\* not fully available in Tayside Division due to legacy ICT recording system*

32. The report also provides the following call handling statistics:

- calls received
- calls discontinued
- calls discontinued after 120 seconds
- average time to answer
- longest wait time
- grade of service.

33. The content of reporting has recently developed further to include demand forecasting of the number of calls on a daily basis. This is represented graphically and demonstrates that forecasting (which allows prediction of numbers of staff required to meet call demand) is accurate. Further statistical and performance information is also being developed on the incident management process including PAD measurement, deferred incidents and the managed call appointment system.

34. Real time performance information is available to supervisory staff to monitor performance of individual service advisors as well as average call handling times. The Resource Management system provides this functionality and is used alongside quality assurance of individual operators' performance (see paragraph 361).

35. Outwith C3 Division, performance is reported to the monthly Police Scotland internal Tasking and Performance Board meeting chaired by the DCC (Local Policing). The SPA also considers a force-wide public performance report at each of its Board meetings, the format of which has recently been revised. The report does not currently contain performance measures on call handling stating that this is dependent on ICT uniformity and C3 rationalisation and that data is expected from January 2016.

36. There has been performance oversight of C3 by the SPA since May 2015 through weekly reporting. The weekly performance summaries are in respect of call handling within the East and West service centres. The reports also provide a summary of absence levels and provide day by day data and measures for each centre for both 101 and 999 calls. The SPA in turn scrutinises the report provided by Police Scotland on call response, grade of service and absence information, producing a summary report for the Scottish Government. Any queries regarding the content are raised with the C3 divisional commander. Copies of both reports are forwarded to the Scottish Government. These reports show over the months from May to August 2015, a significant reduction in calls discontinued at Bilston Glen and a substantial improvement in grade of service.

37. Eliminating all 'failure demand' is essential to understanding and managing demand, as well as improving performance. This relates to contact which is not relevant, avoidable or generated through a previous failure to meet customer need. We have evidenced such failures through our call audit, online questionnaire and other fieldwork. Failure demand can typically include (i) misuse of 999; (ii) additional demand



on the 101 service caused by repeat callers; (iii) follow up calls due to lack of response; and (iv) volume use of these numbers by partner agencies or other police departments. While Police Scotland has already recognised these issues, we believe that it should commission further work to identify and reduce failure demand. This should include ongoing marketing and public communication around appropriate use of 999 and 101 numbers, targeting high volume callers and working with other Police Scotland divisions and external partners to reduce demand and improve performance.

### **Recommendation 1**

Police Scotland should commission further work to identify and reduce failure demand. This should include marketing and public communication around appropriate use of 999 and 101 numbers, targeting high volume callers and working across all Police Scotland divisions and with external partners to reduce demand and improve performance.

### **999 performance**

38. Recent performance reporting shows a consistent level of performance for emergency calls achieving between a 91% and 94% grade of service, with call answer time averaging around four seconds. We have also established that 999 calls cannot be 'lost' in the system unless the caller themselves hangs up. In our call audit, we established that considerable efforts are made to trace abandoned or silent 999 calls, with multiple calls and visits made to ensure that all is well. We also established through our audit of calls that only 70.3% of calls made to 999 were an appropriate use of the service.
39. All 999 calls are routed via BT, which is under contract to the UK Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) to provide 999 services.<sup>19</sup> As part of its quality assurance processes, BT monitors the number of 'long delays' noted by BT operators when connecting 999 calls to Emergency Authorities (EAs). A long delay is defined as a wait of two minutes or more for the Emergency Authority to answer. These figures are indicative only as they are recorded manually by BT operators.
40. If an EA has over 50 delays recorded in a month or a sudden, out of the ordinary delay event on any particular day, BT will contact them to identify issues, understand what contingencies can be applied and what the timescales are for an improvement in performance.
41. In relation to Police Scotland, BT identified delays in November 2014. The table below shows the number of delays recorded for Police Scotland by BT operators. Figures for June and July 2015 have been included to show comparative delay, but it should be noted that BT would not normally keep historic records of these delays as they fall below 20 registered in the month.

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<sup>19</sup> Level 3 currently provides the 999 service for the rail network.



Table 3 – Police Scotland Monthly 999 Delays

|             |                 | Oct-14            | Nov-14 | Dec-14 | Jan-15 | Feb-15 | Mar-15 | Apr-15 | May-15 | Jun-15 | Jul-15 |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>East</b> | Delays          | 41                | 51     | 46     | 63     | 109    | 92     | 104    | 27     | 4      | 16     |
|             | Total 999 calls | 9,516             | 9,282  | 8,250  | 9,130  | 9,860  | 13,293 | 14,496 | 14,033 | 12,956 | 12,719 |
|             | %               | 0.43%             | 0.55%  | 0.56%  | 0.69%  | 1.11%  | 0.69%  | 0.72%  | 0.19%  | 0.03%  | 0.13%  |
| <b>West</b> | Delays          | No data available |        |        |        |        |        | 24     | 2      | 4      | 7      |
|             | Total 999 calls | No data available |        |        |        |        |        | 20,043 | 18,997 | 19,167 | 19,477 |
|             | %               | No data available |        |        |        |        |        | 0.12%  | 0.01%  | 0.02%  | 0.04%  |

42. BT made contact with Police Scotland in early November 2014 and provided examples of delayed calls. The issue was dealt with internally by C3 Division and email communication continued between BT and Police Scotland regarding delay issues. In February 2015, BT escalated the issue to the 999 Emergency Authority and Government Relationship Manager – UK North. Police Scotland was contacted via email, and the issue was also discussed at the ‘999 Issues in Scotland Group’ with C3 representatives.
43. Regular communication continued via email between BT and Police Scotland regarding the delay issue until it was resolved and delays were again below 50 per month with the issue being closed by BT on 3 June 2015. BT continue to monitor the performance of Police Scotland, as with all Emergency Authorities, in relation to any delay in answer of 999/112 calls. 999 performance has continued to improve since that time. BT has confirmed that there have been no further delay issues with Police Scotland for some months now, with monthly delay figures consistently under 50. BT has noted that the delay issue occurred for only a short time and only twice reached 100, which compares favourably with many other Emergency Authorities across the UK.
44. HMICS notes that the issues with 999 delays were most acute within Bilston Glen between January and April 2015, which coincided with the time that Stirling and Glenrothes service centres were closed. This also coincided with other performance issues within Bilston Glen that are largely attributed to insufficient staff numbers and ICT performance (see paragraph 163). HMICS has established that despite the obvious risks associated with 999 call taking at the critical stages of relocating services from both Stirling and Glenrothes, we could not find any evidence of this being raised at the C3 Project Board or other executive level governance forum.
45. Police Scotland should take the opportunity to formally review the 999 delay issues within Bilston Glen between November 2014 and April 2015 and satisfy itself that any learning has been taken forward into the planning and governance of Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project. This is particularly relevant given that 999 calls will be re-routed into the National Virtual Service Centre after the transfer of work from the Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee service centres. Police Scotland has proactively engaged with

BT to monitor 999 performance immediately prior to and during the transfer of Dumfries, Stirling and Glenrothes sites.

## Recommendation 2

Police Scotland should review and identify any learning around 999 call performance that can be taken forward into the planning and governance of Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project. This should include continued proactive engagement with BT to monitor 999 performance immediately prior to and during the implementation of these critical stages.

## Benchmarking

46. Whilst Police Scotland does not currently operate a benchmarking framework, C3 Division undertook some initial data analysis and visited a number of larger forces in England and Wales as part of the development of its Strategic Direction and in order to better inform practice.
47. HMICS benchmarking work has compared a number of indicators across legacy forces, large forces in England and Wales as well as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Ambulance Service. The data used was for 2013-14 and 2014-15. Our benchmarking has been constrained by the lack of qualitative, response and cost indicators available from Police Scotland.
48. Comparison with the eight legacy Scottish forces shows that in 2012-13:
  - 561,750 999 calls were received
  - the Scottish average was 96% of 999 calls being answered in 10 seconds
  - 3,229,383 non-emergency calls were received
  - the Scottish average was 91% of non-emergency calls being answered in 40 seconds
  - between 56% and 95% of non-emergency calls were responded to within target time (only six of the eight forces had targets in place).
49. Performance in these and other areas of policing was published for six years between 2007-08 and 2012-13 by the Scottish Government.<sup>20</sup> Further details are included at Appendix 2. Police Scotland has highlighted that the published legacy national data for C3 was collated from disparate systems and processes and considers them to be incomparable. HMICS acknowledges this position and has commented on the difficulties experienced by Police Scotland in obtaining accurate and reliable data to inform workforce planning and demand management for the C3IR project (see paragraph 157).

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<sup>20</sup> Scottish Government, *Scottish Police Performance Framework – 2009-13*.



50. Key findings from our benchmarking work correlate with our fieldwork findings and include:
  - Police Scotland deal with a below average number of calls per head of population than large forces in England and Wales, primarily due to population density and geographical variances.
  - Police Scotland is operating on a cost per call average well below the average in other large forces elsewhere.
  - Police Scotland continues to maintain the high pre-reform 999 performance levels compared to the eight legacy forces.
  - In relation to 101, comparison between current and past performance is challenging due to disparities in non-emergency call data.
51. During 2013-14 and 2014-15, both the North and East service centres were still operating a much wider range of services than those provided in the West, however we also found that:
  - the number of calls dealt with on a per FTE basis in the North is very high, reflecting their resource shortages
  - service advisors in the East have a relatively high workload (calls per FTE) and they do not perform as well as in other areas or forces, potentially reflecting recent resource shortages and difficulties in taking on new processes.

### **User satisfaction**

52. Police Scotland has conducted User Satisfaction Surveys since October 2013. The results are reported monthly to the Force Tasking and Performance Board. C3 Division undertakes a large number of these surveys on behalf of the force, with a number of surveys allocated to each supervisor and PAD to complete every month. However, the results of the survey are of limited value to C3 Division itself.
53. Staff told us they felt under pressure to complete the required numbers of surveys during the period of acknowledged resource shortages. Police Scotland was aware of this and instructed that surveys be conducted during shift handovers.
54. Police Scotland notes in its management reporting that it assumes that the primary method by which the public make contact with the police is through service centres. The public are requested to assess:
  - What was your level of satisfaction with the way you were treated when you first contacted the police?
  - What was your overall level of satisfaction with the service you received when you first contacted the police?
55. Satisfaction remains very high with the force year-to-date figure in August 2015 remaining in excess of 90% for both questions.



56. However, due to the relatively broad nature of these questions, and the many different ways in which the public can still contact the police (e.g. face to face with an officer or in a public office), C3 is unable to use this exclusively as a measure of satisfaction. It may be helpful to Police Scotland to introduce an initial question that identified the specific way in which the public made initial contact. At present, C3 does not undertake any specific call back system or measurement of satisfaction.
57. In our local policing inspection of Ayrshire Division, we stated that public confidence and satisfaction are key measures of success for Police Scotland.<sup>21</sup> Whilst consistent data collection methodologies across Scotland were welcomed, we noted that direct contact with service users by the service provider may not be the best means of accurately assessing confidence and satisfaction and, in the interest of transparency, we remain of the view that independent surveys provide a better means of obtaining valid and reliable levels of satisfaction and confidence.

### Performance culture

58. HMICS has found a strong focus on efficiency and productivity within C3 Division, with a focus on quantitative measures relating to call handling. Whilst this is relatively common within a service centre environment, there are no qualitative or cost indicators currently measured or reported. This has resulted in performance driven behaviours being emphasised and valued e.g. shorter call handling times and minimising non-call taking time.
59. At the time of our review, most service centres had screens visible to all staff displaying real time performance information. Police Scotland has since decided that these screens will display briefing information for staff rather than performance information. HMICS welcomes this development.
60. Service advisors told us they had limited awareness of specific performance targets with many unable to explain the relevance of statistics displayed on screens. There is an awareness that there are grades of service which specify the times within which calls of different types need to be answered, however none of the service advisors who were asked knew exactly what those times actually were. The majority of service advisors did feel they were continually being pressed to answer calls more quickly and keep calls shorter.
61. Current reporting to the SPA focuses on quantitative measures with some analysis of staff absence levels. Senior management take their primary assurance from this limited set of measures. HMICS was unable to secure qualitative, cost or outcome measures from C3 at the time of our review.
62. HMICS has considered other performance management frameworks in use within the call handling environment and would expect that a balanced scorecard of indicators should be in place reflecting each key stage of the C3 process:
  - Quality – reflecting quality of service, customer focus and user satisfaction
  - Utilisation – reflecting resource utilisation, including costs and staffing
  - Attrition – level of call losses, abandoned and demand failure
  - Timeliness – call answer, dispatch and response time, call lengths etc.

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<sup>21</sup> HMICS, *Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015).



Police Scotland may wish to consider these areas in the further development of its own framework.

63. As noted in paragraph 97, the Strategic Direction for C3 and the C3 performance framework do not align or clearly link to the overarching Police Scotland or local policing performance frameworks. HMICS views that C3 is focussed on a retrospective quantitative set of performance measures as opposed to a forward looking risk based performance view.

### **Recommendation 3**

Police Scotland should develop a balanced performance management framework for C3 Division which aligns to both organisational and divisional strategic objectives. This should include qualitative, cost and outcome measures.

### **Improvement**

64. At the time of our review, the division had no overarching improvement plan, although the Strategic Action Plan from the service centre Gold Group provides an indication as to activity which has been undertaken to address key issues since April 2015. The rationale and subsequent impact for each action is not fully documented.
65. The division has commissioned a number of internal reviews of the ongoing validity of the Strategic Direction and impact of previous stages. HMICS heard that these reviews were discussed at senior management level but cannot identify any specific actions which were taken as a result.
66. Police Scotland does not systematically employ peer or independent review processes and does not currently have a formally adopted position on the use of self-evaluation for improvement.
67. In our fieldwork, we found limited evidence of feedback loops in terms of communication and engagement with no evidence of formal evaluation of the effectiveness of such mechanisms. There has been limited focus on identifying good practice and innovation, with the immediate priority being process standardisation.
68. We have also identified in this report that there is no benchmarking framework in use (paragraph 46) and no adverse incident process (paragraph 371). Both of these processes serve to provide a focus for improvement and ensuring that any weaknesses are addressed. In the absence of a national approach to quality assurance, which is now being addressed, this currently exposes the division to risk. HMICS has made specific recommendations elsewhere within this report in relation to adverse incidents (Recommendation 26), quality assurance (Recommendations 9, 17 and 18) and performance management frameworks (Recommendation 3).

### **Complaints**

69. Complaints provide key indicators of public satisfaction and confidence in policing and should be used to directly inform improvement. Complaints which relate specifically to the conduct of officers or staff are categorised as a complaint about the police. Quality of service allegations are about the organisation and relate to policing policy, practice or procedure. HMICS considers that quality of service complaints add particular value in terms of C3 and provide opportunities to identify weaknesses and drive improvement. Police Scotland should develop a culture where staff are encouraged to



capture quality of service issues and have confidence that the organisation will focus its attention on improvement and not individual staff culpability.

- 70. Overall responsibility for monitoring and scrutinising the complaints process nationally rests with the SPA, through its Complaints and Conduct Committee.<sup>22</sup> Complaints data is also routinely monitored within Police Scotland at divisional and national level.
- 71. At the time of our review, only 2014-15 full year complaints data was available for C3 Division.<sup>23</sup> No comparison was available for previous years, so trends could not be identified. C3 data from 2013-14 was included in data for all specialist services (including custody, operational support, specialist crime and corporate functions) and could not be disaggregated.

Table 4 – C3 Complaints data<sup>24</sup>

|                                   | 2014-15   | April-Sept 2015 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Number of calls received          | 3,668,487 | 1,508,146       |
| Number of complaints              | 245       | 184             |
| Number of allegations             | 301       | 214             |
| % of complaints of calls received | 0.006%    | 0.008%          |
| % upheld or ongoing allegations   | 35.5%     | 13.08%          |

- 72. HMICS has undertaken informal comparison of complaints data with some other UK forces. While there are different recording practices, this would seem to provide reassurance to Police Scotland that complaint allegations as a percentage of total calls at a force level is not significantly different from some of the other forces in England and Wales.

#### Recommendation 4

Police Scotland should review and standardise its C3 complaint handling processes as part of Stages 5 and 6 of the C3IR project. This should promote the consistent recording of quality of service issues and focus on identifying learning and improvement.

<sup>22</sup> Copies of reports to the Complaints and Conduct Committee are available on the SPA [website](#).

<sup>23</sup> Complaints data extracted from [Complaints about the police – statistical return](#) (report to SPA Complaints and Conduct Committee, 11 May 2015).

<sup>24</sup> The Police Scotland process for dealing with complaints changed in 2014 to direct all public feedback to Professional Standards immediately. Prior to this, divisions managed first line resolution of complaints. It should be noted that the figures above only show feedback recorded with Professional Standards and not those resolved by C3 at first point resolution prior to October 2014 when the process changed. Data source: Police Scotland Professional Standards Unit as supplied to SPA.

### Key findings

- Police Scotland is only part way through a highly complex programme of change which offers the opportunity to develop a class-leading call handling service.
- Police Scotland has sought to maintain a focus on consistent service delivery to the public, common systems and interoperability of systems, but has also focussed on productivity and achieving savings.
- The Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland have taken a narrow approach to the scrutiny of major change projects.
- Governance of the change process has been weak with key risks and project issues not being highlighted through existing structures.
- There is a lack of clarity around the strategic vision for the C3 service, with no alignment to wider policing strategy.
- Police Scotland has yet to develop an overarching customer contact strategy and has not adopted national contact management standards, principles or practice.
- There is no clear framework in place to measure the stated benefits of the new C3 model.
- Some staff occupying key project board roles have limited experience of and training in programme and project management.
- Current arrangements for risk management within the C3IR project and C3 Division are not robust.
- At times, there has been confusion between business as usual and delivery of the C3IR project.

73. HMICS recognises that Police Scotland is still only part way through a highly complex change process in C3 Division and has therefore taken into account both its experience to date as well as its current position in order to further comment on its future plans. HMICS acknowledges that this review is being undertaken whilst Police Scotland continues to pursue organisational reform on a national level.
74. The C3 Integration and Remodelling (C3IR) project<sup>25</sup> is highly complex with a high level of interdependency and associated levels of risk. Police Scotland has inherited eight sets of ICT systems, business processes, and terms and conditions of employment, and there are disparate views on what constitutes the optimum national model. This represents a hugely challenging undertaking in a service which is critical to the public and the organisation as a whole. Police Scotland has already achieved rationalisation in relation to five legacy force areas.

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<sup>25</sup> The Contact, Command and Control Integration and Remodelling (C3IR) project is a staged programme of rationalisation and change across all service centres and control rooms in Scotland, including transfer and relocation of functions, closures and implementation of new processes and ICT systems.



75. The project represents both a major change in the business model, but also a major cultural change, with the expected challenges that this level of uncertainty brings. Police Scotland has evidenced a commitment to both maintaining operational service and delivering this change project throughout our review and has demonstrated a renewed focus and strengthened approach in the past months.

### **Outline business case for police reform**

76. The outline business case (OBC) for police reform was published by the Scottish Government in September 2011.<sup>26</sup> The OBC contains minimal information on the future operation of C3 and does not explicitly set out the detail for proposed integration and remodelling. However, it does state that control rooms would be targeted for delivery on a regional basis. These functions were classified under 'Dealing with the Public' and included customer contact, control rooms (dispatch) and front desk. The OBC identified a potential 25% saving across these functions of £18m associated with rationalisation, streamlining and economies of scale. The OBC also highlights that at that time major ICT projects were underway to deliver national systems for human resources, duty management, and national command and control.

### **Dealing with the Public reform workstream**

77. An internal Strategic Proposal<sup>27</sup> for the 'Dealing with the Public' (DWP) reform workstream was developed in October 2012. This proposal recommended the development of a business case as a next step. It also recommended that the following strategic objectives were endorsed as the basis for subsequent DWP activity and evaluation of options:

- Service Centre Benefits of Scale – Police Scotland will derive benefits of scale by joining service centres together and challenging performance across this business area as a whole.
- Maximise Service Centre Sector 'Value Added' – Police Scotland will improve service delivery to the public and improve productivity by maximising the value added by service centres.
- Enhanced Control Centres – Police Scotland will integrate control rooms as necessary to enhance operational interworking, access to service and improve performance.
- Investing In Our People – Police Scotland will undertake a sector specific review of our future requirements for people within this business area. This will lead to the development of a sector specific people strategy.
- Develop 'Policing Direct' Service – Police Scotland will, whenever possible and reasonable to do so, seek to resolve calls at first contact with officers being available to provide police services directly by phone or other communications media.
- Develop Citizen Centred Digital Strategy – Police Scotland will as a priority deploy the proven and modern ICT systems necessary to deliver citizen centred services, improve productivity, enhance interworking and support transformation of this business area.

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<sup>26</sup> Scottish Government, [Police reform: outline business case](#) (September 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Internal Police Scotland document provided as evidence.



- Quick Wins - The Dealing with the Public business area will at the earliest stage exploit the opportunities created by the introduction of the national business area to develop specific proposals capable of delivering benefit in the short term.
78. These objectives were supported by a number of design aims derived from the objectives of police reform and detailed within the document.
79. The report acknowledges a trend of decreasing call demand in Scotland, which counters the trend elsewhere in the UK. It also notes that other forces have 'absorbed' new non-call handling work – a factor not included by Police Scotland in its current model, but which will be addressed as part of the final stages of the C3IR project.
80. HMICS endorses the overall approach and objectives set out in the DWP report which focuses on service delivery to the public. The emphasis on both balanced workforce and managing demand reduction on front line resources are to be commended and it is disappointing that many of the key elements of the proposal were not taken forward into the Strategic Direction.
81. Importantly in this proposal, the potential savings target was halved from the OBC estimates to £8.6 million per annum. The proposal noted that cost reduction targets could be achieved, albeit timescales were very challenging and savings would depend on investment in order to generate the efficiencies necessary to offset the proposed reduction in police staff numbers.

### **Strategic Direction for Contact, Command and Control**

82. The C3 Strategic Direction<sup>28</sup> is the primary document used by Police Scotland to articulate its C3 model. This document was approved by the SPA at its Board meeting on 30 January 2014 and sets out the basis for many of the assumptions and decisions made. A conscious decision was made by Police Scotland not to develop a full business case at this stage due to the unknown number of staff who may choose to leave the service and uncertainty over exact costs of property works and a new ICT solution. HMICS views this as a reasonable approach and notes that a number of reviews have taken place to assess the ongoing validity of the direction adopted.
83. The benefits and savings to be realised following adoption of the preferred C3 model are associated with the wider benefits of police reform as well as those specific to the C3IR project. The benefits were outlined by Police Scotland as:
- improving the response to 999 and 101 calls
  - introducing systems to better assess vulnerability at first point of contact
  - fully integrating the command and control of officers nationally
  - ensuring that the nearest/most suitable resources respond to incidents
  - increasing capability to meet the demands of responding to critical and major incidents, irrespective of location.

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<sup>28</sup> Police Scotland, *Contact, Command and Control Proposed Strategic Direction* (paper to the SPA Board, 30 January 2014).



84. At this stage, the C3IR project estimated the overall release of between 155 and 212 police staff posts with savings of between £4.28 million and £5.88 million per annum. Recurring annual ICT savings of circa £905K were also anticipated as a result of rationalisation and modernisation of supporting C3 ICT systems and infrastructure, as well as associated (as yet undetermined) savings from the subsequent release of police buildings. We note that the level of savings reduced at each stage of the development of the C3 proposals and will make further comment in the Financial Resources section of this report.

85. The C3 Strategic Direction also set out a revised set of eight design objectives:

- maximise operational effectiveness
- improve service delivery to the public
- enhance operational resilience
- significantly reduce operating costs
- minimise impact on our people
- implement a single national operating model
- minimise the cost of change
- consider partnership opportunities

These design objectives were subsequently used by Police Scotland as criteria for options appraisal and are broadly aligned with accepted best value criteria of stakeholder acceptability, feasibility of implementation and affordability.

86. The C3 Strategic Direction stated that a number of options for change were examined. These ranged from maintaining the status quo through to the replacement of all sites with new green field facilities. It noted that options at either end of the spectrum were quickly eliminated as they failed to meet the design objectives. Only three options were evaluated against these objectives:

- Option 1 – Retention of existing sites with existing ICT systems augmented by the Command and Control system
- Option 2 – Integration of existing sites using new C3 technologies
- Option 3 – Virtual Service Centre – with fewer larger integrated area control rooms and service centres

Based on this internal evaluation, Option 3 was selected by Police Scotland as the proposed strategic direction for implementation.

87. HMICS has publicly stated that our primary interest in C3 was service delivery and ensuring that communities and front line staff receive an equivalent or improved service from new call handling structures. In our joint submission with Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) to the Justice Sub-Committee on policing in August 2014, we recognised the need to rationalise legacy call handling structures in terms of police and fire reform to deliver efficiency and operational effectiveness.<sup>29</sup> We also stated in this submission and in our Annual Report published in December 2014<sup>30</sup> that

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<sup>29</sup> HMICS, & HMFSI, *Written submission from HMICS and HMFSI* (submission to Scottish Parliament Justice Committee for consideration on 19 August 2014).

<sup>30</sup> HMICS, *Annual Report 2013-14*.



it was a matter for Police Scotland and the SPA to determine the optimum structures for C3 and inform their decisions through appropriate business cases and implementation plans. The approval of the Strategic Direction and the selected option for delivery was a key stage in this process.

### **Preferred model for service centres**

88. Police Scotland adopted a virtual service centre model (Option 3) based on public and private sector best practice, involving fewer large service centres integrated through the use of ICT and operating as a single 'virtual' centre. This arrangement is intended to improve cost effectiveness and ease of implementation of new C3 technologies. It should be noted that the specific benefits attributed to this model included systems to allow staff to better assess caller needs and identify vulnerabilities, as well as potentially offering a real time police response via email, SMS, Web Chat and social media.
89. In selecting sites to form the virtual service centre, much emphasis was placed on the West, where 42% of all 999 and 101 calls in Scotland were already being handled.<sup>31</sup> It is also stated that the preferred business processes and ICT systems were already being operated in this area, which already enabled the Govan and Motherwell service centres to operate in a virtualised arrangement. Modelling conducted by Police Scotland indicated that with the addition of one further large facility, all calls could be managed effectively. This site was identified as Bilston Glen in the former Lothian and Borders Police area, the second largest service centre in Scotland.
90. This meant that the three sites in Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen would be retained as the new National Virtual Service Centre (NVSC) and the other service centre sites in Scotland would be closed. It is acknowledged in the C3 Strategic Direction document that staffing levels would need to be increased across the National Virtual Service Centre sites to meet national call demand, however overall C3 staff numbers across Scotland would be reduced.

### **Preferred model for area control rooms**

91. The C3 Strategic Direction document proposed a five site model for area control rooms (ACRs) across Scotland in order to provide a control room facility in each of the East, West and North territorial areas as well as providing a national command centre which will provide the facility for conducting national database and intelligence checks in Inverness.
92. The five selected sites were Govan and Motherwell (West), Bilston Glen (East), Dundee (North) and Inverness (National Systems Support Base).
93. Public Assistance Desk (PAD) facilities were to remain in place as an interim contingency to help maintain service delivery in the short term.

### **Implementation of the C3 Strategic Direction**

94. The C3IR project was initiated in May 2013. The C3 Strategic Direction secured approval for a sequence of implementation including seven project stages which would be accompanied by the agreed statutory consultation process with staff. The table below sets out the timetable.

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<sup>31</sup> Source: Police Scotland.



Table 5 – C3IR project delivery timeline

| Stage | Scope   | Planned timescales  | Actual timescales |
|-------|---|---|-------------------|
| 1     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transfer of Dumfries ACR to Pitt Street, Glasgow</li> <li>■ Transfer of Dumfries service centre to Govan</li> </ul>  | April/May 2014  | 27 May 2014       |
| 2     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full integration of systems and procedures across Govan, Pitt Street, Motherwell and Bilston Glen ACRs/SCs</li> <li>■ Remodelling of call management within Bilston Glen, including removal of switchboard</li> </ul>  | End of September 2014                                       | End January 2015  |
| 2A    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduction of the Automatic Call Director (ACD) telephony and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to the service centre at Bilston Glen from which point the service centres at Bilston Glen, Pitt St, Govan and Motherwell were all operating from the same linked ICT system as a National Virtual Service Centre.</li> </ul> | End of September 2014                                       | 27 October 2014   |
| 2B    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Command and Control system installed across Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders and all of the West divisions i.e. service centres and area control rooms in the West and the East all operating on the same incident logging system.</li> </ul>  | End of September 2014                                       | 20 January 2015   |
| 3     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transfer of service centre and Area Control Room services from Stirling to Bilston Glen allowing the closure of the Stirling Service Centre and Area Control Room.</li> <li>■ Introduction of new shift system for the service centre at Bilston Glen</li> </ul>   | By end December 2014  | 27 January 2015   |
| 4A    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Closure of Pitt Street and transfer of Area Control Room services to Govan.</li> </ul>   | By end March 2015   | 16 March 2015     |
| 4B    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transfer of service centre and Area Control Room services from Glenrothes to Bilston Glen allowing the closure of the Glenrothes Service Centre and Area Control Room.</li> </ul>  | By end March 2015   | 17 March 2015     |
| 5     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relocation of Inverness ACR to Dundee</li> <li>■ Inverness SC function to National Virtual Service Centre</li> <li>■ Inverness control function retained as satellite ACR including provision of national PNC, database enquiry and event support</li> </ul>   | End of September 2015<br><i>Now forecast end March 2016</i> | Not yet delivered |
| 6     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relocation of the Aberdeen ACR function to Dundee, and Aberdeen service centre into the National Virtual Service Centre</li> </ul>   | End of December 2015<br><i>Now forecast end March 2016</i>  | Not yet delivered |
| 7     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Programme of procurement and roll-out of new supporting ICT systems</li> </ul>   | End of June 2016  | Not yet delivered |



95. In our Interim Report, we recommended that detailed planning for the previously agreed end-state model should continue in terms of Stage 5 and Stage 6 of this plan. However, we were clear that a decision to proceed with the implementation of these stages was dependent on achieving consolidation and stabilisation of staffing, ICT systems, procedures and processes in both the East and West service centres and area control rooms. HMICS also specified a number of other requirements which had to be in place prior to implementing these stages including independent assurance and enhanced governance and scrutiny. We made only one formal recommendation in our Interim Report, which has been carried forward into this report:

#### **Recommendation 5** *(from Interim Report)*

Police Scotland should consolidate and stabilise its staffing, systems, procedures and processes in both the East and West service centres and area control rooms. While this is being progressed, detailed planning for the previously agreed end-state model should continue, with consideration given to accelerating the recruitment of staff and early commissioning of the North Area Control Room in Dundee.

96. Following publication of our Interim Report, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice made a statement to the Scottish Parliament<sup>32</sup> and provided Police Scotland with an additional £1.4 million in this current financial year to accelerate the recruitment of new staff. Police Scotland has committed to implementing our recommendation and we have commented where appropriate in the relevant sections throughout this report. It has also provided updates on progress to the SPA, most recently having submitted a paper to a public Board meeting on 27 October 2015.

#### **Alignment with strategy**

97. The C3 Strategic Direction does not fully align with policing strategic objectives or the annual police plan other than brief references to ‘keeping people safe’ and linkages with wider police reform objectives. The only supporting strategies referenced within the document are from the DWP proposals and relate to the development of a Citizen Centred Digital Strategy and a sector specific People Strategy, although no such strategies have been put in place. No overarching customer contact strategy has been developed for the national service. HMICS can find no evidence of any specific strategic analysis or strategic risk assessment for the C3 Division or formal adoption of the national contact management standards, principles and practice (see paragraphs 17-18).
98. This lack of strategic context and clearly defined strategic and operational objectives for the C3IR project has led to a degree of confusion for members of staff, police officers and senior managers within the division. The evidential basis for the Strategic Direction approved in January 2014 was limited due to the variable quality and accuracy of data from legacy forces and limitations on the availability of benchmarking information. HMICS considers this situation has constrained a full understanding of the rationale for the adopted model and what exactly it is expected to deliver.

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<sup>32</sup> Scottish Parliament Official Report, 3 September 2015, Column 36.



99. Although the level of detail presented in the Strategic Direction document was limited and does not constitute a full business case, Police Scotland has been able to demonstrate that more detailed supporting information was available, but not widely shared. No evidence can be found of systematic engagement with the public or members of staff in developing the proposals or evaluating the adopted model. This is because Police Scotland decided when the project was initiated that there was no requirement to consult as the fundamental way that the public communicated with the police was not changing. This correlates with a limited focus in the proposals on customer expectations and experience.
100. The relationship between benefits of reform, high level business change principles, operational benefits and project benefits are set out in the C3 Strategic Direction document and are present in the C3IR project initiation document. Beyond that, at a more detailed level, the relationship between strategic intentions, key performance indicators, benefits realisation and risk management is not clear.
101. The Police Scotland corporate approach to programme management has had an impact on C3 delivery in that projects are defined at a high level with a number of subordinate workstreams. Consequently, benefits and risks are also defined at a high level. While there is a balance to be struck, the absence of specific and defined project infrastructure around key pieces of work with a disciplined approach to benefits analysis, links to performance measurement, benefits evaluation and related risk management is a key area for improvement.
102. There has been an emphasis on cost saving and productivity in the project and a focus on a narrow set of performance indicators which do not reflect the complete set of objectives as set out in the Strategic Direction or the high level benefits as set out in the project initiation document. The relationship between the project benefits realisation plan, the C3 suite of performance indicators and risk management plans is not clear. This makes effective scrutiny difficult, although HMICS acknowledges that Police Scotland is improving governance and risk management in order to support effective challenge.
103. The sequential approach to planning set out in the Strategic Direction document does not promote a cohesive approach to implementation which reflects an understanding of key dependencies. The initial two-year implementation timeframe was based on a number of assumptions which have subsequently proven to be challenging to implement, such as the adoption of a set of business processes in areas where fundamental differences exist in working practices, processes and culture.
104. The successful implementation of C3IR is a critical element in the delivery of front line policing and is a key enabler in bringing together Police Scotland after reorganisation. The current approach relies on an interim technical solution which extends the use of existing technology used in the West to other sites. While this is seen as a legitimate approach (see paragraph 243), and some benefits have already been delivered, the ultimate benefits realisation from this programme will rely to a large extent on the successful procurement and adoption of a new suite of technology (Stage 7).



## Quality of service and user focus

105. In 2007, Audit Scotland published a report on police call management.<sup>33</sup> While this report is historic, it highlighted a significant increase in call volumes over the previous decade. At that time, the eight legacy forces had variable arrangements for call handling and the need for more consistent and high quality services was highlighted. Information on call handling was inconsistent and it was difficult to provide a national picture to assess performance. Recording practices and ICT systems varied, matching skilled resources to meet demand was a key issue and no national strategy or standards existed. The public however were largely satisfied with how the police handled their calls but less satisfied with how the police kept them informed about the issue they called about.
106. Although HMICS has not undertaken a thematic inspection of the call handling process or the command and control environment, there has been a degree of coverage across a number of our reports including Best Value Joint Inspections. In 2008, HMICS published *Quality of service and feedback to users of police services in Scotland*.<sup>34</sup> This inspection looked at the way police forces in Scotland engage with, and provide feedback to, members of the public who call the police. This included all requests for service, not just reports of crime. It examined the policies, practices and procedures which legacy forces had in place to:
- negotiate the type of police response to the call
  - inform callers of police action taken in response to the call, once this has been completed (i.e. provide *feedback*)
  - assess callers' levels of satisfaction with the feedback they receive.

Our 2008 report made seven recommendations to the Scottish Government and the eight legacy forces. Two recommendations remained open as of 1 April 2013.

107. In our review of legacy inspection recommendations published in 2014, we did not consider that these had been effectively discharged, partly due to the formation of a single service.<sup>35</sup> We therefore made a new recommendation that Police Scotland should *'create and publish details of the service that members of the public can expect to receive when they call the police. This should be supported by clear internal guidance, which focuses on quality of service. Police Scotland should also develop and publish performance information on how these service standards are being met.'*
108. HMICS considers that Police Scotland has the opportunity for setting call handling within an overall policing strategic context and to develop a class-leading service. Police Scotland has not yet articulated a clear vision for the call handling service it wishes to deliver to the public and how it wishes to support policing delivery across Scotland. There is a need to establish clear standards of service within an overall strategy including a customer charter and internal business planning and guidance as referenced in our previous recommendation.

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<sup>33</sup> Audit Scotland, *Police call management: An initial review* (2007).

<sup>34</sup> HMICS, *Quality of service and feedback to users of police services in Scotland* (2008).

<sup>35</sup> HMICS, *Review of legacy inspection recommendations* (2014), see context section.



109. HMICS recognises that Police Scotland is still part way through a complex change process, and a fully consistent level of service will not be achieved across Scotland until this is complete. However, HMICS recognises this will improve as further stages of the C3IR change project rolls out. Both C3 and local policing divisions will require to work closely in the delivery of a unified vision and development of such national standards. We have therefore consolidated our previous recommendation into the following:

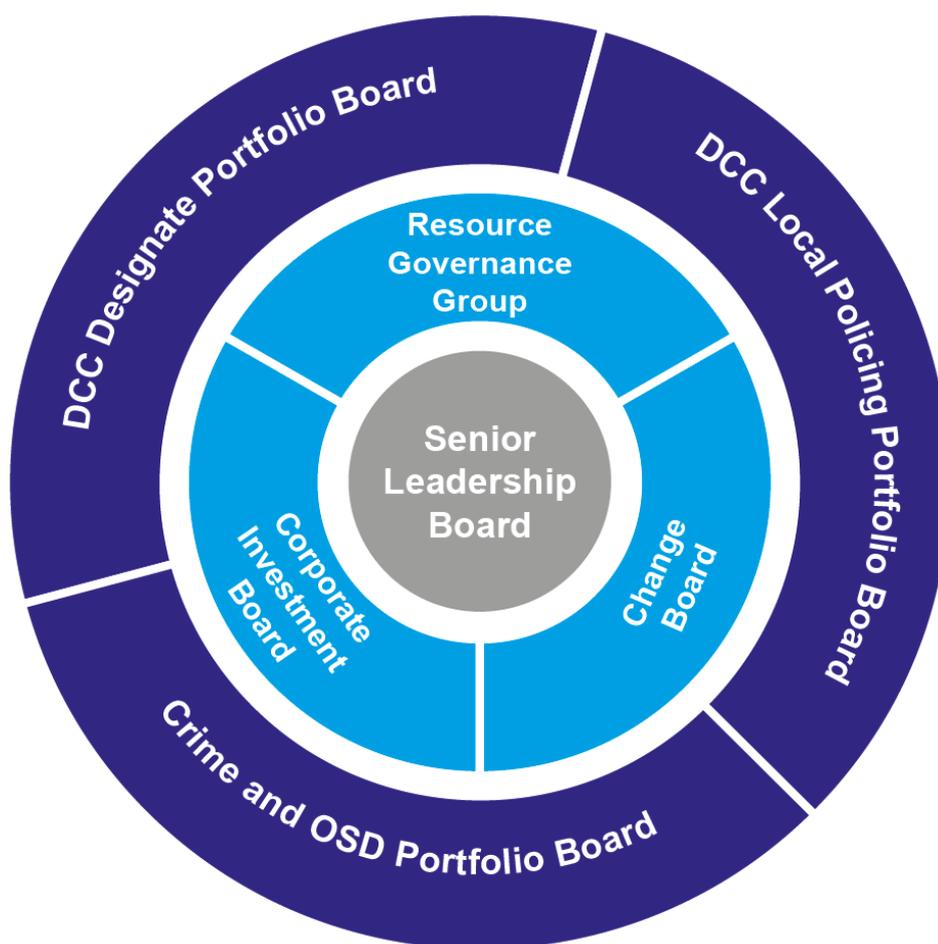
### Recommendation 6

Police Scotland should articulate a clear vision for its Contact, Command and Control (C3) service and develop an overall strategy for customer contact. This should involve engagement with communities and key stakeholders and lead to the publication of standards of service.

### Corporate governance and accountability

110. Within Police Scotland, the corporate governance framework has been under review for some time, although the majority of management meetings, groups and boards were established at the start of the new service. Figure 1 represents the core elements of the framework.

Figure 1 – Police Scotland Corporate Governance Framework





111. Despite the existence of this Corporate Governance Framework, HMICS considers that the authorising environment for C3 within Police Scotland is unclear. C3IR Project Board agendas and minutes clearly demonstrate that key decisions were taken outwith the Board at a variety of forums, with no consistency in approach. Key reports were considered at various forums including the Senior Leadership Board (SLB), Senior Management Team (SMT) and Star Chamber<sup>36</sup> during the course of project development and implementation.
112. The corporate Change Board approved the original C3IR project brief and project initiation document, however only limited information was reported thereafter as part of monthly monitoring. Similarly limited information was presented to the DCC Local Policing Programme Board where C3 projects were reported.
113. This variable approach to corporate governance within Police Scotland causes uncertainty for change projects and often results in over-reporting and an associated administrative burden. Our analysis shows that many forums include the same senior managers and that reports may be tabled in order to secure their approval, whether appropriate to remit or otherwise. Many C3IR decisions remain unminuted or subject to a single entry in an action log.
114. In terms of the SPA, reporting has been systematic at each stage of the C3IR project to the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC) on the staff consultation process and related issues. This reporting process appears to have become a proxy for reporting to the full Board, to which formal reporting was limited until April 2015. Informal briefings have however been regularly undertaken at SPA members meetings and meetings of the SPA Change and Improvement Board, which are held in private. HMICS considers that the SPA and Police Scotland have taken a narrow approach to the initial scrutiny of C3IR and other major change projects, by concentrating on statutory consultation with police staff, rather than a broader focus on all aspects of such a major change. However, the SPA has recently reviewed its governance structures as part of its ongoing improvement plan<sup>37</sup> and has developed proposals to address this. A Strategic Development and Transformation Forum will be introduced to scrutinise and govern major transformation projects such as C3. These new structures will not be confirmed until completion of the SPA Governance of Policing Review,<sup>38</sup> however interim arrangements are now in place. HMICS will maintain an interest in these developments as part of our ongoing scrutiny activity.
115. A project plan has been in place since the start of the project, although this is now only maintained at a high level. Individual stage plans have been underpinned by up to nine supporting workstream plans. Individual plans also exist for each site where estate works are taking place. HMICS considers that the format and quality of these plans is variable.

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<sup>36</sup> As part of the identification of financial savings with associated business change projects, a weekly meeting was instituted at senior leadership level to process proposals. This was replaced with a standing Finance and Investment Board as part of the Police Scotland revised corporate governance framework.

<sup>37</sup> See HMICS, [Terms of Reference – Continuous Improvement Review of Scottish Police Authority Leadership and Governance](#) (2014).

<sup>38</sup> SPA, [SPA welcomes Programme for Government](#) (1 September 2015).



116. The C3IR Project Board has been meeting since May 2013. This Board was originally chaired by an ACC from outwith C3 designated as the Project Executive. Under this model, project resourcing plans for 20-25 staff were submitted on the basis that 'business as usual' and the project should be separately and independently resourced. A risk register was initiated but not fully populated. Proposals for a project user group and a communications plan were also considered. A conscious decision was taken not to involve local policing divisions on the Project Board, but to engage them as a key stakeholder. HMICS considers it would have been helpful if they had been involved at this early stage.
117. Chairing of the Board reverted to the C3 ACC in August 2013. Membership of this Board was limited to local policing, C3 Division, Criminal Justice Division, ICT, Organisational Development, HR and Finance. This limits the level of scrutiny and challenge which can take place at this forum. External scrutiny is provided by the SPA Board, with specific issues subject to further external scrutiny at the HRRC, Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC), SPA ICT Scrutiny Forum and Finance and Investment Committee. However, HMICS notes that no independent reviews were commissioned for the C3IR project. This would have significantly enhanced the level of assurance afforded to both Police Scotland and the SPA, especially at key stages of the project.
118. The C3IR Project Board reports via the DCC Local Policing Programme Board and in turn through the corporate Change Board to the SLB. It is clear that key risks, issues and project variances were not highlighted effectively or addressed through this governance structure. The corporate role of the Organisational Development function and Programme Office<sup>39</sup> is to provide some oversight, assurance and reporting on the whole of the change programme within Police Scotland and support the management of interdependencies. The Programme Office has not recognised key issues in the delivery of this project.
119. The Project Board agenda is inconsistent and often ignores key areas of governance such as risk management. HMICS considers that the quality of project documentation is variable and decisions are often undocumented or missing from minutes, or lack a clearly documented rationale.

### **Programme management**

120. In December 2012, the then Cabinet Secretary directed HMICS to carry out an inquiry into the Common Performance Management Platform Project to draw out lessons to inform the future successful delivery of police ICT and, more generally, police projects and programmes. The report highlighted key learning for both SPA and Police Scotland.<sup>40</sup> The report made four recommendations which HMICS considers to be relevant to the governance of the C3 project:
  - Project timelines should be dictated by sound business planning processes that have been subject to due diligence and not dictated by the availability of funding streams.

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<sup>39</sup> Programme Office is a group or function within an organisation that defines and maintains standards for programme and/or project management. It will usually collate and monitor progress reporting and provide assurance as to overall levels of risk, cost and progress against plans.

<sup>40</sup> HMICS, *Review of the Common Performance Management Platform Project* (2013).



- The use of Scottish Government Gateway Reviews for complex policing projects or programmes should become standard and embedded within SPA/Police Scotland policy. Programme and project boards should have to evidence reasons for not using this process.
  - Programme and project management should be recognised as specific skills sets to rank alongside other specialisms. In particular this should be reflected in the establishment of a selected cadre of staff who are trained and practised in programme and project management; a head or lead role for programme and project management should be identified; and shared corporate standards for programme, project and risk management.
  - The establishment of a future prioritised programme of ICT investment with clear governance structures and definitions must be set within the context of a national police ICT strategy and also within the wider Scottish public sector ICT framework.
121. The difference between programme management and project management is not always well understood. A programme is made up of a specific set of related projects identified by an organisation that together will deliver some defined objective, or set of objectives, for the organisation. The objectives, or goals, of the programme are typically at a strategic level so that the organisation can achieve benefits and improvements in its business operation.
122. There is a close link between programme management and project management because a programme is made up of projects and is only successful if the projects within it succeed. The concept of a programme is that it should deliver more than the 'sum of its parts'. In other words, without programme management, the projects would probably still be able to deliver their particular outcomes but these would not be co-ordinated or integrated into the achievement of a strategic business goal.
123. As part of delivering the major programme of change required in Police Scotland, the corporate Change Board elected to have a 'Single Portfolio of Change' with three distinct programmes. These programmes related to the portfolios held by each of the DCCs. This approach was intended to provide clear reporting lines and consistency of language in order to deliver a shared understanding of the Change Portfolio.
124. This decision was consistent with the delivery of the police reform programme where there were three designated overarching programmes with multiple supporting projects. Therefore C3IR was defined as a project (with multiple stages) rather than a programme, in spite of it being made up of multiple projects.
125. HMICS considers that this decision has fundamentally influenced both the design and delivery of the C3IR project. Project management methodology has been used to deliver a staged implementation plan, which has placed a focus on single deliverables at each stage to the exclusion of an integrated and overarching approach to the management of change and interdependencies.
126. Without a clear programme management methodology in place to manage change and deliver multiple projects, inevitably a reactive tactical approach will result, where decisions are less likely to reflect an appreciation of wider risk and impact assessments. Programme management would also have necessitated an ongoing direct engagement and communication approach with all staff affected by the change. Police Scotland has under-estimated this need for engagement other than through



general communications and statutory consultation processes with staff 'at risk' at each stage of implementation (see paragraph 114).

127. There is limited detail available on the scope of each of the key roles within the project. Although some project personnel have experience of using PRINCE methodology, few have any experience of programme methodologies such as MSP.<sup>41</sup> Project roles have therefore been confused and lacking in definition with no single individual fully qualified or identified as overall project or programme manager. While Police Scotland has now identified a Programme Lead Officer and work is currently ongoing to harmonise all areas of project work, HMICS considers there is an urgent requirement for an experienced and qualified programme manager to manage the delivery of the remaining stages of the C3IR project. HMICS notes that some of the staff occupying key project board roles have limited experience of and training in programme and project management. We consider that these staff should be appropriately trained and experienced.

### **Recommendation 7**

Police Scotland should appoint an experienced and qualified programme manager with immediate effect to manage the remaining stages of the C3IR project. It should also ensure that key project board members are appropriately trained and experienced.

128. HMICS found confusion and 'blurring' of the roles and responsibilities between the project and business as usual (delivering the day to day business of C3). At the time of our review, many managers expressed concern that they had been fulfilling dual roles and conducting what they perceived as work which was not aligned to their core role, whether it be project-based or C3 operationally based. Opposing views were expressed by senior managers as to what constituted project responsibility as opposed to business as usual. Police Scotland has now taken steps to improve clarity of roles for senior managers and has created a new post of Superintendent (Business Change) to address these issues.

### **Recommendation 8**

Police Scotland should continue development of its Contact, Command and Control (C3) leadership and governance arrangements in order to ensure clear delineation and accountability between the C3IR project and 'business as usual'.

129. The C3IR project is highly complex with a high level of interdependency and associated levels of risk. HMICS considers that Police Scotland had underestimated the change management challenge and the need to recruit appropriately skilled project/programme managers and effectively co-ordinate such activity, and this has weakened the overall governance and effective delivery of C3IR to date.

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<sup>41</sup> PRINCE2 (an acronym for PRojects IN Controlled Environments, version 2) is a project management methodology. PRINCE2 is a certification program for practitioners in the methodology who are accredited, qualified through training. Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) was developed as a best practice guide on Programme Management. The guide comprises a set of Principles and a set of Processes for use when managing a programme.



130. This has not been the case with the i6<sup>42</sup> programme, which has been the subject of higher standards of governance and ongoing scrutiny by both the SPA and the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee. Unlike i6, it is significant that the C3IR project has had no independent assurance or (gateway) review process at key milestones or benefited from a validated quality assurance plan. As previously stated, HMICS believes that independent reviews would have significantly enhanced the level of assurance afforded to both Police Scotland and the SPA at key stages of the C3IR project (see paragraph 120).
131. We have previously noted<sup>43</sup> that Police Scotland used our review of the common performance 'Platform' project, alongside the recommendations of Audit Scotland<sup>44</sup> to undertake a self-assessment and quality assurance review of its approach to i6. This was to ensure that previously identified lessons around governance had been factored in to the new programme risk assessment. This approach does not appear to have been taken in C3IR.
132. HMICS recognises that C3IR is only one of a number of critical change projects within Police Scotland. We consider that more robust governance arrangements are needed within both Police Scotland and the SPA to provide the necessary controls, manage dependencies, track benefits and co-ordinate independent assurance across its wider transformation programme. There is an urgent need for both Police Scotland and the SPA to review and strengthen its overall approach to programme governance and establish transparent processes for commissioning independent quality assurance reviews for critical stages of all major projects. This should initially focus on strengthened governance and scrutiny over C3IR and the commissioning of independent quality assurance over the remaining key stages. The HMICS Interim Report recommendation has already set out the requirement for more formal scrutiny and assurance of C3IR to be put in place.

### Recommendation 9

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should urgently review and strengthen their overall approach to programme governance and establish transparent processes for commissioning independent quality assurance reviews for critical stages of all major projects. This should initially focus on improved governance and scrutiny over the C3IR project and independent quality assurance over Stages 5, 6 and 7.

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<sup>42</sup> i6 is the new integrated national police ICT system which will be implemented in 2016. It covers six key policing areas, representing approximately 80% of core service delivery and includes crime, criminal justice, custody, missing persons, vulnerable persons and productions/lost and found property.

<sup>43</sup> HMICS, *Annual Report 2013-14*.

<sup>44</sup> Audit Scotland, *Managing ICT contracts: An audit of three public sector programmes* (2012).



## Risk management

133. The complexity of the C3IR project, and the inevitable consequences of change, means that events or situations will arise which may adversely affect its delivery and realisation of benefits. Risks require positive management to reduce their likelihood and impact. The role of the Project Board is to ensure that the exposure to risk is maintained at an acceptable level. HMICS recognises it is never possible to remove all risks, as some will remain beyond the influence of Police Scotland. However, it is expected that risk management will be formally incorporated in both project standards and approach.
134. HMICS has identified that risk management has been weak from the outset of the C3IR project. Some high level risks were identified in the project initiation document and the current project risk register does identify a range of risks in a standard well-presented format which is regularly updated. However, there is no attempt to further analyse risk at strategic and operational levels or further classify them, which would provide a greater understanding of the current level of risk being managed.
135. The Project Board does not routinely scrutinise risk on its agendas and the minutes do not demonstrate a review of the effectiveness of mitigation actions. There is evidence that risks have been removed from the register by the Project Board without proper assessment or rationale being fully documented.
136. At present, C3 Division has no divisional business as usual risk register. Reliance has been placed on the project risk register to date. Only two C3-related risks have been escalated to the Police Scotland Risk Register, which is regularly scrutinised by the SPA. Police Scotland has also noted that current resource restrictions within the C3 Divisional Co-ordination Unit have constrained its ability to develop a full register.
137. A new C3 Business Change and Co-ordination Unit (BCCU) has now been set up principally to co-ordinate the delivery of the C3IR project with the recently appointed C3 Project Manager being the senior member of the unit. The unit was set up in September 2015 and is based at C3 Govan. The initial focus for the BCCU to date has been on the following areas:
  - project plan
  - project governance
  - project resources
  - risk.

The BCCU also retains oversight of wider business change within the division with a clear focus upon governance and communication. HMICS does not view the current arrangements for risk management within the C3IR project or the division as robust. However, HMICS acknowledges that this unit has now begun to co-ordinate the management of risk.

### Recommendation 10

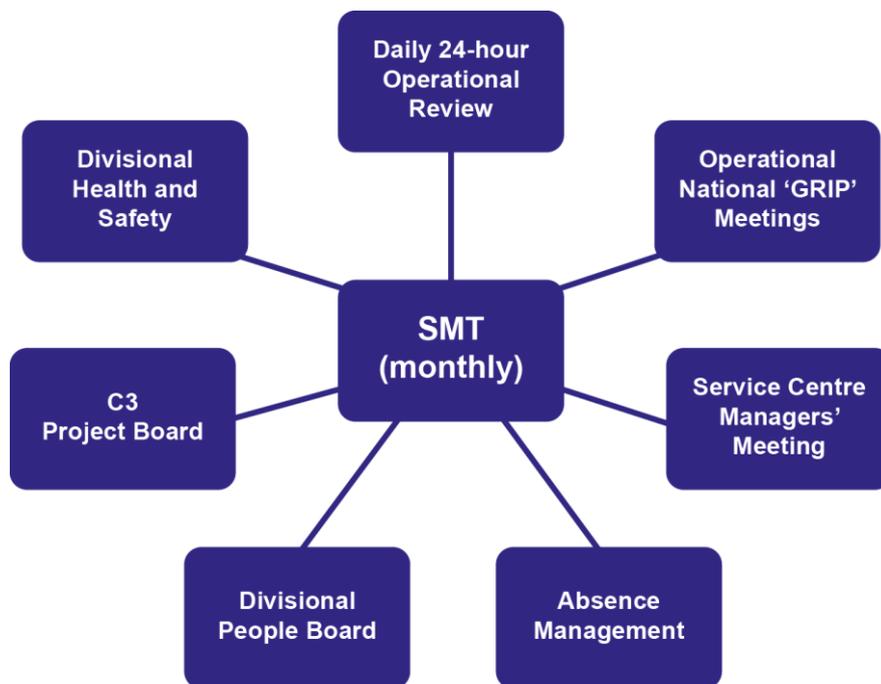
Police Scotland should continue to review its risk management process within C3 Division including a review of existing C3IR project and corporate risks. This should also include the development of a separate 'business as usual' risk register.



### Business as usual

138. Internal governance within the C3 Division has recently improved. The figure below demonstrates the extent of internal groups and meetings which take place daily, weekly and monthly in varying cycles with involvement from staff. HMICS has observed a number of these meetings and is content that they are subject to structured agendas, are well attended and chaired.

Figure 2 – C3 Division internal governance structure



139. HMICS acknowledges that leadership visibility within the C3 Division is challenging, with a number of staff we spoke with highlighting infrequent contact with senior leaders, particularly outwith Govan and Bilston Glen. This is to some extent understandable, given the large numbers of C3 staff working in locations across Scotland and the existence of variable shift patterns. We found that the expectations of staff also varied across the country, with some drawing comparisons with the more frequent contact with senior leaders that was possible under legacy arrangements. Despite this, there was evidence of a strong personal commitment by both the ACC and Chief Superintendent to regularly visit all C3 locations and engage with staff. Visibility of local management seemed inconsistent, with some members of staff reporting no engagement at all, whilst others reported that they have regular contact with managers.

140. Senior members of staff within C3 Division are committed to delivering against the Strategic Direction document. While they have a clear focus on implementing a consistent service across Scotland, minimising the risk to the public and staff, this has led to less emphasis on managing cultural change. Similarly, a transactional and reactive style has also emerged in dealing with risks and issues, resulting in a concentration on workaround solutions and an over-reliance on quantitative performance data (see paragraph 144).



141. Changes in leadership have taken place at both ACC and Chief Superintendent level within the division, including the planned absence of the then Chief Superintendent between January and April 2015. Although the ACC remained in post throughout this period, Police Scotland appointed a temporary divisional commander who had a key role in the C3IR project to provide consistency of leadership. However, HMICS considers that Police Scotland should have strengthened its project governance and sought greater assurance over the delivery of key milestones and the impact of significant change during this critical stage.
142. Since the appointment of a new Chief Superintendent in late April 2015, an improving approach to staff communication and engagement has been evidenced. Similarly a revised approach to performance reporting has also been introduced. A Gold Group<sup>45</sup> was also set up, with wide stakeholder representation, to deal with and support specific call taking performance issues and their causes within the division.
143. The Gold Group model is typically applied to a 'critical incident' which is defined in guidance<sup>46</sup> as:
- 'Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community'.*
144. Whilst HMICS supports the establishment of a 'Gold Group' in response to incidents which fall within the above definition, it considers that this may not always be appropriate to address broader corporate issues. HMICS is aware of the frequent use of Gold Groups across Police Scotland and would caution against this becoming the preferred leadership response to issues which could be more proportionately addressed through existing governance or business as usual structures. HMICS considers that this 'critical incident' approach can encourage more reactive decision making and has the potential to circumvent formal project governance. This creates a risk where 'short-term fixes' are considered outwith the scope of any wider project or improvement plan. The use of decision and action logs is also a feature of this approach and leads to the creation of an additional document set that is not readily visible to project boards and their management of risks.
145. HMICS considers that issues associated with staff engagement, performance and resourcing could have been dealt with under the C3IR project, given the likely solutions were intrinsically linked to project deliverables such as people, processes and technology. These issues require a less transactional and more transformational leadership style and approach to governance.
146. The Chief Superintendent has recently closed this Gold Group and introduced a 'Shaping the Future' Board, whose remit will include addressing consolidation and process issues highlighted in the HMICS Interim Report.

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<sup>45</sup> The formal command structure known as Gold, Silver and Bronze is sometimes referred to as the strategic, tactical and operational model. This can be applied to both spontaneous incidents as well as planned events. The structure provides for the delivery of a strategic, tactical and operational response to an incident or operation. See National Policing Improvement Agency, *Guidance on Command and Control* (2009).

<sup>46</sup> National Policing Improvement Agency, *Practice advice on critical incident management* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2011).



147. Ensuring appropriate governance and accountability mechanisms are in place for business as usual, as well as programme, project and risk management, is fundamental to successful delivery of change and realisation of benefits. HMICS has found weaknesses in the way Police Scotland has approached the implementation of the new division and its approach to change. C3 Division has already recognised many of these issues but Police Scotland as a whole requires to reconsider its approach. In particular, it should place greater emphasis and value on programme and project management and strengthen its commitment to managing cultural change.
148. We consider that Police Scotland has an over reliance on critical incident management as the preferred leadership response to performance and governance challenges. It should mainstream its improvement approach into existing project and business as usual planning and take an early opportunity to review its current use of Gold Groups.

### **Recommendation 11**

Police Scotland should strengthen its commitment towards programme and project management and the management of cultural change. It should mainstream its improvement approach into existing project and 'business as usual' planning and review its use of Gold Groups.

### Key findings

- C3 staff are strongly committed, in often challenging circumstances, to providing a good service to the public. They demonstrate considerable flexibility in their working practices whilst endeavouring to meet call demand.
- Staff across Police Scotland were keen to engage with HMICS during our review with 1,754 officers and police staff responding to our online questionnaire. A further 300 members of C3 staff contributed directly to our fieldwork.
- Staff engagement and consultation by Police Scotland during the C3IR project could have been more effective.
- Initial assumptions on C3 staffing levels were limited by a lack of legacy data and comparators.
- There were insufficient staff available in Bilston Glen when work transferred from Stirling and Glenrothes in early 2015, resulting in low levels of performance.
- Consistent training is now in place for all new staff, with the introduction of a 'Training Academy', but further work is required to develop a nationally consistent approach for all staff.
- Staffing levels within C3 have now stabilised with a full complement of staff in the East and West. Performance is now being maintained in these locations. Staffing challenges remain in the North.
- There is accurate demand forecasting and planning in place to inform staffing levels.
- There has been limited use of police officers in service centres to provide cover as a short term measure to address staff shortages.
- Levels of absence within C3 Division are reflective of the average figure for Police Scotland.
- Staff affected by future relocation or closure have been subject to significant uncertainties and some had not received direct wellbeing, redundancy, retirement or employment support.

149. As previously highlighted in our interim findings, members of C3 staff at all levels in the division are strongly committed, in often challenging circumstances, to providing a good service to the public. They are committed to doing a good job and demonstrate considerable flexibility in their working practices whilst endeavouring to meet call demand. This correlates with findings in the recent Police Scotland staff survey where the main factor in people's decision to stay with the organisation was commitment to their job.<sup>47</sup> Some staff have however told us that the organisation does not always encourage feedback, they do not feel listened to and trust in the organisation has been damaged.

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<sup>47</sup> Axiom Consultancy, *Report for SPA/Police Scotland: Opinion Survey 2015* (September 2015).



150. HMICS notes that our findings are consistent with those of the recent Police Scotland staff survey.<sup>48</sup> We are encouraged by the high level of response to that survey and the commitment of Police Scotland and the SPA to addressing its findings. We have in turn placed significant emphasis in our review on the views of staff, senior management and the public. We conducted interviews with 85 staff and also undertook 34 focus groups and drop-in sessions involving over 200 staff. Whilst we recognise this does not capture the views of all staff, our findings do correlate with both our online questionnaire (to which 1,156 officers and 598 staff responded) and the recent Police Scotland staff survey (to which 11,796 officers and staff responded). All staff were offered the opportunity to engage with us and have been forthcoming in their views. We have also engaged directly with staff associations to ensure that we have fully captured both local and national issues.
151. HMICS has engaged with both the Scottish Police Federation (SPF) and Association of Scottish Police Superintendents (ASPS) throughout our review. They highlighted a number of C3-specific concerns which reflected the views of their members which we have endeavoured to address during our fieldwork and in this report including:
- staff retention in terms of experience, training (capacity and skills) and supervision
  - relative roles of service advisors, controllers and dispatchers
  - health, safety and wellbeing including working hours
  - effective ICT systems and associated quality assurance
  - connectivity of call handling with command and control procedures as associated risks
  - risk management procedures
  - performance culture
  - confidence to challenge changes to procedures
  - SPA scrutiny of C3 policy and procedures
  - benchmarking legacy forces and best practice elsewhere.
152. Both organisations noted their concerns that the scope of this review would not fully consider the wider capacity and capabilities of the service to respond to and deal effectively with calls and associated incidents or crimes. They also noted that in making any recommendations, HMICS should consider the potential financial and people impact of their implementation.
153. HMICS has also engaged directly with Unison, which represents many of the police staff affected by the changes in C3 Division. Unison provided us with details of key areas of concern and supporting evidence. These concerns reflect both SPF and ASPS views but also specifically highlight issues around:
- levels of meaningful staff engagement and communication
  - detail and basis of assumptions in the Strategic Direction
  - transparency and openness to challenge
  - staffing levels and loss of experienced staff
  - training
  - interdependencies
  - perceived pressure to reduce call handling times.

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<sup>48</sup> Axiom Consultancy, *Report for SPA/Police Scotland: Opinion Survey 2015* (September 2015).



154. Unison noted concerns regarding the capacity of front line officers to respond to calls. It also reflected the need to develop a medium to longer term sustainable model for C3. HMICS has endeavoured to address these issues during our fieldwork and in this report.
155. Police Scotland has made significant efforts and engaged positively with staff associations through Gold Group, JNCC and HRRRC. Regular and issue specific meetings have also been held and a wider Local Negotiating Consultative Committee for C3, Criminal Justice and Custody Divisions has been established since March 2015.

### Workforce planning

156. As noted in paragraph 98 above, the evidence for the Strategic Direction was limited due to the variable quality and accuracy of data from legacy forces and the availability of benchmarking information. This has constrained a full understanding of the rationale for the adopted model and exactly what is to be delivered.
157. Workforce planning is the ongoing planning process for the numbers, demographics, locations, working patterns and skills of staff and officers required to meet call demand. HMICS acknowledges that Police Scotland undertook a range of modelling work in order to develop its proposals albeit that data was incomplete. This included benchmarking based on figures produced by HMIC in England and Wales and use of industry models. A consultancy report<sup>49</sup> was also commissioned to provide assurance on the model selected and resource projections. Police Scotland recognised limitations of gathering consistent data from legacy systems and has addressed this through the manual collection of data on a daily basis from across Scotland.
158. External consultants were engaged by the force to provide a review of the proposed strategic direction for C3 in October 2013. They conducted their work in December 2013 and presented findings in March 2014. The external consultants specialise in call centre and control room operations and had previously carried out work on behalf of a number of other UK police forces, most notably Greater Manchester Police.
159. The consultants point out in their report that potential savings from the C3 transformation process are calculated based on data gathered between April 2013 and January 2014. It makes a number of assumptions including that:
  - relevant and meaningful metrics are being used in a consistent way to calculate optimum resource levels e.g. average call handling time (AHT), holidays and offline activity are spread equally across the force area
  - calculations are based on service advisor full time equivalent (FTE) only and not support or management functions
  - estimated numbers of FTE assume that the force consistently achieves its agreed service targets and training needs
  - technology can be optimised to achieve single site efficiency (albeit the preferred model is split across two or more sites)

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<sup>49</sup> 'Corporate Structure and Core Functions, Roles and Responsibilities' – Review by Sabio (March 2014) (provided as evidence by Police Scotland).



- figures are based on total number of service advisors excluding other support roles such as duty managers, team leaders and PAD officers.
160. The consultants also based their findings on data provided by Police Scotland relating to industry models and in the absence of accurate national data, had to rely on the legacy Strathclyde area (more than half of calls in Scotland). This model is productivity focussed and centres on cost reduction. The consultants found that it was not possible to define exact savings due to a lack of detailed historic data. Therefore their modelling was done on the basis of the most accurate data available and the resulting output was expressed as a 'savings range' on the understanding that Police Scotland accept that the final savings figure would not be defined until the transformation process had begun and systems and processes had been put in place to collect further detailed data. The consultants strongly advised Police Scotland that an ongoing model should be put in place to measure and refine resource levels and associated savings.
  161. The commitment to an evolving modelling tool was a key recommendation in the consultant's report. Due to the relatively short timescales involved before staged delivery commenced, or national processes were fully embedded, there is limited evidence of the model and projections being revised in a systematic way to date or a workforce/resource plan being maintained in an ongoing fashion.
  162. HMICS considers that the evidence base was not sufficiently mature to constitute a definitive workforce planning model. This was primarily due to the limited availability of national data, which necessitated initial assumptions being based on the legacy Strathclyde Police model and associated call times. Limited account was given to the processes and culture prevalent in the East and North.
  163. These limitations in ongoing workforce and resource planning were evidenced by the issues encountered during Stages 3 and 4 of the C3IR implementation plan involving the relocation of Stirling and Glenrothes to Bilston Glen and associated staff shortages. The release of unforeseen levels of staff through Voluntary Redundancy or Early Retirement (VR/ER) from these sites, and the resultant lag time in satisfactory completion of recruitment and training processes, meant there were insufficient resources available in Bilston Glen when the work transferred, resulting in low levels of performance.
  164. This should have been planned for and managed more effectively. The decision to proceed with implementation in the knowledge that resource levels would not be sufficient demonstrates a significant weakness in governance, workforce planning and risk management. Those responsible at that time were aware that the number of staff was insufficient to cope with call demand, and put a number of measures in place to mitigate against these issues. The effectiveness of these measures was limited.
  165. Police Scotland has since provided us with evidence and assurances that current staffing projections are correct, recruitment is complete and a full complement of staff is in place in Bilston Glen, Govan and Motherwell to support call demand. HMICS can therefore provide an assurance that resourcing of C3 is now stabilised in the East and West and performance is being maintained within these locations.



166. The external consultants engaged by Police Scotland to provide a review of the proposed Strategic Direction also confirmed that the model selected would deliver productivity and cost savings and provided Police Scotland with an indication of the safe operating range of resources with a significant number of caveats. They concluded that the level of projected savings in the Strategic Direction appeared to be in a realistic range and achievable albeit with a number of major dependencies which need to be overcome before full realisation can be achieved. They identified these dependencies as:

- transformation of legacy technology platforms
- change to staff contracts and long established working practices
- accurate identification and measurement of all ancillary activities (which should either be eliminated or built into the resourcing model)
- development of a robust resourcing model for SCs/ACRs.

167. The report also made recommendations for the next steps as follows:

- agree on a set of core foundational data and assumptions
- undertake further analysis for modelling use
- define a business continuity strategy in conjunction with peak activity strategy rules
- generate and model next level detail (shift patterns)
- assess the modelling capability of the Resource Management system<sup>50</sup> and decide if other modelling tools are needed
- identify if source data is suitable for up-scaling
- compare new patterns to existing (gap analysis)
- assess ancillary tasks
- develop new shift patterns
- implement a long range planning model
- create robust ACR, PAD, PNC and training team planning models.

168. Many of these aspects have yet to be addressed by Police Scotland. The selection of the final number of service centre staff was subsequently agreed by the Project Board and set at a level of 415 FTE. Police Scotland has however been able to demonstrate its ongoing assumptions and modelling approach to us based on variations in Average Call Handling Time between 300 and 450 seconds. This approach uses a set of key parameters and historical information and an example provided used:

- grade of service set as 91% of calls answered within 35 seconds (takes into account target answer time of 10 seconds for 999 and 40 seconds for non-emergency calls)
- agent utilisation of 75.0%
- staffing hours set to 35 hours per week

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<sup>50</sup> The Resource Management system is a software package which allows Police Scotland to systematically register and measure staff and activities in real-time in order to base resourcing decisions on real-time data. It provides detailed reports and statistics on service centre staff and their call related activities. This includes how long customers have to wait until their call is answered, call load peaks, and call handler skills to see who is best fit for answering which type of call.



- gross downtime of 37.3% (comprising annual leave, sickness, absences but excluding training)
  - monthly average of total call volumes (316,416, based on the year May 2014 to April 2015).
169. This modelling outlines the requirements for a NVSC and the necessary uplift of staff for Bilston Glen, Govan and Motherwell on the transfer of work from Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. This is based on the individual call handling times presented and the parameters set. The model can be reviewed with varying parameters and Average Call Handling Time in order to provide scenario projections on staff required and informing training timelines for new recruits. While this provides us with improved assurance, HMICS views that the model could be further developed to include levels of quality, regional variations in demand or variable AHT for different types of call.
170. The Strategic Direction also asserts that 'having reviewed all current practices, the optimum level of police officers within Area Control Rooms is approximately 45%'. There was an inconsistency in legacy force approaches previously with levels of officers ranging from 11% to 55% across Scotland. Operational benefits are set out for using police officers rather than police staff, and the optimum level was based on feedback from staff focus groups at design stage and reflected practice in the East. HMICS would have expected a more detailed rationale and supporting data to justify this workforce balance.
171. It should also be noted that full job description and pay scale harmonisation has yet to take place across Police Scotland including C3 Division. This work is being led at a national level by the corporate People and Development Directorate. Staff who have recently joined C3 Division and are on new SPA contracts will also be affected. This is a significant piece of work and the job evaluation process is scheduled to commence in 2016. Not only will this impact on staff pay scales, but will result in single role based job descriptions. There is an intranet page dedicated to this process that provides regular updates to staff. This exercise will pose further staff engagement and morale challenges to the C3IR project.
172. The authorising environment for workforce changes has primarily been the HRRC and JNCC<sup>51</sup> where each stage has reported, specifically around the statutory consultation process, its results, counter proposals and final staffing models to be implemented. Scrutiny at these forums has been strong with SPA and staff organisations offering their views.
173. As previously identified, the lack of clarity of vision for the division and its operating model has led to a vacuum around the wider benefits that should be realised from the project. Productivity and cost effectiveness being part of the focus has led to the perception that change equates to removing posts and making savings.
174. HMICS strongly supports the concept of a balanced workforce and believes that police staff have much to offer in terms of their experience in service centre environments and ability to offer high standards of customer service. The loss of experienced and highly skilled staff is a loss for the division and the service as a whole.

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<sup>51</sup> The Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee is chaired by Police Scotland and membership includes Unison, the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents and the Scottish Police Federation.



175. Police Scotland has, over the past six months, strengthened its resource management position and now has a full complement of staff working in the Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen sites with no vacancies. It has plans in place to recruit the additional staff required as part of Stages 5 and 6 when work transfers from Aberdeen and Inverness. It is further developing its workforce planning and demand management models to take account of the revised delivery model.

### **Demand management**

176. Demand management, along with workforce planning, is crucial to supporting the service's ability to respond effectively to threat, risk vulnerability and public safety issues. Many demands are placed on Police Scotland and these can originate from both outside and inside the force. Understanding demand by type and volume over time is critical to effective management. This requires an understanding of both primary contact handling (calls dealt with through service centres) and secondary contact (through area control rooms) and also contact via departments or individuals outwith C3.
177. Demand forecasting and planning has been used widely across the private and public sector for some time and is supported by technology, modelling and simulation systems. Police Scotland uses such technology and has developed its models to support the current delivery structure. This is measured daily and falls within a fraction of a percentage in terms of deviation from forecast.
178. Effective demand management allows accurate prediction of resources required to meet a pre-determined level of response at the required level of quality to a forecasted level of calls. This process delivers efficient use of resources and reduces the risk to the public in terms of effective call handling. However, in order for this process to be effective, Police Scotland should minimise 'failure demand', i.e. contact which is not relevant, avoidable or generated through a previous failure to meet customer need. It is necessary that all points of contact including public counters and front line response are aligned in order to achieve a consistent standard of service. As previously noted, Police Scotland has no unified customer contact strategy or standards of service.
179. 'Failure demand' was evidenced in our audit of a sample of calls. Additional demand on the 101 service was being caused by callers who repeatedly contacted the police for an update on their case as they were not being kept updated by local policing officers whom they were unable to call directly. Similarly, on occasion callers would not get the response they were looking for (e.g. being referred to a local station) and would phone again. Failing to resolve calls appropriately following first contact sometimes led to additional and unnecessary demand. Identifying this level of 'attrition' is key to understanding and managing demand.
180. Police Scotland has recently scoped the level of discontinued 101 calls and implemented measures to reduce these. Levels are currently running at approximately 3% of all calls received. This is a significant improvement, delivered through enhanced staffing levels, appropriate use of touch tone technology and increased levels of monitoring.



181. At present, C3 has a resource management unit based in Govan providing support to the West. Co-ordinators are currently in place in both the East and North, but are not part of a single demand management function. SPA has already approved plans for a national resource management and quality assurance unit with 11 staff. Senior management place high value on the work of the existing resource management unit, which actively supports day to day operations. HMICS welcomes this development by Police Scotland to address this issue.
182. HMICS found that the demand model in use has remained relatively unchanged for two years. The industry benchmarks which have been used also relate to primarily linear contact processes and do not necessarily reflect the complexity of the policing environment. HMICS has found that this model could be significantly improved to reflect revised processes and further develop scenario modelling. The current approach could ultimately be developed to become a tool for strategic investment in staff for the force.
183. Staff are contracted to a variable shift pattern, which allows Police Scotland to vary shift patterns to meet demand within agreed notice periods. Further flexibility is provided by offering staff overtime or additional shifts on a voluntary basis, using trained C3 officers to supplement service centre resources as a last resort or allowing calls to be routed to other sites automatically. Varying shifts are a common feature of service centre environments, and can only be extended voluntarily.
184. Unions have agreed new contract arrangements along with a process for implementing shift changes. Many of the members of staff who have relocated were granted their requests for specific working patterns, and a review will also take place of these in January 2016 as part of an agreement with unions.
185. HMICS is aware that there has been limited use of police officers in service centres to provide cover. We note their use was adopted as a limited short term measure to address staff shortages associated with the transfer of Stirling and Glenrothes calls to Bilston Glen, (see paragraph 163). HMICS has not reviewed the use of these officers nor their training and experience nor have we examined their access to 3C systems. These are matters exclusively within the scope of the PIRC inquiry into the tragic incident involving the deaths of John Yuill and Lamara Bell,<sup>52</sup> and will be covered in detail within her final report to the Lord Advocate.
186. An effective workforce planning model provides an evidence based assessment of divisional establishment and requires regular review. HMICS accepts that this model will be updated by Police Scotland as more information becomes available and will therefore become more linked to demand profiling. However, C3 workforce planning requires to link to the strategic objectives of the division and force more widely and form a key element of the strategic planning process. HMICS views that these processes require to be further strengthened.

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<sup>52</sup> *PIRC investigation: death of couple following recovery of car at Bannockburn on 8 July 2015.*



187. Police Scotland should develop a workforce planning model which supports the C3 strategic vision and provides an evidence based assessment of required staffing levels. The model should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as more information becomes available. This process should link to demand profiling and be based on realistic and tested performance standards, which reflect all of the aims of the C3 Division. Such a model should allow Police Scotland to take a view of the resources required within C3 Division to meet its strategic objectives.

### **Recommendation 12**

Police Scotland should develop a workforce planning model which supports the C3 strategic vision and provides an evidence based assessment of required staffing levels.

188. Staff based at Information Resources (IR) at Pinnacle House in Glasgow are currently part of C3 Division. These staff perform support functions for both Criminal Justice and C3 Divisions. Part of their role is to answer overflow calls from the West. The level of calls which IR staff have been required to handle has diminished over time, meaning that their training, experience and exposure to call handling is less current. HMICS visited staff at IR and identified issues around technology and processes for call handling which had the potential to impair the ability of some staff to effectively manage calls. These were highlighted to Police Scotland during our review and public call taking within IR was temporarily suspended.
189. HMICS acknowledges the flexibility and additional capacity that staff within IR can offer to C3 Division especially at times of unplanned demand. However, Police Scotland should ensure that should staff within IR continue to be used for overflow call handling, then they must be suitably trained, experienced and supported by effective processes and systems.

### **Recommendation 13**

Police Scotland should review the use of staff at Information Resources Unit for call handling to ensure that effective support and training are in place to maintain skills, awareness and understanding.

## **Training**

190. C3 Division has a designated post of Interim Business Training Partner responsible for co-ordinating divisional training needs and managing a dispersed team of training staff. A team of five police officers and staff are based in Govan. The Training and Compliance Unit (TCU) in Bilston Glen consists of one police sergeant who plans and delivers training for the East. There are currently no dedicated C3 divisional training staff in the North.



191. At the time of the approval of the Strategic Direction in January 2014, the SPA was advised by senior management that 'members of staff in control rooms are specialists who require specialist training'.<sup>53</sup> It was told that members of staff undergo 12 weeks' training before being released into the ACR environment. Assurance was given that training would take place in a staged process and when members of staff moved to their new roles. An ACR training schedule was to be drawn up and those that worked to different processes would be identified in the training schedule to ensure that they then worked to the new processes.
192. At the time of our review, HMICS found that there was no national standard induction course for either new service advisors or controllers. In the West, service advisors' induction course was of three weeks duration. Courses in the East set out a four week timetable for newly recruited service advisors. New recruits then joined teams and were mentored but not for any consistent period of time. HMICS did not find evidence of any formal evaluation of these courses.
193. Interviews with members of staff established that the induction courses had limited practical or scenario based input and the focus was on ICT systems and the inputting of data. There was a concern expressed that training did not cover the range of procedures which were in place across Scotland and the processes and practices which should be adopted in response to incidents. This was perceived as resulting in delays in managing calls and ensuring the most appropriate action was taken.
194. New staff were routinely allocated a mentor or 'buddy' for support when they completed induction training and were released into the service centre environment to take 101 calls. However, staff noted that this process was variable with most mentors not being allocated dedicated time to work with new recruits and having a limited ability to support them.
195. Induction courses were described by staff we spoke to as not adequately preparing them for their role. Furthermore, new recruits are currently trained on the legacy Command and Control system as the upgraded Command and Control training database does not yet have sufficient data to be used for training purposes. However staff did receive a 30-minute input to apprise them of the differences in the two systems. There was a strong feeling amongst staff we spoke to that the training provided to new service advisors was not sufficient or adequate.
196. During the course of our review, Police Scotland introduced a training programme for new service advisors in the East and West which it refers to as the 'Training Academy'. This was established within the Govan service centre in September 2015 and provides a four week structured programme immediately after induction training courses. It allows new staff to build knowledge and learn about processes and procedures whilst being introduced to call taking on a gradual basis. This includes scenario training and call monitoring which allows individual training needs to be identified and addressed prior to the staff member moving on to their team. To date 40 recruits have gone through this training, with a further four courses scheduled up to March 2016. This training programme is also running in Bilston Glen on a smaller scale to ensure training across both sites is streamlined and new recruits are provided with the same

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<sup>53</sup> SPA, Minutes of Board Meeting on 30 January 2014.



level of training. HMICS welcomes this approach but as this has only recently been introduced, we have not yet been able to evaluate its effectiveness.

197. HMICS identified that there had been no refresher or continuous professional development training provided to any service centre staff for some considerable time, other than the provision of e-learning courses. This was exacerbated by the fact that if new processes were introduced there was no accompanying training and changes were invariably communicated by email. This correlates with findings in the recent Police Scotland staff survey<sup>54</sup> where heavy reliance on non-verbal communication (email and intranet) was highlighted as an issue, with staff feeling overloaded with information of limited relevance.
198. Interviews with staff identified that there have been a number of corporate e-learning training modules made available to them. However, for the majority of staff, there is no facility for these to be completed in a quiet area and limited validation of understanding. Staff felt there is always pressure to return to their operational role and this was not considered the optimum method of delivering training in this environment. HMICS notes that whilst e-learning can be a valuable tool in the delivery of a training programme, and is used widely within Police Scotland as a whole, it should be used to complement and not substitute any ongoing programme of professional development.
199. HMICS found that controllers in Bilston Glen currently have a training/opportunity day built into their rota on a five weekly basis. A proposed ACR shift pattern has been created to allow for the introduction of opportunity days across C3 Division. In Bilston Glen these days were not used for training purposes and had been temporarily suspended due to heavy workloads in the area control room. These had been reinstated at the time of our review and training/opportunity days were being used productively.
200. There are generic role requirements in the NVSC for service advisors in terms of both 101 and 999 call taking; both areas are covered as part of their core training. Experienced supervisors assess each individual in terms of their capability to handle 999 calls and are only progressed to this level after their approval. This time period varies according to each individual with some progressing after a relatively short time and others taking over six months. HMICS noted that there were no formal criteria or assessment of service advisors to progress to taking 999 calls, and the process relied on the subjective judgment of supervisors.
201. HMICS identified that prior to shift changes being implemented, service advisors at Bilston Glen had training days built into their rota but this is no longer the case. They now work fixed shifts across Police Scotland and very little consideration has been given to address the training needs of those staff who work permanent night shifts.
202. The CRM and the ACD telephony systems were adopted in Bilston Glen in October 2014. The TCU was responsible for delivering the training in these systems and deadlines were viewed as very tight. Service centre staff we spoke to were of the view that the training was poor and not effective.

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<sup>54</sup> Axiom Consultancy, *Report for SPA/Police Scotland: Opinion Survey 2015* (September 2015).



203. The transfer of Stirling and Glenrothes area control rooms and service centres to Bilston Glen was a significant challenge. The former moved on 27 January 2015 and the latter on 17 March 2015. It was decided by senior management that the staff and police officers transferring to Bilston Glen would receive two days refresher training. The refresher training for the staff from Stirling was viewed by staff as inadequate as a significant amount of training time was spent on administrative tasks. However this was not the case for the staff from Glenrothes who received the full two days input.
204. Interviews with staff who were dealing with overflow calls from Dundee, Inverness and Bilston Glen identified that whilst they knew the procedure to transfer calls to the respective area control rooms they had not received any specific training in the new processes. This lack of training allied with difficulties in identifying locations left some of the staff we spoke to feeling anxious and apprehensive about these overflow calls. HMICS highlighted concerns to Police Scotland over call transfers during our review which resulted in process improvements and guidance being communicated to staff. HMICS identified that the number of call transfers vary on a weekly basis with an average of 170 calls per week being transferred from Inverness and an average of 401 calls per week being transferred from Dundee between 6 July 2015 and 19 October 2015.
205. Interviews with staff revealed that currently there was no specific area control room course for sergeants which covers all key areas of responsibility and related roles, expectations and standard operating procedures which require to be adhered to. Although current ACR training includes a session on expectations of sergeants, provision of a dedicated course is viewed as a potential development opportunity.
206. There is no overarching training strategy in place for the division or as part of the implementation project. Other than limited training plans for each stage of the project, there is no plan or programme for the ongoing delivery of training on a national basis. Current training is not accredited and does not lead to any formal qualification. Accreditation provides external validation of achievement of an appropriate level of professional competence. It allows comparison and requires that either the organisation or individual meets quality assured standards. For the individual this can be both career and skills enhancing, provide a route for continuous professional development and ultimately improve confidence and morale.
207. HMICS considers that Police Scotland should develop a training strategy for C3 Division which is supported by an appropriately skilled and resourced single national training unit. The implementation of a professionally accredited industry best practice programme of ongoing consistent training and development should be a priority. Sufficient time should be allocated to staff to develop their skills in an ongoing manner. Training should be designed to meet a defined set of unified professional competencies for each role and effectively linked to development plans within each individuals annual Performance and Development Review (PDR). In developing its training strategy, Police Scotland should take into account the results of our audit of police call handling (see page 101).

#### **Recommendation 14**

Police Scotland should develop a training strategy for C3 Division which is supported by an appropriately skilled and resourced single national training unit.



## Staff engagement

208. On 30 January 2014, the SPA Board approved Police Scotland's Strategic Direction proposals for C3. As noted in paragraph 99, our interviews and focus groups with staff clearly identified that there had been little meaningful engagement with practitioners in developing the Strategic Direction and much more could have been done to secure their understanding and expertise.
209. HMICS fully accepts the challenges faced by C3 Division in implementing a complex programme of change and that every individual will handle change in their own way. We also understand that communication and engagement will always be perceived subjectively by those providing information and those receiving it, and this can pose a challenge in terms of gathering a true picture of this process.
210. HMICS found that there was no overarching communication strategy for C3's integration and remodelling project but stage specific communication plans. These follow a standard template and were reviewed by HMICS. The plan for Stages 3 and 4, albeit not dated, details the methods of communication as follows:
- 'Given the impact of the changes, the primary method will be face-to-face, with line managers and team leaders telling staff about what is happening and offering the opportunity for questions. Divisional Commanders will play a key role in communicating and engaging with local stakeholders. Written communications and the Intranet will be used to follow up any direct communications and will also be used to inform other stakeholders who may be less affected by the proposed changes.'*
211. As part of its plans, the division has produced briefing packs for local policing commanders including presentation material for local scrutiny committees. It also has an intranet page, a regular newsletter and a project email address. A strong emphasis on external stakeholders was noted with a focus on responding to concerns regarding site closures.
212. While the effectiveness of communications with external stakeholders and the media is evaluated by the division, staff communication has not been formally assessed. Feedback was welcomed via the project email address, through line management and via the recently formed staff Focus Group. Divisional commanders have also provided feedback on the communications and briefing pack they have received as part of project roll out. All members of staff have received updates after each key project milestone to keep them apprised of progress, but it was noted that there had been nothing specific to say to staff in the North until Stage 5/6 commenced and consultation began.
213. HMICS has found that despite the existence of project stage communication plans, engagement with staff is perceived as weak. This was generally accepted by senior officers who found it difficult to prioritise engagement due to the pressure of project deadlines and workload. Furthermore, there has been no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication plans or materials by the project team at any point over the past 18 months.
214. Interviews with staff established that in Bilston Glen there had previously been a supervisors meeting held every Wednesday. This was an opportunity to update supervisors and ensure they disseminated information to police officers and staff. However, the meetings stopped in January 2015. The practice of service advisors and



dispatchers being jointly briefed has also ceased. In relation to service advisors, shift handovers are strictly regulated with people coming off duty and those coming on duty monitored by the Resource Management system. These factors have resulted in low morale and a feeling that staff were not valued.

215. Service centre staff across C3 Division informed HMICS that team meetings, briefings and updates had been, for the most part, discontinued. This lack of information creates the risk that staff fill in the gaps with rumour and speculation. Communication to service centre staff primarily takes the form of emails and newsletters which they feel they have limited time to read and understand. There is limited direct engagement and consultation<sup>55</sup> with ACR and service centre staff by management. Staff felt that changes to processes are generally made without any explanation and they had limited time to read or understand the connected emails.
216. ACR staff receive cascaded briefings on a regular basis, typically at the start of late and night shifts by supervisors. These briefings include any changes in processes, emails of note, incidents or timetabled events which are ongoing or of note, training and their detail for the day. Aberdeen and Dundee, where staff shortages have been most acute, have less regular or formal briefings, but still have team meetings or discussions when possible and handover takes place at individual controller's terminals.
217. As previously noted in paragraph 139, high visibility may be a challenge for senior managers. HMICS notes that divisional commanders have undertaken a range of focus groups and staff visits. However, senior managers and project staff often referred to staff engagement as the statutory formal consultation process which is entered into at each stage of the project where centres are closing and staff are either being offered VR/ER or relocation. Police Scotland has maintained a high degree of governance and control over this process through the HRRC. However, this is not a substitute for ongoing meaningful communication and engagement throughout the whole process of change.
218. HMICS notes that corporately Police Scotland commissioned a review from external consultants, which was published in November 2014 to assess its organisational restructure process.<sup>56</sup> The review aimed to specifically address the question 'What approach will deliver timely and effective decisions on organisational change within Police Scotland' and make it more streamlined and open to staff engagement.
219. Of particular note are the key findings from the report which correlate with our own fieldwork:
  - disconnect between the design of changes and formal consultation processes
  - change is perceived to be HR/people led rather than operational policing led
  - the pace of change has been rapid and some people and areas of service are feeling disengaged
  - staff are not involved as early as they could be in changes affecting them
  - the information on which project decisions are made is variable
  - once a change project is underway, the level and consistency of governance varies.

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<sup>55</sup> HMICS found that Police Scotland did fulfil its statutory obligations to consult and hold one to one meetings with staff who were at risk of losing their jobs.

<sup>56</sup> 'Policing change: Creating an effective and efficient change process – Review of the organisational restructure process' – Report by Deloitte (November 2014) (provided as evidence by Police Scotland).



220. A number of recommendations were made in this report and immediate improvement actions identified to improve employee engagement, two-way consultation and communication throughout the whole consultation process. A short-life corporate Organisational Change Working Group was created to take this forward.
221. In an SPA review report to HRRC as part of its own scrutiny programme, a significant amount of good practice was identified and highlighted as already being carried out within Police Scotland as part its current communication and consultation processes, which were deemed to be legally compliant. However this report also made 17 recommendations for improvement. One of these recommendations was that the Working Group created from the consultants review be made permanent. This was agreed and the group now meets on a monthly basis. The primary focus of the group is to implement the remaining 16 recommendations made by the SPA. Work has now started on each recommendation and it is anticipated that these will be completed by the end of the year.
222. HMICS views that progress on addressing both reviews has been relatively slow and has not significantly improved communications and engagement in the C3IR project.
223. Senior managers recognise that consistency in communication and time for team briefings were challenging and are things they have begun to address. They hope to improve certain aspects by installing additional screens in service centres and using them to display information and changes to key processes. HMICS welcomes this but found overall the C3 Division has lost considerable ground in terms of relationships and buy-in by not effectively engaging with staff.
224. Staff and officer response to the HMICS online questionnaire was good, with a high percentage of submissions coming from within Police Scotland. A total of 3,826 questionnaires were completed, with 46% being completed by members of the public, 46% by officers and police staff, 2% by elected representatives and 7% by others.<sup>57</sup> The key themes explored in the questionnaire were contact with the police through telephoning 101 or 999. We also asked specific questions of police officers and staff about their experience of call handling from an internal perspective. Finally, we asked elected representatives about issues raised by their constituents about call handling and whether these had been raised with Police Scotland. Early feedback from the questionnaire responses informed the key lines of enquiry used during this review. A number of themes have emerged which confirm our findings during fieldwork. For full results, see page 115.
225. The importance of staff communication and engagement during the process of change is key to successful delivery of any project. The scale and complexity of this project and its impact on staff requires a strong emphasis on maintaining relationships with them and their representatives. Although plans were put in place, it is clear that the approach was not embedded in the project from initiation through to delivery.

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<sup>57</sup> Where percentages do not sum up to 100%, this is due to rounding.

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226. HMICS considers that Police Scotland should review its approach to communication and engagement for C3IR and ensure its implementation plan for the remaining stages accommodates effective engagement with and communication to members of staff through briefing, coaching, mentoring, performance management and other related support activities.

### **Recommendation 15**

Police Scotland should further develop its approach to communication and engagement for the C3IR project and include this as a specific workstream with key deliverables within its implementation plans for Stages 5, 6 and 7.

### **Health, safety and wellbeing**

227. Health, safety and wellbeing is a corporate function of the People and Development Directorate within Police Scotland. A Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager oversees this function supported by a Health and Safety Manager, a commercial delivery manager and 12 Health and Safety Advisors. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team has run awareness sessions across Police Scotland to promote its role and provides advice to all functions within Police Scotland, including C3 Division.
228. Occupational health is currently outsourced to a private sector provider and the employee assistance programme (EAP) is supplied by another external provider. The EAP is a 24/7 facility available to all police officers, support staff and their families. It offers assistance for all types of concerns covering physical wellbeing and everyday life issues. There is a national Health and Safety Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable Designate and a national Health and Wellbeing Forum chaired by the Director of People and Development. Divisions also have local health and safety committees and groups.
229. C3 Division recently set up its own health and wellbeing forum with its first meeting in August 2015. It has nominated locally based wellbeing champions supported by managers at each site. In addition, assisted by the force Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, the division has delivered one day health and wellbeing sessions at Motherwell, Govan and Bilston Glen. These sessions were well attended and more sessions are planned for the future. Furthermore, C3 also has a Health and Safety Committee which is chaired by a chief inspector who is supported by a Health and Safety Advisor. This committee meets quarterly and includes representatives from trade unions and staff associations. The meetings are documented and our review found that actions were regularly raised, logged and progressed.
230. Some of the staff we interviewed in the North and East perceived that the C3IR project was having a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. This was of particular concern in the North, where staff perceived that there had been limited face to face communication of changes and a lack of empathy and support demonstrated by the organisation.
231. Since the communication of their closure in January 2014, a high number of staff have left the Aberdeen service centre whilst others have been living with significant uncertainties as to exact closure dates and the availability of the VR/ER package. At the time of this review, staff had not received direct wellbeing, redundancy, retirement or employment support. Although this support had been promised at the outset to staff,



Police Scotland told us that these would only be made available once Stage 5/6 of the project commenced.

232. Since January 2014, the continued reduction in staff levels resulted in the Aberdeen service centre operating at approximately 45% of previous staffing levels at the time of our visit, placing additional demands on remaining staff. Police Scotland has made a number of attempts to recruit new staff and there have been limited opportunities to bring in police officers to bolster staffing levels due to a lack of suitably experienced frontline officers for overtime and difficulties in recruiting and training locally. This has resulted in increased workloads and the remaining staff perceiving they are compromising on what was formerly a very high quality customer service.
233. Staff we spoke to felt there had been very limited support or face to face communication with staff in the North since January 2014. HMICS views this lack of support and ongoing direct engagement as unacceptable. This correlates with findings in the recent Police Scotland staff survey where only 8% of those Police Scotland employees who responded thought the organisation was genuinely interested in wellbeing.<sup>58</sup>
234. Police Scotland uses its Human Resources ICT system SCOPE to record and monitor the hours staff have worked. There have been no breaches of working time directives. Although it has been recognised that some staff are working long hours, all staff work to contractual hours and any additional hours are voluntary.
235. Staff we spoke to described a number of perceived factors within C3 which they feel affected their morale or caused difficulties in their work-life balance. These included:
  - not being allowed time off in lieu or leave
  - focus on performance and information communication technology rather than the workforce
  - staff perception of 'de-skilling' in the new service centre model
  - awareness that post grading will change as part of wider harmonisation
  - shift changes.
236. This correlates with our own findings in local policing inspections where the pace and nature of change has affected the morale of both officers and staff.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, morale is not as high among police staff who continue to be concerned about job security and who feel their contribution to policing is not as valued by Police Scotland as that of officers.
237. Absence is regularly monitored at senior management level with support from HR advisors. HMICS observed detailed consideration of staff absences with a balanced approach between staff welfare and proactive return to work processes. All staff are being managed in accordance with the relevant stages of the Police Scotland Attendance Management and/or Capability Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that the organisation's expectations are managed and that relevant support is provided.

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<sup>58</sup> Axiom Consultancy, *Report for SPA/Police Scotland: Opinion Survey 2015* (September 2015).

<sup>59</sup> HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Pilot inspection of Fife Division* (2014); *Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015); and *Inspection of Aberdeen City Division* (2015).



238. High levels of sickness absence have been reported for C3 Division in the media over the past months. However, in reality, levels of absence within the division are reflective of the force average figure. C3 absence levels have remained consistent in the preceding year to date with an average days lost figure during the period April 2014 to October 2015 of 6.6%. The senior management team within the division has engaged with the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) to look at the provision of health fairs in order to support staff, specifically targeting relevant absence causes where OHU practitioners can offer relevant professional advice and guidance.

### Key findings

- The decision to implement an interim ICT solution and to delay the procurement of major new technologies reduced the complexities and risk associated with the rollout of the C3IR project.
- The interim ICT solution in place is generally fit for purpose in terms of basic functionality. However, the stability of these systems remains in question: while network performance has improved, this continues to affect day to day operations.
- Business Continuity Planning across C3 sites has been tested regularly, and although still reliant on some legacy force plans, has proven to be well managed and maintains service and performance during periods of down time.
- At a cost of £15m, the procurement and implementation of an integrated suite of new technologies will be critical to the future delivery of call handling and presents an opportunity to improve productivity, realise savings and deliver the full benefits of the project.
- While Police Scotland has already achieved savings of over £1.8 million per annum in staff costs, it has increased police officer and overtime costs.
- Although service centre staff are able to bypass key ICT systems to support business continuity, Police Scotland has recently introduced processes to monitor and manage this.
- The current address 'look up' gazetteer and Police Scotland internal directory do not fully meet operational requirements.
- While there are defined arrangements for ICT governance and testing in place, there was limited awareness amongst some senior managers of C3 ICT issues.
- The C3 approach to information audit is not currently providing the necessary levels of assurance required.
- Identifying the true costs of the C3IR project and exact levels of savings has not been possible.

### ICT systems and infrastructure

239. Police Scotland does not currently have an ICT strategy. It does however have an ICT delivery plan associated with the current Corporate Strategy<sup>60</sup> and an ICT Strategic Blueprint<sup>61</sup> which was approved by the SPA in June 2013. In the blueprint, C3 was listed as one of four national priorities (alongside i6, human resources and duty management, finance and payroll).
240. The Corporate Strategy was approved in March 2014 and essentially repeats the commitment to C3 as an operational priority and details a high level delivery plan

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<sup>60</sup> Police Scotland, *Corporate Strategy 2014*.

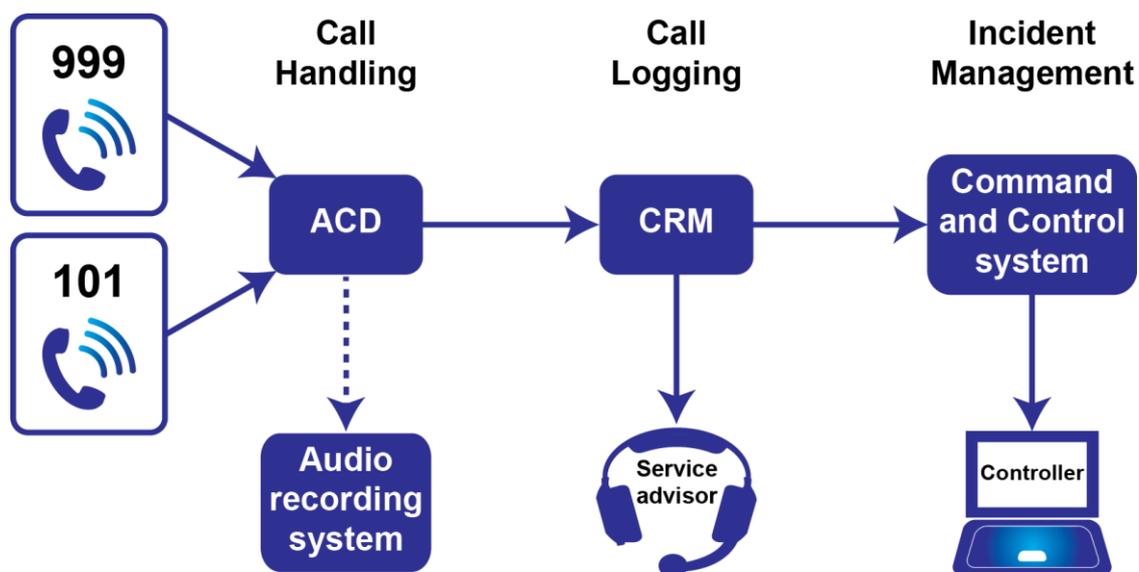
<sup>61</sup> Police Scotland, *ICT Blueprint* (paper to the SPA Board, 26 June 2013).



indicating that priority projects will be completed by the end of March 2016 subject to full specification by Project Boards.

- 241. The Strategic Direction document is clear that the introduction of new ICT systems will improve productivity. It states that recurring savings of circa £905K are anticipated as a result of rationalisation and modernisation of supporting ICT (Stage 7 of the project). Police Scotland state that this will be achieved by the implementation of a new integrated ICT system which their market testing demonstrated will be associated with lower support, licensing and maintenance costs.
- 242. Modelling undertaken by the force indicated that through a reduction in site count and replacement of legacy ICT systems with a common suite of modern C3 ICT systems, it would be possible to significantly improve the capability of service centres and area control rooms whilst at the same time realising savings. The cost of replacing legacy ICT systems was estimated at approximately £15 million in the Strategic Direction. £3 million of this figure was already provided for within the ICT Blueprint.
- 243. Improvements in service centre capability and financial savings will not be fully realised until the successful completion of Stage 7<sup>62</sup> of the project. HMICS supports this staged approach, which seeks to implement the initial phases of the C3IR project without the complexity and risk associated with any significant ICT procurement. This approach has required Police Scotland to select an interim suite of technologies to support the C3 rationalisation programme and establish the virtual service centre environment. These technologies were chosen by Police Scotland on the basis of scalability, licence availability and ensuring best value from existing contracts of predominant solutions within the West. HMICS considers the selection of these technologies and applications was reasonable, given their interim nature and limited life-span.
- 244. The interim ICT solution currently being used within the NVSC is described in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – C3 Call handling systems



<sup>62</sup> Stage 7 is the final stage of the C3IR project. It will include specification, procurement and delivery of a new national suite of enabling ICT technologies for contact, command and control.



245. **Call (Audio) Recording** – This system records all telephone calls received within the NVSC sites and offers functionality for service advisors and supervisors to immediately play back individual calls where needed to check on information provided during calls. It also supports routine quality assurance checks within the service centres. HMICS used the call recording system to conduct our call audit (see Audit of police call handling at page 101).
246. **Automatic Call Director (ACD)** – This system supports all telephony across the virtual service centre sites and provides ACD functionality. This routes telephone calls to available service advisors based on their specific skills and availability. The ACD system has been integrated with the CRM, which is configured to automatically log service advisors into the system. This ensures calls are only passed to service advisors when they have completed their previous call, updated information systems and are cleared by the CRM as available to take another call. In order to support business continuity, service advisors are able to log directly into the ACD system and manually update their availability to receive calls should the CRM be unavailable.
247. Whilst this manual login should only be used to support business continuity events, it does mean that service advisors can bypass the CRM system at any time. This means that not all calls will be entered on the CRM system, and the ACD system will potentially route calls to a service advisor before they have completed all the tasks associated with a previous call. Whilst the call will always be recorded on the call recording system, it could lead to some call data not being held on other systems and potentially left unactioned. Police Scotland has recently introduced processes to monitor and manage this.
248. **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** – This system provides CRM functionality across the virtual service centre sites and is the primary means of recording emergency 999 and non-emergency 101 calls from the public and partner agencies. It automatically searches and displays previous caller histories and provides information which assists service advisors to make risk and vulnerability assessments and grade incidents. It also provides access to a range of other key ICT tools such as an address gazetteer, on screen mapping, internal directory, A-Z guidance, messaging between service advisors, ticker tape notices, alerts to supervisors and emails. As outlined above, the CRM system provides integration with the ACD which controls call routing based on service advisor availability. Police Scotland has recognised that efficient operation of the CRM system is crucial to call handling time, having a significant impact on their ability to prioritise calls and manage service advisor availability.<sup>63</sup>
249. The CRM system is also integrated with the Command and Control system within the NVSC sites, and allows for the automatic creation of any incidents which require a police response. This also supports the electronic transfer of incidents between the East and West ACRs for action. Police Scotland expects all service advisors within the virtual service centre sites to use the CRM system to create an incident on the Command and Control system, given it transfers across important information, including the contact telephone number for the caller, brief details of the call and the initial call grading. The system is configured to automatically create a ‘data stamp’ on

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<sup>63</sup> Police Scotland, C3IR – CRM Upgrade v 1.1 (23 July 2015).



the Command and Control incident to show that the record was created through the CRM system. If used consistently, the CRM system should log and contain information for all incoming 999 and 101 calls received by the service centres.

250. **Command and Control** – This is a critical system to record and manage all incidents which require a police response and is the primary system used within the ACR. As explained above, the CRM system is used by the service advisors within the virtual service centres to automatically transfer information into the Command and Control system. This creates an incident log which will then be picked up by the appropriate ACR. While Police Scotland expects service advisors to use the CRM system to generate incidents, they are also able to log incidents directly into the Command and Control system.
251. Given the potential risks associated with entering incidents directly onto the Command and Control system and bypassing the CRM system, HMICS examined the number of incidents that were created without a CRM ‘data stamp’. This revealed that between February and September 2015, the proportion of incidents created outwith the CRM system ranged between 20.3% and 24.8%. It should be noted that incidents can also be created directly on the Command and Control system by operational policing divisions where they are reported at front counters or directly to officers.
252. HMICS observed service advisors across all sites using paper ‘scribble pads’ alongside their ICT systems. While Police Scotland encourages service advisors to record information from callers directly onto the CRM system, it permits the use of ‘scribble pads’ given the frequent need to quickly write down critical information from a caller, who may not always be coherent or structured in providing information. Staff in the East told us they often used these pads when ICT systems were slow. We were also aware of some staff using desktop software applications such as Notepad or Word as a ‘scribble pad’.
253. In the case of a business continuity event, more formalised template forms are used to record caller and incident details. These forms are also available to staff to use whenever they take manual notes. Whilst HMICS understands the use of ‘scribble pads’ in such circumstances, we are concerned that the current ad hoc arrangements present additional risk in that any information noted by service advisors is not subject to any formal guidance, audit or control. HMICS views that with the exception of a system failure, service advisors should not be permitted to use ‘scribble pads’ to record incidents in order to input information later into the CRM or Command and Control systems. As previously highlighted, this could lead to calls not being properly recorded on any system and potentially left unactioned.

### **Recommendation 16**

Police Scotland should review the use of ad hoc ‘scribble pads’ by service advisors within C3 Division and provide definitive guidance on their use, issue and proportionate supervision.

254. The above suite of technologies was selected by Police Scotland as an interim solution and HMICS has found this to be generally fit for purpose in terms of basic functionality. However, there were opportunities to consider how these could be configured to better support the new national processes across the virtual service centres. This could have



included opportunities to develop robust process mapping, documentation and training. Importantly, opportunities existed to configure these systems or introduce audit procedures to ensure compliance with new processes or at least reduce the risk for staff to bypass critical systems and processes.

255. HMICS could find no evidence that Police Scotland considered how the interim suite of technologies could be configured to support new national processes and improve compliance. While HMICS accepts that system configuration must facilitate business continuity events, we found that the interim suite of technologies, as initially configured and implemented, allowed users to bypass agreed processes. Senior managers had limited awareness of these issues and their associated implications.
256. HMICS accepts that it is not currently technically feasible to configure systems to prevent them being bypassed. Police Scotland has however now developed a daily management report and quality assurance process to identify where critical systems are being bypassed by service centre staff.
257. HMICS recognises that Police Scotland will shortly procure a new suite of integrated technologies under Stage 7 of the C3IR project. This clearly presents a fresh opportunity to develop a detailed specification which supports new streamlined national processes for call handling and improves compliance.

#### **Recommendation 17**

Police Scotland should ensure that the new suite of integrated technologies procured under Stage 7 of the C3IR project includes a detailed independently assured specification which supports streamlined national processes, improves compliance and reduces the risk of staff bypassing critical systems. These new systems must also support robust quality assurance processes and audit.

#### **ICT staff and resources**

258. During the delivery of Stage 1 of the C3IR project, ICT appointed a full time project manager who directed a team of staff from business as usual and the project to deliver the approved project and resource plans. An ICT Programme Manager was appointed at the end of Stage 1 and has now been in place for most of the implementation stages to date. He has since established a dedicated pool of 17 to 20 staff (a combination of full time Police Scotland employees and ICT contractors) including a technical lead, business analysts, a test manager and a test analyst. ICT senior management view these skills and training as critical to the delivery of the C3 project.
259. The use of ICT contractors introduces a level of risk for the project, increasing staff costs and being liable to turnover. Police Scotland views this as an acceptable risk as the benefits include a significant element of knowledge transfer and training. The Strategic Direction document identified £750k for the temporary recruitment of specialist contractors (approximately 16 FTE). This funding was secured from the Scottish Government police reform budget.



260. The Area Control Rooms in each area do not currently have any dedicated ICT support. Whilst the East and West sites have some ICT resources on site, these are either temporary project-based postings or not of the skill set required to provide the support resilience required. Police Scotland has since identified that it would be beneficial to have an onsite presence within each ACR to co-ordinate incidents and outages and build up a site focused skill set to provide support for one of its most critical operational areas. This service is to be provided over core hours (9-5 or closest depending on shift changes and call volumes) over seven days. This is projected to equate to three additional specialist ICT resources being required per location resulting in a total of nine staff. The cost of providing this support is £300k and will be met from the additional £1.4m funding recently provided by the Scottish Government.
261. Structures exist within Police Scotland which should provide for strong ICT governance across both the range of major change projects and business as usual activity. These include a number of departmental forums, individual Project Boards and an ICT Programme Board reporting to the Corporate Strategy Programme Board. The SPA has also provided scrutiny through its ICT Forum and more recently through its Finance and Investment Committee. The C3IR project has reported frequently through these forums to gain authorisation and monitor progress. However, HMICS identified some ICT issues affecting the C3 project, which had not been readily visible or apparently known to Police Scotland senior managers and executives. We would have expected these issues to have been escalated to them through these ICT governance structures. HMICS considers that both Police Scotland and the SPA should implement strengthened ICT governance and independent quality assurance reviews for key deliverables within Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project. These measures should be in addition to our specific recommendation for a general strengthening of governance and assurance (see Recommendation 9).

### **Recommendation 18**

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should implement strengthened ICT governance and independent quality assurance reviews for key deliverables within Stages 5, 6 and 7 of the C3IR project.

262. HMICS has established that ICT Stage Plans existed for each phase of the C3IR project. These were managed by dedicated ICT project managers. We were also shown supporting documentation, including systems test reports. These documents were of a suitable quality for the project environment.

### **Current issues with ICT**

263. Staff reported poor engagement and communication regarding the implementation and changes to ICT systems. They perceive that decisions are often made without any prior consultation, when users of the systems often have an improved insight into the impact of such changes. The lack of process integration with ICT systems was highlighted as an ongoing issue for staff. Police Scotland has since introduced enhanced communication to operational staff regarding potential system changes and downtime.



264. There are acknowledged performance issues affecting the use of ICT systems in both the East and West. Police Scotland has attributed this poor performance to issues with supporting network infrastructure and assessed that performance issues relating to the Command and Control and the CRM systems are largely caused by infrastructure faults on ageing equipment that has already been scheduled for replacement. In August 2015, Police Scotland recognised that given the mission critical real time nature of C3 systems, 'significant risk' exists to C3 services from reduced network performance or network outages.<sup>64</sup>
265. Police Scotland maintains records of all system outages within C3 and their duration. Between January and September 2015, there were 151 outages with average incident duration of approximately three hours. Monitoring of outages continues to be a priority for ICT response.
266. C3 Division has reported that more acute issues with mission critical systems have received a positive response from the ICT department, with further work now underway to deal with the remaining known issues and to identify further investment options to specifically enhance that part of the network which supports C3 systems. A range of short term solutions has been implemented and medium to longer term solutions are being explored. This includes the implementation of a dedicated C3 network.
267. HMICS was also made aware of issues with the CRM system.<sup>65</sup> The system which is currently in use across the virtual service centre sites is based on the system used by Strathclyde Police and has been in existence since 2004. It runs on the original hardware and uses unsupported versions of database technology. The system was described as 'fairly stable' until it was rolled out to the East under Stage 3 of the project in January 2015, when its performance was affected by a number of infrastructure failures. The system is also based on an old version of software and vendor support has become problematic. HMICS is aware that Police Scotland is addressing these issues and has now scheduled a software upgrade.
268. In advance of the CRM system roll out to the East, Police Scotland had involved the software supplier in solution design and gained assurance that network loading was unlikely to be an issue for the number of users involved. This was further verified when investigation highlighted that the volume of users historically using the CRM in the West during events and major incidents was greater than the proposed uplift to extend CRM to the East. The system was therefore not tested under pressure from multiple users and no performance issues were identified.
269. However, staff we spoke to were clear that performance issues became apparent in Bilston Glen almost immediately. The ICT project team only became aware of the severity of the CRM issue in the East in recent months. This is attributed to a lack of formal reporting of CRM issues by staff, with issues first being formally highlighted on 28 July 2015. Daily fault recording was put in place in early August 2015 with as many as 40-50 faults being recorded on a daily basis and delays of up to seven minutes affecting service advisors. HMICS is aware that subsequent improvement is attributed

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<sup>64</sup> Police Scotland, *Update on C3 Network Issues/Solutions to Project Board* (24 August 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Police Scotland, *C3IR CRM Upgrade Paper* (23 July 2015).



to ICT mobilising a support team, with remedial action recently taken in terms of the network infrastructure. HMICS has now established that daily fault reporting is still ongoing with between five and 15 faults now being recorded daily, with delays of up to two minutes affecting service advisors.

270. These performance issues affected the ability of service advisors to type call details directly into the CRM system. This often caused staff to revert to making written notes on 'scribble pads' and then needing to catch up with inputting call details after the caller had hung up. These issues were highlighted by staff and observed on site by HMICS while undertaking our audit of calls. In particular, the slow response of the CRM system in the East has caused some staff and officers to avoid the use of the CRM system altogether. As discussed above, the configuration of ICT systems allows staff to bypass the system and log directly into the telephone system, take calls and record incidents directly on the Command and Control system. The consequence of bypassing the CRM system is to limit the ability of the advisor to assess the risk and vulnerability of the caller, as they are unable to see the previous history, where available, of calls from that telephone number. Our audit of calls also confirmed that the CRM system is used inconsistently across sites with some calls not being recorded. This presents a risk to the public and officers attending the incident.
271. HMICS acknowledges that there have been issues over the Command and Control system stability and performance in the West, but these have been closely monitored by ICT and addressed to the point where no further reports have been made.
272. Three stages of system testing are in place before a system goes live within Police Scotland:
  - Test Stage 1 – Factory Acceptance Testing
  - Test Stage 2 – Site Acceptance Testing
  - Test Stage 3 – User Acceptance Testing (UAT).
273. All test scripts and documentation are subject to quality control and are signed off by the Test Manager. Testing identifies faults or 'defects' at severity levels 1 to 4. It is deemed acceptable that a system can go live if there are no severity 1 faults outstanding. The ICT programme manager supports this process and reviews test completion reports prior to go live to ensure that the project does not lose sight of severity 2 faults.
274. The Command and Control system was subject to several rounds of user acceptance testing prior to commissioning. At test completion, a total of 32 defects remained outstanding across the test stages, with 21 at severity level 3 and 11 at severity level 4. All severity 1 and 2 faults had been resolved. UAT was fully documented and the resulting report sought agreement for go live and the viability of the remaining defects being allowed into the live system. HMICS established that this report was approved by senior management, though not through formal governance at the Project Board.
275. It should be noted that C3 had agreed that the defects outstanding were manageable and could be treated as 'for future resolution as part of a schedule to be agreed going forward'. A number of the remaining defects related to the operation of the address gazetteer and a 'Hints and Tips' document was subsequently sent to service advisors to support workarounds. Both the CRM and ACD systems were only subject to stage 3



testing. C3 ICT staff consulted with the ICT network infrastructure team regarding network performance, but no load testing took place.

276. HMICS has observed issues in the use of the gazetteer and with network loading impacting on systems performance. Full automated mapping between the CRM and Command and Control systems was not operational at the point of go live in January 2015. Staff told us that this mapping functionality was no longer directly accessible and that upgrades had been required to address faults soon after the system had gone live. It was not until 4 August 2015 that the full functionality was restored. HMICS acknowledges that this mapping functionality could still be accessed through a 'manual launch' process by the service advisor and detailed guidance was provided.
277. Whilst the effectiveness of the testing process may be acceptable in terms of identifying system defects, assessing their severity and mitigations appears to be less robust. HMICS notes that managers have been willing to accept workarounds, which in reality are having an impact on staff and their ability to do their jobs.
278. HMICS considers that there were weaknesses in the testing approach taken during the implementation of CRM in the East and the prioritisation of outstanding issues within the Command and Control system. Test reports were not submitted for formal Project Board approval, reducing opportunities for greater scrutiny and visibility. HMICS has previously commented on ICT testing in our assurance review of stop and search.<sup>66</sup> We recommended that Police Scotland should review its business processes and governance arrangements for the development, testing and acceptance of its ICT systems. This should include the testing and acceptance of ICT changes and updates to existing force systems. **This recommendation remains outstanding and we would expect Police Scotland to ensure that robust testing and reporting is in place for Stages 5, 6 and 7 of this project.**
279. Much of the infrastructure and many systems currently in use within C3 are nearing the end of their useful lifetime. Police Scotland is still committed to maintaining these systems until they are decommissioned or replaced.

### Future ICT solution

280. Approval for the outline business case for Stage 7 of the C3 project was given at the SPA Finance and Investment Committee on 21 August 2015. This allows C3 to commence the tendering process for the procurement of replacement ICT systems. The Stage 7 'Procurement Phase' will now be initiated with the issue of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) and subsequent Invitation to Tender (ITT) to short listed suppliers. Following the completion of the tendering process, a Full Business Case (FBC) will be developed for consideration by the SPA to allow a final investment decision to be made.
281. Police Scotland has already undertaken an Early Market Engagement exercise between March and May 2015 as part of its development of the outline business case. The main purpose of the exercise was to determine what solutions are currently available and their capabilities and capacities.

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<sup>66</sup> HMICS, *Audit and Assurance Review of Stop and Search: Phase 1* (2015).



282. During this process, a review was undertaken of the initial Strategic Direction financial assessment of £15 million capital and £3.3 million per annum revenue for new C3 systems. This review identified that these values are probably at the higher end of the expected range, however have been maintained to allow for contingencies and ensure that the associated costs of change (training, business process change, communications etc) are adequately resourced.
283. Existing support and maintenance contracts account for an annual expenditure of £4.2 million per annum. Net revenue savings of at least £0.9 million per annum are anticipated from the replacement of legacy systems with new C3 systems. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded in June 2016. Implementation timescales will be subject to agreement with the suppliers.
284. The procurement process for Stage 7 is being managed by a dedicated Scottish Government Procurement Manager (SG Shared Services), reporting through the Police Scotland Head of ICT Commercial Strategy & Procurement. HMICS welcomes this professional support to Police Scotland for such a critical procurement.
285. Having highlighted our general concerns regarding governance, risk management, independent review and comparison with i6, HMICS considers that Police Scotland should review its approach prior to issue of the ITT and put more robust arrangements in place prior to contract award which should continue throughout implementation.

### **Information management**

286. The Strategic Direction set out that improved command and control response can be achieved through the deployment of a common and integrated set of modern communications, command and control ICT systems. Providing staff with the access to the most effective tools and information for the job is therefore key to delivering a successful service.
287. The paper is also very clear that technology developments mean that calls from anywhere in the country can be answered whilst ensuring that local knowledge is available to the service advisor. This will allow Police Scotland to deliver a consistent, highly effective, professional policing service to all communities, no matter where they are located.
288. Access to up to date, accurate information in a number of key areas is vital for service advisors and control room staff. HMICS found a number of system issues which were affecting staff confidence and their ability to efficiently deal with calls. These are set out in the following paragraphs.
289. Access to on screen maps to support the quick identification of locations can be vital in priority incidents. It can also support service advisors who have limited local knowledge of a particular location. Mapping functionality is embedded within both the CRM and Command and Control systems. However, during the initial roll out of the Command and Control system, the automated mapping functionality was removed from the CRM system, although a manual workaround was available (see paragraph 276). Some staff we spoke to were resorting to the use of 'Google Maps' to identify locations, with associated delays in completing calls. This issue has since been rectified by a system upgrade, but demonstrates the lack of staff engagement in such decisions (see paragraph 213).



290. Similarly, the systems within C3 use a 'look up' facility to search and verify addresses. This facility is known as a gazetteer, which is a list of all known addresses in Scotland with unique reference numbers. The current gazetteer is sourced from a composite list of addresses produced by all 32 local authorities. Issues with the gazetteer were identified during system and user testing in late 2014, but were not deemed to be severe enough to prevent implementation of the new systems.
291. Staff in both East and West complained about the quality of the information within the gazetteer. This prevents easy and quick identification of addresses, particularly where local knowledge is an issue. Staff noted this as a particular concern when taking overflow calls from the North area. It should be noted that both feedback from our online questionnaire and call audit stressed the importance of local knowledge and the need for staff to have access to systems which support this.
292. In our benchmarking work with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Ambulance Service, HMICS found that bespoke address gazetteers were in use which specifically met the needs of an emergency service. Given the issues being faced by Police Scotland in its use of the current gazetteer, HMICS considers that it would be prudent to consider greater collaboration and develop a purpose-built emergency services gazetteer for Scotland.

### **Recommendation 19**

Police Scotland should engage with the Scottish Government, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service to explore the feasibility and joint development of a bespoke emergency services address gazetteer for Scotland.

293. Access to a directory of contact numbers within Police Scotland is essential in order to identify individuals and departments and transfer calls appropriately. Members of the public are consistently provided with 101 as the contact number for individual officers both in person and in writing. Without an accurate internal directory, staff in the control room struggle to effectively deal with follow up calls from the public.
294. Again staff told us that the internal directory was inaccurate, poor quality, inconsistent and of limited use. We also observed these issues on our site visits and in our call audit. Police Scotland has since implemented an updated directory system, with one directory of personal numbers (sourced from the SCOPE system) and another directory of departmental and office contact numbers. A memo has been issued by the Director of People and Development to remind all staff to maintain their own personal details including contact numbers.
295. Service centre staff in the East and North typically had access to a number of national and legacy systems which gave them the ability to undertake checks on behalf of officers, but also to provide additional background on calls to the control room assisting in assessing risk and vulnerability. This included the ability to access crime management systems and historic incidents on legacy systems, and to provide intelligence updates.
296. Whilst new systems have provided additional functionality, staff still feel that access to key information which supported their role has been removed. HMICS found that the current operating environment is not meeting the needs of staff in terms of easy access to accurate, well maintained information resources.



297. HMICS was not able to find evidence of a systematic approach to assuring data quality and accuracy within C3 division. Our call audit has confirmed inconsistency in coding and grading which require to be addressed and may be influencing performance figures. Information security, records management and processes for regular weeding and maintenance of information needs to form part of a supporting audit and quality assurance approach.

### **Recommendation 20**

Police Scotland should implement a robust information audit approach which should include an immediate review of data quality and information security. Functionality and accuracy of the gazetteer and internal directory should be addressed as a priority.

### **Business continuity**

298. Police Scotland has strategic business continuity processes in place which include C3. The Risk and Business Assurance department includes two experienced business continuity (BC) officers who work closely with and support management teams within different business areas to develop and test their business continuity and resilience plans. However, business continuity of ICT systems is the responsibility of the corporate ICT department. The BC officers are able to locate ICT disaster recovery plans and are aware of the necessary arrangements.
299. HMICS found that C3 Division has a risk officer who deals with any risks associated with business as usual issues. Interviews with staff established that the division plans to appoint a dedicated C3 business continuity officer and does have BC plans in place.
300. Operation Re-route<sup>67</sup> is the business continuity plan developed by C3 Division to ensure that Police Scotland has an effective method of replacing the services provided by them should any of the functions or facilities become unavailable. The focus of this plan is on critical functions and currently encompasses C3 sites in the West and East only. The North ACRs and service centres continue to follow respective legacy business continuity plans. HMICS finds this acceptable, given that Stages 5 and 6 of the project have yet to be completed.
301. Operation Re-route and the legacy plans are systems focussed, with limited business impact analysis undertaken. The lack of a detailed business impact analysis creates a risk to business continuity and C3 should consider this as it implements any structural changes.

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<sup>67</sup> Draft Business Continuity Plan, Contact, Command and Control (C3) Division Version 0.8 16 March 2015.



302. To date, C3 has always had a fall-back position when business continuity has failed or has been threatened. However, there was a concern amongst some staff regarding planned downtime of systems, where the communication was poor, contingency procedures were not clear and the advice was inconsistent.<sup>68</sup> HMICS has reviewed a number of operational orders to manage planned downtime and can confirm these were of a high quality, with only risk management requiring some refinement. HMICS also observed a number of incidents on site where business continuity plans were used and arrangements were put in place and can provide assurance that these were effective.
303. Police Scotland reviews its business continuity plans annually with a six monthly health check. The Risk and Assurance department business continuity officers also quality assure the plans. In addition, they have undertaken 'walkthroughs' breaking down every aspect of business continuity. The business continuity plans for divisions, including C3, have also been tested and exercised recently (March and May 2015).
304. HMICS observed a number of planned and unplanned events during its fieldwork and noted that although reliant on legacy force plans, Police Scotland maintained service and performance during these periods of 'down time'. We accept that changes to technical infrastructure are ongoing as part of the project and that merging all plans may not yet be possible.

### **Recommendation 21**

Police Scotland should continue to progress the development of a single suite of business continuity plans for C3 Division, replacing remaining legacy site plans.

### **Estate and facilities**

305. HMICS found that the estate and facilities at C3 sites was in generally good condition and well maintained. Staff were well provided with facilities for food preparation and storage, dining and rest periods. Security and access control were good and parking was available for staff. The service centre and control room environments were well set out and conform to industry good practice in terms of lighting, space and noise levels.
306. Staff were generally content with their working environment, although some noted that equipment was ageing and in need of replacement. However, all recognised that the final phase of implementation would involve equipment and systems upgrade.
307. HMICS also observed preparations underway at Bilston Glen for additional service advisors to be accommodated within the facility. A number of desks were awaiting full equipment installation at the time of our visit and it was noted that at shift handover, when potentially two sets of staff were in the service centre, there was a shortage of workstations. Police Scotland has subsequently increased this capacity with additional workstations now in place.

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<sup>68</sup> HMICS was supplied with an operation order (Op Reroute) 005/2015. This related to emergency maintenance work at Motherwell area control room on 5 August 2015. It was a comprehensive document that set out a timeline for the work and identified key roles and responsibilities.



308. As part of the C3 project, the team has worked closely with the Estates function to plan and implement the required physical work and relocations required. Detailed Estates plans are in place for each site. The relocation of the Dundee service centre and transfer of control room functions from Aberdeen and Inverness to Dundee requires property works which are a critical requirement for completion prior to any moves taking place. Capital budget has been secured for these works and is being monitored.

### Financial resources

309. The initial Strategic Direction sets out that economies of scale and improvements in productivity underpin the delivery of both service improvement and savings through the release of staff posts in the C3 project.

### Projected savings

310. Initially the project estimated the release of between 155 and 212 staff posts with savings to employment costs of between £4.28 million and £5.88 million per annum. Further recurring ICT savings of around £905k per annum were also projected as a result of rationalisation and modernisation of supporting C3 ICT systems. This was to be achieved by the implementation of a new integrated ICT system with lower support and maintenance costs than existing legacy systems. Undetermined savings from the release of police buildings were also anticipated. The original timeline of savings is shown at Table 6.

Table 6 – C3IR project savings

| Financial year | Cashable savings |
|----------------|------------------|
| 2014-15        | £1.1m            |
| 2015-16        | £4.18m - £4.78m  |
| 2016-17        | £5.18m - £6.78m  |
| 2017-18        | £5.18m - £6.78m  |

### Costs

311. Inevitably the major changes involved in the C3IR project require investment. Costs have been identified in a number of categories, including estates/property, ICT and people. These include:

- The reuse of larger sites enables the costs associated with increasing capacity and the addition of more desk space to be minimised. Property costs of £500k are estimated for upgrading desks, altering existing layouts and enhancing some event facilities.
- Police Scotland estimates capital costs of approximately £15 million in total to replace current aging ICT systems. In order to maintain new systems, there will be associated revenue costs of approximately £3.3 million per annum.
- Expenditure will also be required to sustain and upgrade the existing ICT estate for it to remain operational while new systems are being procured and commissioned.

- The Strategic Direction also identified that additional appropriately skilled ICT personnel would require to be recruited on a temporary basis to meet the specialised needs of the project. This was estimated at 16 FTE staff phased over the two years with costs of £750k per annum. This funding was secured from the Scottish Government reform budget.

Table 7 – Project costs

|                         | 2013-14   |            | 2014-15      |              | 2015-16<br>(full year estimate) |              | Total        |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                         | Revenue   | Capital    | Revenue      | Capital      | Revenue                         | Capital      |              |
|                         | £000      | £000       | £000         | £000         | £000                            | £000         | £000         |
| <b>ICT</b>              |           |            |              |              |                                 |              |              |
| ■ ICT staff/contractor  | 0         | 0          | 847          | 0            | 915                             | 0            | 1,762        |
| ■ Stages 1-6 costs      | 11        | 260        | 72           | 880          | 156                             | 995          | 2,374        |
| ■ Stage 7 – new systems | 0         | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0                               | 100          | 100          |
| Estates/property        | 0         | 0          | 8            | 218          | 20                              | 437          | 684          |
| C3IR project team       | 0         | 0          | 1,306        | 0            | 1,210                           | 0            | 2,516        |
| Consultancy             | 47        | 0          | 5            | 0            | 0                               | 0            | 52           |
| Other                   | 4         | 0          | 30           | 0            | 21                              | 0            | 55           |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>62</b> | <b>260</b> | <b>2,268</b> | <b>1,098</b> | <b>2,322</b>                    | <b>1,533</b> | <b>7,543</b> |

312. Police Scotland has provided details of actual capital and revenue costs for 2013-14, 2014-15 and estimated full year costs for 2015-16. Projected costs for future years are not currently available. Costs associated with VR/ER will be met from Scottish Government reform funds specifically established for that purpose and are not included within Table 7. HMICS has been unable to fully reconcile the funding sources for the project costs supplied.
313. After the publication of our Interim Report, an additional £1.4m was allocated to Police Scotland by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice in order to build resilience. This is to cover recruitment and training costs in Dundee and Inverness in order that Stages 5 and 6 of the project can progress. The £1.4m is a one-off payment. £300k is for dedicated ICT staff and the balance is for recruitment to the virtual service centre prior to the release of other staff and training of new recruits.

### **Current financial position**

314. Analysis of C3 revenue budgets since 1 April 2013 shows a reduction in employee costs in relation to police staff costs. Although it is unclear as to how C3 savings have been explicitly reported, the actual police staff costs for 2013-14 were £40.5m. These reduced in 2014-15 to £38.7m, demonstrating an approximate saving of £1.8m. However, the actual police officer staff costs for 2013-14 were £16.7m. These increased in 2014-15 to £17.8m, highlighting additional costs of £1.1m. It should be noted that the actual police officer costs were markedly over budget for both these years and that there was also a rise of £232k in police staff overtime over the same period. In summary, there was a slight overall reduction in the combined C3 employee costs of £430k.



Table 8 – C3 Revenue Budget

| Cost/income area       | 2013-14       |               | 2014-15       |               | 2015-16<br>(1 April – 30 September) |               |               |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                        | Budget        | Actual        | Budget        | Actual        | FY Budget                           | YTD Budget    | Actual        |
|                        | £000          | £000          | £000          | £000          | £000                                | £000          | £000          |
| Police officer costs   | 14,054        | 16,730        | 15,282        | 17,876        | 16,232                              | 7,836         | 9,108         |
| Overtime officers      | 351           | 323           | 269           | 319           | 124                                 | 373           | 297           |
| Police staff costs     | 41,150        | 40,498        | 40,536        | 38,674        | 34,475                              | 17,172        | 18,311        |
| Overtime staff         | 481           | 711           | 480           | 943           | 471                                 | 207           | 500           |
| Other                  | 29            | 18            | 15            | 38            | 7                                   | 6             | 26            |
| <b>Employees total</b> | <b>56,064</b> | <b>58,280</b> | <b>56,581</b> | <b>57,850</b> | <b>51,308</b>                       | <b>25,594</b> | <b>28,242</b> |
| Premises               | 581           | 503           | 656           | 541           | 27                                  | 21            | 43            |
| Transport              | 105           | 118           | 192           | 131           | 146                                 | 68            | 71            |
| Supplies and services  | 257           | 361           | 194           | 124           | 99                                  | 58            | 75            |
| Administration         | 143           | 144           | 132           | 71            | 64                                  | 39            | 75            |
| Third party payments   | 35            | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0                                   | 0             | 0             |
| <b>Gross total</b>     | <b>57,186</b> | <b>59,405</b> | <b>57,754</b> | <b>58,716</b> | <b>51,644</b>                       | <b>25,780</b> | <b>28,506</b> |
| Fees and charges       | -716          | -856          | -716          | -822          | -814                                | -407          | -368          |
| Other income           | 0             | -2            | -290          | -1            | -1                                  | 0             | 0             |
| <b>Net total</b>       | <b>56,471</b> | <b>58,547</b> | <b>56,749</b> | <b>57,893</b> | <b>50,829</b>                       | <b>25,373</b> | <b>28,138</b> |

315. Analysis of overtime figures for officers within C3 Division demonstrates that there are typically peaks around Christmas and holiday periods. However, the levels of overtime have steadily increased since February 2015 as a result of authorised and targeted expenditure to address resource shortages. The annual overtime budget has already been exceeded as of period 5 of 2015-16. The spending has been largest in the East to address shortages at Bilston Glen.
316. Allocated budget figures for employee costs in 2015-16 are currently under review for all divisions and will be revised to better reflect actual establishment figures. Combined with high overtime levels, employee costs appear much larger than budgeted. Police Scotland now has both issues in hand and recruitment processes are well advanced to address resource shortages.
317. C3 Division generated income of approximately £826k in 2014-15. Much of this income is associated with criminal justice work and includes Accident Report fees (£600k) and Security Alarm fees (£90k). Charges for out of hours services to other organisations (£136k) reflect that many legacy forces had arrangements in place to undertake out of hours call handling on behalf of other public agencies in their areas. Some of these arrangements generated income and some were part of mutual support agreements. Police Scotland offered to renew these arrangements, but most organisations have chosen to develop their own local solutions.



318. HMICS has encountered difficulties in securing sufficient financial information to demonstrate true project costs and has not found evidence of accurate financial savings or benefits reporting from Police Scotland. HMICS views this information as a fundamental prerequisite to effective governance and accountability for every programme or project.

### **Recommendation 22**

Police Scotland should improve financial management and reporting for the C3IR project. The Scottish Police Authority should consider the level of scrutiny and due diligence applied to change project budgets and projected financial benefits. Identification of explicit savings against project costs (both revenue and capital) should be regularly monitored as part of business case review and overall benefits reporting.

## Planning and process

### Key findings

- Basic call handling processes are in place although consistency, understanding and definition of these processes all need to develop further.
- Currently there are no systematic processes for recording adverse incidents or 'near misses'.
- The lack of investment in process mapping and capturing local variances has been a weakness in the C3 change approach.
- More can be done to support service centre staff in assessing initial risk of calls and vulnerability of callers.
- Grading, prioritisation and dispatch of police officers works well for emergency and high priority calls, but lower priority calls can be affected by a lack of available officers to attend incidents and weak divisional management of these incidents.
- Risk and vulnerability assessment is strong within the area control room environment with ongoing re-evaluation of levels of risk as incidents are dispatched and managed.

### Key processes

319. The key processes for call handling within Police Scotland are represented at Figure 4.

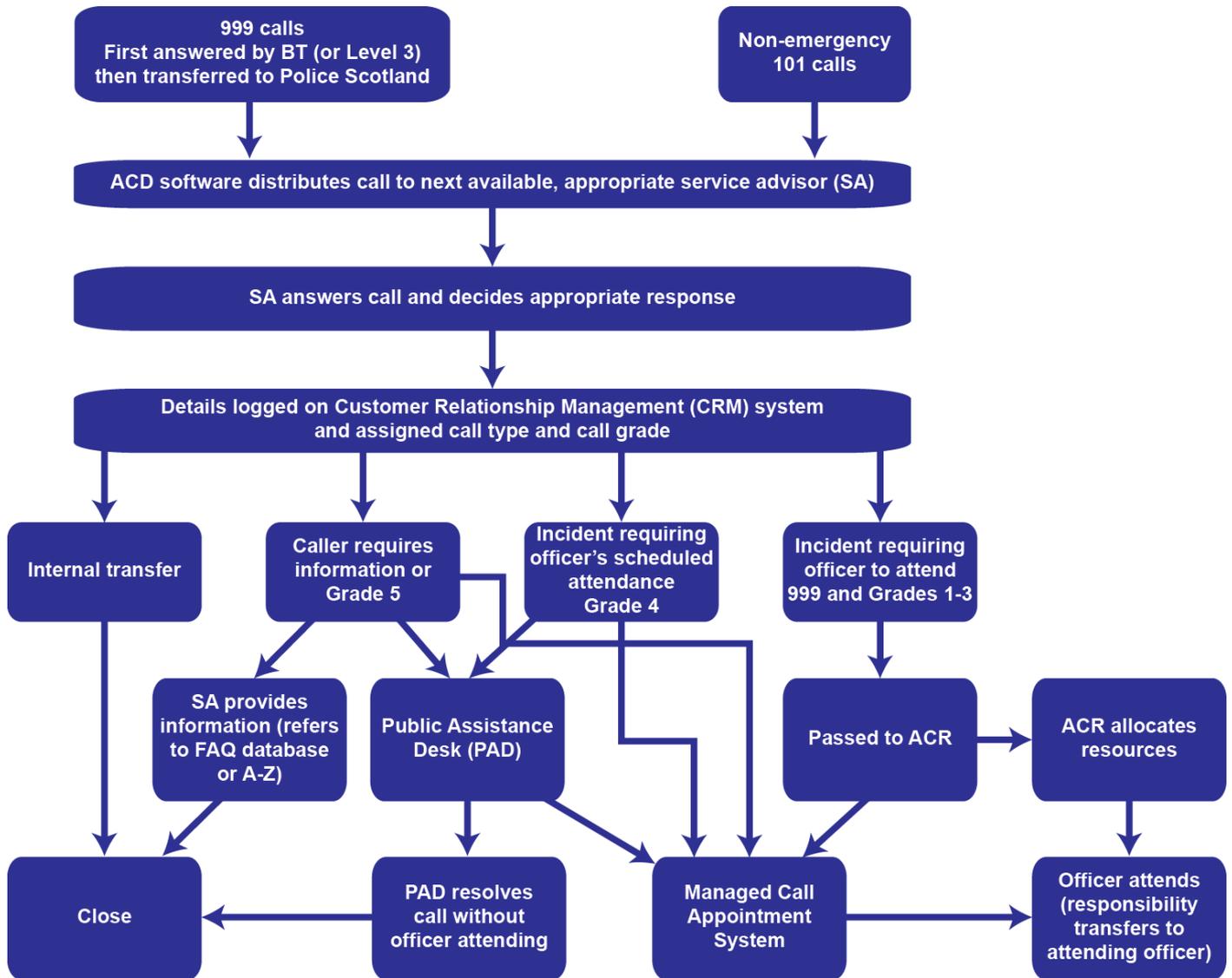
320. In order to understand key processes within the C3 environment, HMICS reviewed a number of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Table 9 – C3 Standard Operating Procedures

| SOP   | Date last updated | Scope   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Command and Control   | 7 April 2015      | Sets out ACR practices, procedures and responsibilities relating to command and control of incidents.   |
| Contact Management  | 28 October 2013   | Sets out service levels, expectations and performance framework for service centres.  |
| Incident Prioritisation and Response                            | 15 May 2014       | Lays out standards aimed at achieving consistent levels of grading and response to calls for assistance from members of the public.   |
| Interim Command and Control Communications and Interoperability | 28 October 2013   | Describes the circumstances and lays out the interim arrangements for allocating resources to Grade 1 calls. Supported by a process map it clearly outlines areas of responsibility for incident management and recording information when managing grade 1 incidents and sharing resources across legacy boundaries. |
| Airwave   | 3 June 2013       | Provides a framework for radio communications across the whole of Police Scotland.  |



Figure 4 – Call handling processes



321. HMICS found these SOPs to be of variable currency and quality. A standard operating procedure should aim to achieve predictable, standardised, desired outcomes at a key stage within the context of a larger overall process. SOPs need to describe the process in which the specific procedure sits. Different templates have been used to compile each of the SOPs and therefore they are inconsistent, particularly in the use of process maps as a means of describing the process and illustrating the significance of that procedure within that process.
322. However, the SOPs do provide comprehensive guidance in key areas such as Airwave functionality, call grading, linkages to other national guidance, standards expected and associated performance requirements. HMICS can therefore provide assurance that that basic processes are in place.



323. HMICS also sought process maps of high level processes to clarify those which staff should be following in both service centre and control rooms. HMICS was unable to identify up to date process maps which clearly set out in detail each step which staff should follow.
324. Police Scotland had previously identified key and ancillary processes transferring at each key stage of implementation. It had also developed lists of processes and procedures and received input from staff identifying 900 key processes. Whilst some of this work was of immediate value at the time of completion, there was no holistic approach or single identified process workstream within the project. A Process Development Group has been meeting since May 2015 to consider the detail captured to date. The group will now co-ordinate activity around process mapping. HMICS considers that key and ancillary processes which currently operate in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee should be identified and mapped against the new national processes.
325. At the time of our review, staff had an inconsistent understanding of key processes. This was true across the division, within each site and even within teams of staff. Many staff were still adhering to legacy processes and many were confused by the frequent communication, usually via email, of changes to processes. Staff were unclear as to where to source definitive instructions or guidelines on key processes. Our call audit has also confirmed a number of inconsistencies in processes across different C3 sites.
326. For those staff in the East and North adopting new processes, training had focussed on new ICT systems rather than business processes. Many staff reported that processes would change regularly as workarounds were found to manage local variances and ancillary processes that had not been identified or foreseen as part of preparatory project work.
327. Police Scotland has latterly begun to accurately map key processes as part of their Stage 7 project design work. It has demonstrated a clear understanding that core processes and their specification will be key to developing a comprehensive Invitation to Tender document (ITT). Funding has also been provided to contract expertise to undertake further process mapping work.
328. However, HMICS finds that the lack of initial investment in process mapping, capturing variances, engaging with staff, developing clear guidance and training has been a major weakness in the project approach. This has led to a subsequent need to identify workarounds to manage process variances. The approach was not strategic or systematic and should have focussed on core process definition and harmonisation prior to stage implementation.
329. This is typified by the processes which were being used to manage overflow calls from sites in the North area. The decision to overflow calls to Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen was made due to performance issues in the North around delays in call answering and abandoned calls. These were largely attributed to difficulties in retaining service centre staff after the announcement that work would be transferred from the centres in the North. Whilst HMICS acknowledges that answering calls is a priority for Police Scotland and preferable to leaving calls unanswered, we would have expected critical processes such as call transfer to be well developed, documented, trained and exercised. Instead, we found a number of variations to this process and a general lack of understanding amongst staff as to the correct steps to be followed.



330. We noted in our Interim Report that the practice of diverting unanswered ‘overflow’ calls was creating additional risk. This risk must be balanced against the risk of doing nothing and calls going unanswered. The number of call transfers varies on a weekly basis with an average of 170 calls per week being transferred from Inverness and an average of 401 calls per week being transferred from Dundee between 6 July 2015 and 19 October 2015. Police Scotland has since taken immediate action to improve the management of this process.
331. We still consider that this risk will not be removed until (i) the service centres in Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen are fully functional with the full complement of trained staff supported by stable systems and processes which are capable of taking the additional call demand from the North; and (ii) the new area control room in Dundee is fully operational. HMICS adhere to our view that the service centres in Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness should be maintained and staffed appropriately until these key elements are fully in place.

### Recommendation 23

Police Scotland should define and document its key processes within C3 Division and update its standard operating procedures. This should be supported with immediate investment in process training and guidance for all existing and new staff.

### Call grading and prioritisation

332. Once a call is received and an incident requires to be created, an incident type is selected by service advisors, using the CRM system, which best fits the description of the circumstances provided. In the West and East service centres, a default pre-defined priority (or grading) is assigned to the incident based on the incident type selected e.g. an incident involving theft is a Grade 2. This grading ultimately determines the level of response required and is defined as follows within the national Incident Prioritisation and Response SOP.

Table 10 – Standard call grading definitions

| Grade | Type          | Description  |
|-------|---------------|--|
| 1     | Immediate     | An ongoing incident where there is an immediate or apparent threat to life or a serious crime in progress                        |
| 2     | Priority      | Crime/Incident where there is a degree of urgency associated with police action  |
| 3     | Standard      | Incident not ongoing but police attendance is required – where the outcome could be prejudiced by significant delay              |
| 4     | Scheduled     | Crimes/incidents which will not be prejudiced by a scheduled response, with police attendance being at a mutually agreeable time |
| 5     | Non-attendant | Incidents that can be resolved by telephone or by some other means which do not require police attendance                        |



333. The default grading assigned to each call/incident type by the CRM system promotes a consistency of response. Assigned grades may be enhanced or reduced according to each circumstance, but any amendment to grading must be justified and recorded. Control room staff and officers will continually assess all available information, amending grades as circumstances dictate. HMICS supports default grades based on incident type and recognises the value in staff being allowed to amend these in light of individual circumstances and an assessment of risk and vulnerability.
334. It should be noted that although grades are the same nationally, the grading process currently varies across the North area, where ICT systems vary and do not supply default grades. Service advisors in Aberdeen often do not grade incidents, with the area control room applying grading once it receives an incident.
335. Understanding of the grading process also varied across the three areas, where some service advisors believed they were not permitted to amend or downgrade an incident, whereas others felt able to both upgrade and/or downgrade incidents as required based on their experience. This variation in understanding was evidenced across the division, within each site and even within teams of staff.
336. Although the SOP is clear that any amendment to grading must be justified and recorded, it is unclear about initial receipt of calls and the ability of service advisors to upgrade or downgrade. From statistics provided for the two weeks of our call audit, we observed that a much larger number of calls are being downgraded than are upgraded. HMICS views it as fundamental that all C3 staff are clear on this process to ensure consistent application of prioritisation.
337. Our audit of a sample of calls confirmed that most calls (93.9%) are graded correctly. However, we also identified some inconsistencies between locations on how incidents were graded (see paragraph 432).

### **Risk and vulnerability assessment**

338. Good practice dictates that grading should always be based on an assessment of risk and vulnerability and not on resource availability or meeting performance targets. Staff require to be provided with the framework, training and tools to support this process.
339. One of the primary benefits of using a CRM system to record caller details and their history of contact with the service centre is the support provided in assessing risk. Similarly, the CRM system can also record key vulnerability markers such as domestic violence, which will make service advisors aware of potential further risks.
340. HMICS has examined training materials in current use and has identified that no formal methodology has been introduced for service advisors to assess risk and vulnerability. HMICS benchmarking has revealed that best practice elsewhere includes the adoption of a clear model such as THRIVE<sup>69</sup> which has now been adopted in many forces in England and Wales.

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<sup>69</sup> National Policing Improvement Agency and Association of Chief Police Officers, *National Contact Management Principles and Practice* (2012). NPIA guidance sets out a requirement that forces have a common set of standards in the prioritisation of incoming incidents from members of the public. THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement) is a risk management tool which considers six elements to assist in identifying the appropriate response grade based on the needs of the caller and the circumstances of the incident.



341. Service centre staff receive some training in assessing risk and vulnerability but told us that they rely on their own experience in the service centre environment. They perceived a trend toward risk aversion, preferring not to downgrade calls.
342. Given the initial emphasis placed on cost saving and productivity in the current C3 model, Police Scotland requires to be confident that as it pursues efficiency, it does not compromise on the time allowed to undertake effective risk and vulnerability assessment. This should be accounted for as part of its demand management modelling in terms of average handling times.
343. Staff and officers in the control room environment were confident in their assessment of risk, with many referencing the National Decision Model (NDM).<sup>70</sup> Results from our audit of a sample of calls confirmed that control rooms were taking into account new information and reassessing risk, with effective re-assessment of call grades.

#### **Recommendation 24**

Police Scotland should adopt a more formalised risk and vulnerability assessment model for service advisors, reflecting this in both general and specialised awareness training.

#### **Incident handling and dispatch**

344. Once service advisors have received a call and recorded details, the incident is passed to the area control room in order that suitable resources can be dispatched according to the grading and circumstances surrounding the incident. It should be noted 999 and 101 calls requiring urgent police action can be directed immediately to the control room to ensure the minimum of delay in dispatch of appropriate resources.
345. The process of allocating incidents to front line officers is known as 'tasking'. Incidents must be tasked according to priority and the following prescribed timescales are set out within the Command and Control SOP.

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<sup>70</sup> The National Decision Model is a risk assessment framework, or decision making process, that is used by police forces across the country. It provides five different stages that officers can follow when making any type of decision. See ACPO, [National Decision Model](#).



Table 11 – Incident dispatch time targets

| Grade | Type                            | Incident dispatch targets   |
|-------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1     | Immediate                       | Within five minutes of acceptance at ACR  |
| 2     | Priority                        | Within 15 minutes of acceptance at ACR  |
| 3     | Standard                        | Within 40 minutes of acceptance at ACR  |
| 4     | Scheduled                       | Attendance at a mutually agreeable time   |
| 5     | Non-attendance                  | Incidents that can be resolved by telephone or by some other means which do not require police attendance                     |
| MCAS  | Managed call appointment system | Officers to attend at allocated time slot at complainant/reporter's home, or at police office/surgery by complainant/reporter |

346. It is essential that information passed to the control room is accurate, relevant and timely. The SOP clearly states that all incident information must be recorded in a concise and unambiguous manner, without protracted updates or specialised information.
347. Service advisors we spoke to in the East reported that whilst they attempt to record as much information as possible from the caller, they feel under pressure to keep call handling times short and often pass the incident through to the control room when they feel further information could have been recorded. Similarly, control room operators, particularly in the North and East areas, noted deterioration in the quality of information passed through from the service centre. This may on occasion require control room staff to contact the caller again for further information. Our call audit also reflected that some calls in the West were cut unnecessarily short whereas some calls in the East were overly long.
348. HMICS views that perceived pressure to reduce call times to meet grades of service in the East may be impacting on the quality of information which is passed to control rooms and is not facilitating priority assessment or quality of response.
349. In order to allocate an incident, control room operators require to identify available resources. A number of systems are used to identify location and type of resource available, including automatic resource location systems that map officer locations in real time. Control room staff noted a number of ongoing challenges, particularly around local supervisors not updating deployment plans. This results in resources not appearing on the Command and Control system as available for allocation, even though they may be on duty. This is also essential from an officer safety perspective.
350. In a recent sample of officers who had indicated their availability on the system, C3 Division found that 33% of response, 48% of community and 68.5% of CID officers had not booked on in the East. These officers were not visible to the ACR and therefore not readily available for deployment. While local divisions have arrangements in place to use the duty management system to allocate these officers to local priorities and operations, it is essential that accurate data is available to ACRs to assess the level of



resource available at any time within particular locations. Police Scotland is actively managing this issue and guidance has recently been issued to a number of divisions.

351. While senior managers are clear that the current service centre model focuses on effectiveness, staff we spoke to were clear there is a focus on call handling times and expediting incidents to the control room. This limits capacity within the service centre to resolve minor incidents at first point of contact and has the potential to place additional demand on front line officers. There was a perception amongst some staff in the East and North control rooms that this additional demand places pressure on operators to allocate incidents when there may not be resources available to respond. This results in incidents queuing for extended periods of time.
352. Overall, Grade 1 and 2 calls are dispatched within timescale and responded to appropriately. However, HMICS observed a number of issues with the incident handling process associated with the challenges listed above. We observed incidents being downgraded after officers had attended with no clear rationale; control room supervisors allocating calls to themselves; and use of inappropriate incident closure codes. Whilst these processes in themselves do not affect the quality of service provided to the public, their cumulative effect is to skew performance figures and mask issues with workload. HMICS is aware that these issues have already been identified and are being addressed by Police Scotland.
353. Grade 3 calls have been identified as a potential issue in the East. These calls typically do not involve the need for an immediate priority response, but do require officers to attend within a reasonable timescale. The volume of Grade 1 and 2 calls may prevent timeous response from frontline officers to Grade 3 calls which may subsequently be deferred for the next shift. This Grade 3 deferral process can often continue over a number of shifts and result in a poor response. HMICS is aware that Police Scotland has daily processes to assess and manage calls which have not been attended to and is monitoring these with local divisions.
354. HMICS has already commented on the availability of local policing resources within our recent Local Policing+ Inspection of Edinburgh Division.<sup>71</sup> When combined with officers not being visible to the ACR and therefore not readily available for deployment, and the implementation of the 'task not ask' policy, the impact across the East is to increase demand on the system. This includes deferring non-urgent incidents and generating a backlog for local officers to attend. These issues should be considered by Police Scotland when implementing our recommendation that it review current resourcing arrangements for Edinburgh Division.<sup>72</sup>
355. Police Scotland currently operates a Managed Call Appointment System (MCAS) which allows callers to book scheduled or diary appointments with officers. HMICS supports the use of this system, which provides a quality of service to the public by attending their calls at a time convenient to them and also provides greater opportunities for Police Scotland to manage its demand for routine incidents. This system relies heavily on the support of local divisions and the commitment of dedicated resources to attend appointments. Police Scotland has identified the need to

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<sup>71</sup> HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Edinburgh Division* (2015).

<sup>72</sup> Recommendation 3, HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of Edinburgh Division* (2015).



improve its management of MCAS and HMICS is encouraged by the recent addition of performance management information which reports on the proportion of cancelled appointments across Scotland.

356. Much of the feedback that HMICS has received from the public and elected representatives through our online questionnaire has focussed on the time it takes for an officer to attend an incident and not on the initial call handling. Police Scotland is currently developing its approach to reporting attendance and response time, which should separate the time taken to dispatch or allocate an officer to attend an incident (incident dispatch targets) and the time taken for the officer to attend. HMICS is advised that differing ICT systems in the North do not allow a national performance indicator to be reported as yet, but performance for other divisions can be found in monthly indicator reports produced by Police Scotland. HMICS supports this approach, which provides more meaningful management information to inform both the quality of service provided to the public and the resource levels within local policing.
357. C3 introduced the 'task not ask' approach early in the implementation of the single force. This approach involves control rooms directing the most appropriate available policing resource based on the nature of the incident to attend calls from the public. Although outwith the scope of this report, HMICS has reported in each of its local policing inspections<sup>73</sup> on the impact of 'task not ask' and levels of local resources. Divisions have viewed the approach as being owned by C3 and protocols have been created to ensure that conflicts between controllers and front line managers over local deployment are minimised.
358. HMICS supports a flexible approach by Police Scotland to deployment that reflects the diverse nature of the policing environment across the whole of Scotland, and is equally effective in urban areas as well as rural areas where officers cover a larger geography. This approach should be embodied within relevant policy documents, standard operating procedures and guidance communicated to all operational members of staff.

### **Quality assurance processes**

359. HMICS has found evidence of a variety of quality assurance processes within C3 division. However, these are not applied consistently or systematically across all sites and lack detailed specification. Furthermore, there is no current overarching framework or approach for quality assurance and more could be done to provide a higher level of risk mitigation.
360. Police Scotland recognises the need to strengthen its existing quality assurance arrangements within C3 Division. HMICS notes that a report was submitted to the C3IR Project Board seeking approval for an independent Resource Management and Quality Assurance Unit in July 2015. This proposal has since been approved by HRRC and notified to JNCC and is now under consultation with staff.
361. The most commonly referenced quality process is undertaken by service centre team leaders and supervisors, who listen to a sample of approximately 30-40 calls (three to five calls per advisor) each month, in order to assess each service advisors' adherence to standards. A spreadsheet is used to record these assessments and individual feedback is provided to service advisors. The assessment considers caller

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<sup>73</sup> HMICS, *Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Pilot inspection of Fife Division* (2014); *Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015); *Inspection of Aberdeen City Division* (2015); and *Inspection of Edinburgh Division* (2015).



verification, transferring calls, giving advice, accurate recording, coding and prioritisation, call handling skills, call closure and compliance with data protection. Supervisors also actively listen in to calls and monitor in real time.

362. We found examples of good practice in Aberdeen and Inverness in terms of this process which had been well developed and embedded. Aberdeen had a dedicated Quality Assurance Supervisor in place to support their approach. Although a process had been in place in Dundee, due to resource pressure, no quality assurance had taken place for some time.
363. We found that the process had been in place in the West for some time, with guidance developed in 2008, and had recently been introduced in Bilston Glen. Feedback to staff was viewed as poor, with many feeling they only received negative feedback if at all. The approach to PDR was variable with many service centre and control room staff not having had one for at least two years. HMICS recognises that this is a wider issue for Police Scotland and we have previously made specific recommendations around the need for a national PDR system.<sup>74</sup>
364. The Command and Control SOP does not specify the minimum standards required for quality checking by supervisors such as method, frequency, feedback, rectification and links to PDR etc. Whilst the Contact Management SOP makes reference to a performance framework which includes 'Quality of Contact', there is no reference made to any mechanism for obtaining this information.
365. The Command and Control SOP requires ACR supervisors to regularly quality check incidents within the ACR to ensure:
  - correct use of priority grading
  - incidents are being tasked within appropriate timescales
  - incidents contain all necessary information
  - correct incident closure codes are applied.
366. These processes include checking a sample of incidents for Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) compliance.<sup>75</sup> HMICS endorses this sampling of incidents and recognises that it strengthens the overall assurance framework for crime recording.<sup>76</sup> However, challenges over staffing levels and demand within the ACRs have resulted in limited capacity for supervisors to undertake routine and systematic quality assurance checks.
367. External consultants recommended in early 2014 that team leaders, duty managers and resource manager job descriptions should include an element of quality assurance and quality management, with the C3 Divisional Co-ordination Unit (DCU) also having a role. The recommendations also include establishing a support unit to take responsibility for ongoing quality assurance. HMICS notes that the establishment of an independent Quality Assurance Unit is now underway.

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<sup>74</sup> Recommendation 4, HMICS, *Inspection of Ayrshire Division* (2015).

<sup>75</sup> The Scottish Crime Recording Standard provides guidance on when an incident should be recorded as a crime.

<sup>76</sup> See HMICS, *Review of incident and crime recording* (2013); and *Crime Audit 2014* (2014).



368. HMICS has undertaken our own audit of a sample of 101 and 999 calls. Our results show that the majority of people who contact the police via 101 and 999 receive effective customer service. Full results can be found at page 101.
369. These results provide a degree of assurance that the public continues to receive a good service from Police Scotland despite many of the challenges it has faced in delivering considerable change and savings within a short timescale.
370. HMICS considers that Police Scotland should establish a clear Quality Assurance Framework as soon as possible, ensuring this is both adequately resourced and that its scope includes all core processes and linkages into the C3 performance management framework. This should include regular call audits undertaken by the Quality Assurance Unit and the results shared with the SPA and local policing scrutiny committees. In developing its Quality Assurance Framework, Police Scotland should take into account the results of our audit of police call handling (see page 101).

### **Recommendation 25**

Police Scotland should establish a Quality Assurance Framework as soon as possible. This should include regular call audits undertaken by the Quality Assurance Unit and the results shared with the Scottish Police Authority and local policing scrutiny committees.

371. There is no systematic process for recording adverse incidents or 'near misses', where staff or supervisors identify or are made aware of specific incidents that highlight potential weaknesses in processes, systems and training. During our review, staff highlighted a small number of adverse incidents, which served to illustrate potential weaknesses or unforeseen consequences and identified areas for improvement. HMICS considers that this is a vital process to capture learning and refine core processes within C3 which is not currently being addressed. This is especially relevant at a time of significant change and where national processes may not yet be fully developed. Some staff reported that they rarely had time to record or escalate such incidents, whilst others did not always feel confident. Police Scotland should promote an improvement culture where staff are encouraged to report adverse incidents or near misses. It should introduce a process as soon as possible where these can be recorded and assessed, and any improvement identified and implemented.

### **Recommendation 26**

Police Scotland should promote an improvement culture where staff are encouraged to report adverse incidents or 'near misses' and introduce processes as soon as possible where these can be recorded, assessed and any improvement identified and implemented.

## **Public Assistance Desks**

372. In designing its Strategic Direction, C3 Division has sub-divided itself into three operational areas: the service centre; the Public Assistance Desk (PAD); and the area control room. PADs are staffed by police officers. These officers are responsible for responding to calls from the public which can be dealt with over the phone and which do not need an officer to attend. PAD officers are typically able to initiate crime enquires, providing more specialist advice and support to callers. HMICS views this as



a valuable resource and one which can effectively manage demand and remove workload from control rooms and front line officers.

373. The Strategic Direction document states that as a transitional measure, local PADs will be retained at discontinued legacy force sites in order to provide an element of local knowledge and a means of access to legacy ICT systems, specifically to support the assessment of risk and vulnerability. PADs are still in operation in Dumfries, Stirling and Glenrothes.
374. HMICS found that the role of the PAD and the functions they perform, their resourcing and supervision was variable across sites. Some PADs were still undertaking legacy processes, which did not transfer with service centre or control room staff and have not yet been allocated or transferred to other divisions. Service Administrators (Crime Inputters) have also been retained at Glenrothes. These staff take crime reports directly from the public and also create and update crime reports for police officers within Fife Division.
375. PADs play a vital supporting role in resolution at first point of contact. However, HMICS observed evidence of a heavy workload for PAD officers at sites across Scotland, inappropriate incidents being allocated to them and more generally insufficient resources being available to meet demand.
376. The Strategic Direction also states that PADs will be centralised into a national PAD unit. However it also envisages that PAD functions will be pooled or integrated into the virtual service centre, enabling the future release of additional officer posts. Police Scotland is still considering the future direction and national role of PADs. The final direction will also be informed by the roll out of the i6 system, as there may be a requirement for PADs to retain some crime reporting functions in the interim. HMICS supports the further development of PADs and their contribution to manage demand and reduce workloads on local policing divisions across Scotland. This development should be underpinned by a clear and consistent vision for the role and responsibilities of the PAD and any national implementation should be adequately resourced to meet defined benefits and outcomes.

### **Recommendation 27**

Police Scotland should ensure there is a clear and consistent vision for the role, responsibilities and resourcing of Public Assistance Desks.

### **Service Overview**

377. There are currently two Overview functions in C3 Division in the West and East areas. There is no current Overview function in the North, however control room supervisors undertake this role. The Overview function in the West also undertakes a national service co-ordinating role.
378. The role of the Service Overview function includes:
  - oversight and monitoring of strategic force and command area communications
  - ensuring the effective and efficient direction and deployment of specialist resources
  - ensuring the professional operation of the area control room
  - close liaison with area control room and divisional/departamental supervisors
  - providing quality assurance in respect of incident management



- ensuring that area control room personnel operate correct radio procedures and that serious incidents receive a quick and efficient response
  - circulating messages and information in accordance with force procedures
  
  - the initial dispatch of armed response vehicles to incidents that require their attendance
  - monitoring response to major incidents to ensure initial control and co-ordination and an appropriate divisional response.
379. Service Overview also produces daily briefings (known as the Chief Constable's Note) highlighting serious incidents including murder, attempted murder, serious assaults, rape, robbery, fatal and serious road crashes, firearms incidents, drug related and other deaths across Scotland.
380. Although Service Overview does not fall within the scope of the original C3 Strategic Direction, this is an important function in terms of managing specialist and critical incidents, firearms operations, supervisory support, general oversight and quality assurance. The function is usually managed by highly experienced control room officers at the rank of police inspector and is usually supported by communications and research/intelligence analysts.
381. HMICS is aware that Police Scotland is developing proposals to integrate the service overview function within the new C3IR model. Given the critical nature of this function, we would expect these proposals to be well evidenced and provide significant assurance that they will meet the operational policing needs across Scotland, demonstrating sufficient capability and capacity to meet unplanned demand and offer sufficient resilience and business continuity. Whilst HMICS acknowledges the sensitivities of making detailed operational information publicly available, we would expect any proposals impacting on Service Overview to be scrutinised in private session by the SPA.

### **Recommendation 28**

Police Scotland should ensure that any changes impacting on the Service Overview function are fully risk assessed and included with the appropriate governance for Stages 5 and 6 of the C3IR project.

382. The co-ordination of major incident plans is the responsibility of the Operational Support Division (OSD) in Police Scotland. These plans are held manually in the West, whereas in the North and East they were held on the legacy Command and Control systems. These plans typically provide a detailed set of actions to follow and contacts/responses. HMICS found that awareness of these plans was variable across locations.
383. The C3IR project and national implementation of a Command and Control system provides an opportunity for Police Scotland to combine all major incident plans into a single system and make them accessible to ACRs and the Service Overview Function. While these plans are managed by OSD, there is a requirement for C3 Division to include a specific workstream within its Stage 5 and 6 plans to co-ordinate the collation and transfer of all major incident plans onto a single system and embed processes for their ongoing management. This workstream should also include training for C3 staff in their use.



## Recommendation 29

Police Scotland should include a specific workstream within its Stage 5 and 6 plans of the C3IR project to co-ordinate the collation and transfer of all major incident plans onto a single system and embed processes for their ongoing management. This should also include training for staff in their use.

### National Systems Support

384. The Strategic Direction document sets out a role for the Inverness site as a national command centre. However, Police Scotland was clear that the detail of this role had yet to be developed. The early design included a facility which officers and police staff from across Scotland could access and request checks of national databases and intelligence systems. The base was also to support the command of major incidents and events to be managed from this location. It was also noted that an increase of staff may be required to meet these needs.
385. Currently a systems support function is located at Govan providing this service to the West. This function has developed significantly over the past few years, extended its role and has highly skilled staff providing a quality service. In the East and North, the provision of system checks has proven to be more challenging and inconsistent. Legacy forces used front counter staff and service centre or control room to provide this service. Subsequent to the Police Scotland review of public counters<sup>77</sup> and consolidation of service centres, there have been limitations on the resources available to perform these functions.
386. The Inverness ACR is a modern facility within a self-contained building. It is one of the smaller facilities across Scotland and has limited prospects for expansion without considerable redevelopment work with associated costs. It was therefore not selected as a service centre or permanent control room site under the C3IR project.
387. Stage 5 of the project involves relocation of the Inverness control room functions to Dundee and the Inverness service centre function to the National Virtual Service Centre. Inverness will then provide national PNC and other database enquiries and a facility to manage events and major incidents for the Highlands and Islands. The exact role of the Inverness site is currently subject to design work in Police Scotland.
388. HMICS commends the location of national functions outwith the central belt and the retention of experienced police staff across Scotland. We do however note that staff will require to develop new skills and experience to meet the expectations of their new roles and sufficient time and training should be made available as part of transition planning. It will also be critical that ACR members of staff are not de-skilled in this process. Whilst staff at Inverness have felt some uncertainty regarding their future roles, they have felt secure in the knowledge that their jobs are not under threat.
389. This service will be critical to operational policing and may require to be available 24/7 in order to meet operational demand. It would therefore be useful to clarify the vision for this service and consider a resilient model of service utilising the current centre of expertise in the West. Implementation of this function should also be adequately resourced to meet defined benefits and outcomes.

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<sup>77</sup> Police Scotland, [Public Counter Service Provisions](#) (report to a meeting of the SPA Board, 4 December 2013).



390. HMICS also notes that effort should be spent on developing processes within other divisions to ensure this national function is used effectively.

**Recommendation 30**

Police Scotland should ensure there is a clear and consistent vision for the role, responsibilities and resourcing of the National Systems Support function.

# Audit of police call handling

## Key findings

- The majority of people who contact the police via 999 and 101 received effective customer service.
- In 96.9% of calls we audited, the service advisors were polite, helpful and professional. Service advisors generally delivered an effective and efficient service in often challenging circumstances, and dealt with calls with patience and empathy.
- Where we found the service advisor not to have been polite, helpful and professional, this was due to the service advisor being impatient, interrupting the caller unnecessarily, failing to ask sufficient follow-up questions or providing poor advice.
- In a few cases, service advisors did not strike an appropriate balance between listening to the caller and capturing all relevant information, and ending the call promptly so the service advisor is available to receive another call.
- The call result was appropriate in 95.1% of the calls we assessed, with service advisors seeking to resolve the caller's query at the first point of contact. Where calls were not resolved appropriately on first contact, additional and unnecessary demand on the service was created.
- There was some inconsistency in the way service advisors responded to similar or the same incidents.
- We listened to several calls where the caller was frustrated that officers had failed to update them on the progress of their case. In a few cases, some callers eventually became unco-operative with the police due to a lack of communication.
- The customer relationship management system was not used consistently across service centres and service advisors. This poses risks to the quality of the data on the system.
- Police Scotland made considerable efforts to trace abandoned or silent 999 calls.
- In 98.0% of the calls we audited that resulted in an incident, the service advisor accurately recorded what was said by the caller.
- The best opening code was used for 96.5% of the incidents we audited and the best closing code for 92.6% of incidents.
- 95.1% of incidents were closed correctly and in accordance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard. This is higher than the compliance rate achieved by Police Scotland in our Crime Audit 2014 (92%).
- While 93.9% of incidents were graded correctly, there was some inconsistency in grading practice across Scotland.



## Our audit

391. The aim of our audit was to gather evidence regarding the quality of call handling by Police Scotland. This includes quantitative information regarding the quality of the police response to calls made to the 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency services, as well as qualitative information in the form of themes arising from the calls audited. This quantitative and qualitative evidence has informed our wider review of call handling.

## Methodology

392. We audited 1,501 calls made to the police via the 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency numbers. The audit of each call involved listening to the call and reviewing any incident record that resulted. We assessed the quality of the police response to the caller against several criteria. In relation to all calls, we assessed whether the service advisor was polite, helpful and professional, and whether the call result was appropriate. Call results could include creating an incident record, providing the caller with advice or transferring the call to a relevant person.

393. In relation to calls that resulted in incidents, we applied additional assessment criteria. We checked the information given by the caller was accurately recorded on the incident, whether the best opening and closing codes were used for the incident, and whether the incident was graded correctly. We also assessed whether the incident was closed correctly. Correct closure means either that (a) the incident was closed as being non-crime related and contained sufficient information to dispel any inference of criminality; or (b) the incident indicated a crime had occurred and a crime report was traced.

394. For 999 calls, we also assessed whether the caller had made appropriate use of the 999 emergency service.

## Call selection

395. The calls audited were from two one-week periods: calls made to the police between Monday 15 and Sunday 21 June (Week 1) and between Monday 13 July and Sunday 19 July (Week 2). These weeks were chosen as they fell before and after the reporting of the incident on 5 July which prompted our call handling review, and because we anticipated that the incident may have affected service advisor behaviour. The calls audited were randomly selected by HMICS from across a full week to ensure that some calls audited were received at peak times, and to ensure a spread of calls across different teams of service advisors. We audited 751 calls in Week 1 and 750 calls in Week 2.

396. Calls to 999 and 101 are received at five locations in Scotland: Aberdeen, Bilston Glen, Dundee, Govan/Motherwell<sup>78</sup> and Inverness. The number of 999 and 101 calls we audited in each location was proportionate to the number of calls received by that location during Weeks 1 and 2.

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<sup>78</sup> For the purpose of our audit, we viewed the service centres at Govan and Motherwell as a single centre.



Table 12 – Number of calls audited

| Location          | Week 1       |              | Week 2       |              | Total number of calls audited |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|                   | Calls to 999 | Calls to 101 | Calls to 999 | Calls to 101 |                               |
| Aberdeen          | 10           | 87           | 11           | 92           | 200                           |
| Bilston Glen      | 39           | 179          | 40           | 182          | 440                           |
| Dundee            | 10           | 69           | 10           | 53           | 142                           |
| Govan/ Motherwell | 59           | 248          | 59           | 256          | 622                           |
| Inverness         | 4            | 46           | 4            | 43           | 97                            |
| Scotland          | 122          | 629          | 124          | 626          | 1,501                         |

397. Many calls made to the 101 non-emergency number are not from members of the public. For example, the 101 service can be used by partner agencies seeking to speak to a named person within Police Scotland. Where the calls we randomly selected were of this nature, we chose not to include them in our audit. Instead, we focused on calls made by members of the public, or calls from partner agencies which were more complex than simply requiring transfer to a named person. In total, we discarded 762 calls from our sample because they would not have contributed to our assessment of the quality of police call handling in Scotland. These included calls from partner agencies such as the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service which were immediately transferred to a named person, and misdialled calls (usually where the caller was seeking the NHS on its 111 number).
398. We sought to report on statistically significant call results at a Scotland-wide level with a confidence interval of 95% ± 1.5%. Further information about our methodology and confidence intervals for location specific results, for 999 and 101 calls, and for Weeks 1 and Week 2 is available from paragraph 436 and at Table 14.
399. In this report, we present only our overall results. We do not comment on our quantitative results in Week 1 compared to Week 2, on 999 calls compared to calls to 101, or on comparisons between locations. This is because our audit of calls did not identify any statistically significant differences in these areas – all result ranges overlapped with the overall result for each test in our audit. While we anticipated that there may have been a change in service advisor behaviour between Week 1 (pre-incident) and Week 2 (post-incident), we did not find this to be the case. Similarly, there was no location that performed significantly better or significantly worse when compared to Scotland as a whole. We report on the full results of our audit, including a breakdown by location, week and whether the call was made to the 999 or 101 service at Table 15 on page 114.

## Results

400. The results set out below show that the vast majority of people who contact the police via 999 and 101 receive effective customer service. Where we have highlighted concerns, it should be remembered that these related to a small number of calls. Nonetheless, the findings from our audit should be taken into account by Police Scotland, particularly when delivering training to service advisors and those managing incidents, and when carrying out internal quality assurance (see recommendations 14 and 25).



### **Was the service advisor polite, helpful and professional?**

401. In 96.9% of calls we listened to, the service advisors were polite, helpful and professional. They asked the caller probing questions and were able to gather information and resolve the call quickly. Service advisors generally delivered an effective and efficient service in often challenging circumstances. They often dealt with callers who were distressed, panicked and incoherent due to the circumstances that led them to contact the police. At times, callers were also incoherent due to their mental state or drunkenness. Service advisors did well in these circumstances to calm the caller, keep them focused and gather information from them. In other cases, service advisors managed calls professionally despite callers being aggressive and rude.
402. We listened to many calls where the service advisor delivered good customer service with patience and empathy. We heard several calls in which the caller suffered from dementia and had contacted the police in a distressed and confused state. Service advisors were reassuring and managed these calls with kindness. Some service advisors frequently thanked callers for contacting the police to report an accident or to provide intelligence. This was often reassuring for callers who were unsure about whether they had done the right thing and meant they had a positive experience of police contact.

#### **Example**

In one call we audited, a woman reported that her ex-partner had contacted her to say he intended to kill himself. The woman did not know the current location of her ex-partner or where he now lived. She contacted police with her concerns but was apologetic that she did not have much information and struggled to remember details about his family (the relationship had ended some time ago). The service advisor was initially unable to trace the ex-partner using police systems but after talking with the caller patiently and encouraging her to think of places they had visited, the service advisor was able to gather enough information to identify the addresses of the ex-partner's family members. Eventually the location of the ex-partner was identified, the police and an ambulance attended, and the man was taken to hospital. Patient call taking, effective questioning and good searching of police systems resulted in this call ending with a positive outcome.

403. In the 3.1% of calls where we found the service advisor not to have been polite, helpful or professional, this was due to the service advisor being impatient, interrupting the caller unnecessarily, failing to ask sufficient follow-up questions or providing poor advice.
404. While it is important that calls are dealt with swiftly, an appropriate balance must be struck between listening to the caller and capturing all relevant information, and ending the call promptly so the service advisor is available to receive another call. Most service advisors, particularly those in Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness, managed this well. In a small number of calls we heard at Govan/Motherwell, we felt the service advisor had been too abrupt while at Bilston Glen, we felt some calls were unnecessarily long.



405. We heard some inconsistency in how 101 calls were answered. Police Scotland's contact management policy requires those who answer 101 calls to greet callers by saying, 'Good morning/afternoon/evening [as appropriate], Police Scotland, [call taker's name] speaking, how may I help you?' In a small number of the calls we listened to, this standard corporate greeting was not used. While this mostly had no adverse consequences, in some cases it lengthened the call and confused the caller.

### Example

In one call we audited, the call was simply answered 'hello' rather than by using the standard Police Scotland greeting. The caller was clearly confused and the first part of the call was spent clarifying that he was speaking to the police, rather than exploring the reason for the call.

### Was the call result appropriate?

406. A service advisor can resolve a call in various ways. For example, the caller may be transferred to another person or department, a message may be sent to a named officer on behalf of the caller or the service advisor may give advice, thereby resolving the query at first contact. The service advisor may also create an incident as a result of the call which will usually result in police attendance. Of the 1,501 calls we audited, 60% resulted in the creation of an incident. Calls to 999 were more likely to result in the creation of an incident: 89.4% of calls to 999 resulted in an incident compared to only 54.7% of calls to 101.
407. In our audit, the call result was appropriate in 95.1% of the calls we assessed. Service advisors sought to resolve the caller's query at first contact, in line with Police Scotland policy, and they often provided the caller with good advice on a range of issues. Some service advisors were particularly helpful in ensuring the call was resolved to the caller's satisfaction.

### Example

In one call we listened to, an elderly person called 101 to report lost property. She was advised that lost property can be reported via the Police Scotland website. On telling the service advisor that she did not have access to the internet, the service advisor completed the online form on behalf of the caller.

408. Where the call result was not appropriate, this was often because an incident should have been created but was not. In some cases, service advisors advised callers to attend at their local police office to report a crime when they should have been able to record the details themselves and either create an incident or pass the caller to the Public Assistance Desk. In other cases, service advisors provided incorrect advice which could lead to the under-recording of crime. For example, some callers were wrongly advised that their concerns related to a civil rather than a criminal matter and therefore did not merit police involvement. Some service advisors had a tendency to treat reports of stolen property as lost property.
409. In Aberdeen, callers who want to report a crime that can be dealt with over the phone (such as theft of a bicycle) may be told that someone will call them back to take the full details of the crime. This can be an effective means of managing demand within the service centre during busier times, or can be done at the caller's request. In relation to



one call we audited, this process was agreed with the caller but the police were unable to make contact with the caller again despite both the police and the caller making multiple efforts to contact each other. In this case, the caller eventually gave up. Because no details had been taken at the time of the initial call, this crime was not recorded. We appreciate that taking full details of a crime report may be challenging during busy periods, but service advisors should at least create a skeleton incident or crime report that can be fully populated later once all details are known. This will help to ensure that all allegations of crime are recorded in compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard.

410. In some cases, service advisors were not able to provide as full information or advice as we would have expected. For example, callers would be advised to attend at their local police station, but service advisors struggled to advise the location of the station or its opening hours. This was sometimes because of systems outages when they were not able to access the information. Information that is regularly needed, such as station opening times, should be available in hard copy in each centre to assist service advisors in the event of a systems failure.
411. We also noted inconsistencies in the way service advisors responded to similar or the same incidents. Occasionally, callers would not get the response they were looking for and would phone back a short time later and get a different response from a different service advisor. For example, in one case, the caller was advised to attend at his local police station the following day. The caller contacted the police again a short time later. The second call was dealt with by a different service advisor and resulted in an incident being created and police attending. Failing to resolve calls appropriately on first contact led to additional and unnecessary demands on the service.
412. Additional demand on the 101 service was also caused by callers who repeatedly contacted the police for an update on their case. They were frustrated that they were not being updated by the police officers dealing with their case, and had to use 101 to reach them instead of contacting them directly. Service advisors dealt appropriately with these situations by emailing officers and asking them to get in touch with the caller but these requests were often not fulfilled, causing the caller to try again. We saw some cases where callers eventually became unco-operative with the police due to the lack of communication.
413. In some cases, callers would contact 101 in response to a letter sent to them or a call card left by a police officer. Too often, letters and call cards did not provide sufficient information to allow the service advisor to efficiently transfer the caller. They sometimes lacked the officer's full name or shoulder number or their home police office. Service advisors could spend considerable time searching the Police Scotland directory trying to find the person to whom the caller should be transferred. Even where the correct officer details were passed out, we heard that the directory of officers was out of date with incorrect contact information. We also listened to some calls where the caller had received a letter advising them to attend a police office to collect a citation. On arrival at the office, it was closed. Communications from Police Scotland requesting attendance at a police office should advise the recipient of the opening hours of that office.



414. In Inverness, there appeared to be resistance to giving out incident numbers to callers. These numbers can be invaluable when callers phone back with additional information or for an update on their case. Failing to provide incident numbers means service advisors spend time searching systems for the relevant incident.

### ***Customer relationship management system***

415. A customer relationship management (CRM) system is used by service advisors in Aberdeen, the East and the West. This system provides service advisors with access to call histories, geographical information, and Police Scotland databases and directories. Police Scotland expects that an 'event' will be created for every call received. This will allow the service to have a history of all calls made which can be useful when dealing with dynamic incidents and with callers who are particularly vulnerable. For example, if a repeat victim of domestic abuse calls the police, the service advisor can search the CRM system using the caller's name or phone number to establish the victim's address and the history of abuse. This information can help the service advisor decide how to resolve the call and what priority it should have. The record on the CRM system will be updated with the latest 'event' (i.e. call) and the service advisor can add notes to the record describing the circumstances. When closing the event, the service advisor will be prompted to record the call result (e.g. incident created, call transferred, message sent or advice given).
416. We found the CRM system was used inconsistently between centres and between service advisors. Some calls were not recorded on the system at all. This was true of all centres using the CRM system but was more prevalent at Bilston Glen. Failure to record all calls on the CRM system at Bilston Glen may partly be explained by the performance of the system at that location. The system was slow and often froze, making it impossible to use during a dynamic call taking situation. Often we found that incidents had been created immediately, without using the CRM system as an intermediate step (incidents are created on a separate Command and Control system).
417. We also found that service advisors were regularly recording the wrong call result on the CRM system. Where they had transferred a call, they had closed the record as 'advice given', or where they had created an incident, they had closed the record as 'message sent'. Where the actual outcome of the call was the correct one, we did not record these as a fail for the purpose of our audit. However, it is important that service advisors accurately record the call result to maintain the accuracy of data on the CRM system.
418. If a caller contacts the police and provides their phone number, this will be recorded on the CRM system. If the same caller contacts the police again and provides the same phone number, the latest call event will be attached to the original record. If, however, multiple callers contact the police from the same phone number (such as a payphone), then the record for the payphone number will have multiple events attached to it. Similarly, if the same caller uses multiple phones to contact the police, each phone number can be attached to the caller's record. When logging calls on the CRM system, service advisors should attach the call to an existing record where possible. This helps to build a history for a particular caller or a phone number (or an address). It is important that service advisors do this correctly to maintain the integrity of the data in the CRM system and ensure the call history is accurate. We were concerned about the quality of the data on the CRM system. Particularly at Aberdeen and Bilston Glen, we



noted that call events were being attached to the wrong record. For example, a call from a male was logged against the record of a female who had used the same phone, or multiple entries were created for one caller instead of being consolidated on one record.

**Abandoned 999 calls**

419. We noted considerable efforts being made by Police Scotland to trace abandoned or silent 999 calls. These included calls where the caller cleared the line before being transferred to the police by the BT operator, or where the call terminated before the service advisor could gather sufficient information. Often, these calls were malicious or accidental calls (such as by a young child playing with a phone, or by someone ‘pocket dialling’ on their mobile phone). These calls were automatically graded as priority 2 (see paragraph 429) and often resulted in police re-contacting the caller or attending at their address to ensure no assistance was required.

**Location of service advisors**

420. Police Scotland’s plans to rationalise service centres and control rooms have caused concern among the public and stakeholders, particularly in relation to fears that service advisors based in far off locations will lack the necessary local knowledge to effectively deal with calls. Following the closure of the control room in Dumfries and Galloway in May 2014, calls from that area are being taken by service advisors based in Govan/Motherwell. There were multiple calls from people located in Dumfries and Galloway in our random sample of calls. We found all of them to be well managed.

**Correlation between service advisor demeanour and call result**

421. We reviewed the correlation between the findings from our first two tests. Even where we assessed the service advisor as having been impolite, unhelpful or unprofessional, in most cases the call was resolved correctly and to the satisfaction of the caller. Conversely, where the call result was incorrect, in most cases the service advisor had nonetheless dealt with the caller in a professional manner. Only in a few cases (1.3%) did the call fail both tests.

Table 13 – Correlation between service advisor demeanour and call result

|                                       | Correct result | Incorrect result |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Polite, helpful and professional      | 93.3%          | 3.6%             |
| Impolite, unhelpful or unprofessional | 1.8%           | 1.3%             |

**Was the information given by the caller accurately recorded on the incident?**

422. In 98.0% of the calls we audited that resulted in an incident, the service advisor accurately recorded what was said by the caller on the incident record. Service advisors were generally very good at capturing all relevant information, including minor details that were often hard to make out on poor connections or when disturbances were going on in the background of the call. In a small number of cases, the service advisor failed to record details provided by the caller. Mostly, these details were minor and would not have prejudiced the ability of police to respond and manage the incident. Very occasionally, the missing information was more significant and could have resulted in a negative outcome.



### Example

In one call we audited, the service advisor failed to record that a man who had repeatedly been acting aggressively towards a woman he thought was a prostitute was driving a left-hand drive vehicle. This intelligence could have made it easier for the police to trace the suspect.

### Were the best opening and closing codes used for the incident?

423. When an incident is created, an initial code is applied to it. This code relates to the nature of the incident and there are almost 100 codes covering issues such as crime, antisocial behaviour, public safety and transport issues. For example, if a member of the public reported a housebreaking, the resulting incident is coded as CR-67. Similarly, when an incident is closed, a disposal code is applied to it. Multiple closing codes may be applied. For example, a report of public disorder where the police attended but no trace could be found of the disorder and thus no crime could be established could have three codes (one relating to the disorder, one relating to the fact officers searched the area but found nothing and one to signify that no crime had been committed). The same codes are used throughout Scotland.
424. Opening codes can be particularly important as they can help determine what priority is given to the incident. For example, all abandoned or silent 999 calls have the code PW-70, and a default priority of 2 (see paragraph 429 for further information about prioritisation of incidents). Closing codes are important as they describe the exact nature of the incident and can help the police to identify specific types of incident at a later date (for quality assurance purposes, for example).
425. In our audit, we reviewed whether the best opening and closing codes had been used for each incident.<sup>79</sup> We found that the best opening code had been used in 96.5% of incidents and the best closing code had been used in 92.6% of incidents. There appeared to be no recurring themes regarding which types of incidents were wrongly coded. We did however find variation in how closing codes were applied – for some incidents, one closing code was selected which best described the incident.<sup>80</sup> For other incidents, multiple codes were selected which better described all aspects of the incident (up to five codes can be selected). This included the ‘best’ code, but also additional codes which described the outcome of the incident or whether, for example, the incident was mental health-related. This inconsistency suggests that staff have not received sufficient information or training about the application of codes and are perhaps not clear on the importance of the codes and how they are used.

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<sup>79</sup> We refer the ‘best’ code as sometimes more than one code could describe an incident.

<sup>80</sup> This one ‘best’ code was used in addition to the ‘SCO’ code which indicates whether a crime has been committed. The SCO code is used on all incidents.



### Was the incident closed correctly?

426. For each call that we listened to that resulted in the creation of an incident, we assessed whether the incident was closed correctly in accordance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS). Correct closure means either that (a) the incident was being closed as being non-crime related and contained sufficient information to dispel any inference of criminality; or (b) the incident indicated a crime had occurred and a crime report was traced.<sup>81</sup>
427. We found that 95.1% of incidents were closed correctly. This compliance rate is based on the number of incidents that were closed correctly and does not take account of possible under-recording of crime where the service advisor failed to create an incident (see paragraph 408). The errors we identified in those incidents that were not closed correctly were similar to those highlighted in our Crime Audit 2014.<sup>82</sup> Incidents were not closed correctly because there appeared to be a lack of follow-up to the initial report or a failure to dispel an allegation of criminality; a crime appeared to have been committed but no crime report was traced (these crimes more often related to issues such as fraud or threats received online); property that was felt by the complainer to have been stolen was treated by the police as lost property; and the incident was wrongly deemed to be civil rather than criminal in nature.
428. Although some of the errors we found were similar to errors previously identified by HMICS, the compliance rate in this audit (95.1%) is higher than that in our Crime Audit 2014 (92%). This reflects work Police Scotland has undertaken in response to recommendations made in that report.

### Was the incident graded correctly?

429. Each incident created by Police Scotland is given a priority grading. This indicates the priority with which the incident should be responded to. There are six possible grades:
- Grade 1 – Immediate  
An on-going incident where there is an immediate or apparent threat to life or a serious crime in progress.
  - Grade 2 – Priority  
Crime/incident where there is a degree of urgency associated with police action.
  - Grade 3 – Standard  
Incident not on-going but police attendance is required – where the outcome could be prejudiced by significant delay.
  - Grade 4 – Scheduled  
Crimes/incidents which will not be prejudiced by a scheduled response, with police attendance being at a mutually agreeable time.
  - Grade 5 – Non-attendance  
Incidents that can be resolved by telephone or by some other means which do not require police attendance.

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<sup>81</sup> This is known as Test 1 under SCRS. We chose not to apply additional tests relating to the counting and classification of crime, and the timeliness of crime recording, because these aspects of crime recording are more commonly managed by local policing divisions rather than C3 Division. Moreover, these tests form part of the regular audits of crime recording conducted by HMICS.

<sup>82</sup> HMICS, *Crime Audit 2014*.



- **Managed Call Appointment System**  
Managed call appointment system for officers to attend at complainer/reporter's home, or at police office/surgery by complainer/reporter.
430. Resources are despatched to Grade 1 calls within five minutes of being accepted by the area control room, Grade 2 calls within 15 minutes and Grade 3 calls within 40 minutes.
431. In our audit, we found that 93.9% of incidents were graded correctly. Of those that were graded incorrectly, some were graded higher than was necessary and some lower. Incidents may be up or downgraded at any time as new information becomes available to the police. We saw effective re-assessment in many cases with control room staff taking into account new information and reassessing risk. However we also came across multiple incidents which had been re-graded after the incident had been attended and immediately prior to closure. We could find no explanation for why this practice should occur.
432. Police Scotland policy states that incidents should not be re-graded due to a lack of resources however we came across several examples where this appeared to have been done.<sup>83</sup> There appeared to be some inconsistencies between locations on how incidents were graded. For example, the area control room in Dundee appeared to be using Grade 3 differently: it was being used for incidents which would have been graded 4 elsewhere, or where an appointment had been made with the caller for attendance at a later time. Similarly, in Aberdeen, there appeared to be some inconsistency in grading at the lower end of the scale, particularly where there was an agreement with the caller to attend at a specific time.

### **Was the call an appropriate use of the 999 emergency service?**

433. Police Scotland advises that callers should dial 999 in an emergency. An 'emergency' includes where there is a risk of personal injury or loss of life, where a crime is in progress or where someone suspected of a crime is nearby. The 101 service should be used for non-emergencies and general police enquiries. Police Scotland states that using 101 for situations that do not require an immediate police response helps keep 999 available for when there is an emergency. Calls to 999 are free, while calls to 101 from landlines and mobiles cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day the call is made or how long the call lasts.
434. The emergency service was frequently misused by callers. Of the 246 calls to 999 that we audited, only 70.3% were an appropriate use of the emergency service. Deliberate misuse took the form of malicious calls, of which we listened to several, and calls where the caller knew they should not use the 999 service but choose to do so anyway. On a few occasions, we heard 999 calls where the caller had not dialled 101 because they had no mobile phone credit. Despite being introduced in March 2013, there were also still some callers who used 999 because they were not aware that the 101 non-emergency service was available. This suggests there may be scope for further promotion of the 101 service. The 999 emergency service was also misused by accident, such as when someone 'pocket dialled' from their mobile phone, or by very young children or those with mental disorder.

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<sup>83</sup> Police Scotland, *Command and control: standard operating procedure* (2013) at paragraph 2.2.14.



435. For those who dialled 999 when they should have used 101 instead, there was variation in how service advisors responded. Some dealt with the call, and then ended the call by reminding the caller that the 101 service was available for non-emergency situations. Other service advisors did not deal with the call and instead told the caller to hang up and dial 101 instead. While this was a legitimate response in some cases, in others the service advisor was too quick to decide the call was a non-emergency and ended the call abruptly. Some service advisors were polite and professional when asking callers to use 101 instead, while others were almost rude. Some service advisors also gave out misleading information about the use of 999 and 101. For example, one service advisor told a caller that the emergency service was for use in 'life threatening emergencies only'. Variation in how such calls are responded to may be caused by the service advisor being aware of whether there are other incoming 999 calls that need answered and which may be more pressing. However, each call should receive a consistent level of service. Service advisors should remain polite and calm at all times, and should establish the circumstances of the call before bringing the call to an end.

#### **Further information on methodology**

436. The number of calls made to the police via the 999 emergency and the 101 non-emergency services varied in each week from which we selected our sample. The number of calls received at each centre also varied. For example, the centre at Govan/Motherwell received over 40% of all calls made in Scotland to 999 or 101. While all the audited calls were selected at random, we designed our sample to ensure it was representative of the variation in the volume of calls between each centre, between each week, and between 999 and 101.
437. When selecting our sample size, we considered the reliability of the results. The calls included in our audit are only a sample of the total population so we cannot be certain that the results obtained are exactly those we would have obtained if we had audited the entire population (the 'true' values). We can, however, predict the likely variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from knowledge of the size of the sample on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular result is obtained. The confidence with which we can make this prediction was chosen to be 95% (i.e. the chances are 95 in 100 that repeated audits of calls to the police would result in values that fall within the specified range). Our results are statistically significant at the 95% level as set out in Table 14, which presents an estimate of confidence intervals for each sample. Precision varies between calls and incidents because not all calls result in the creation of an incident, therefore our sample of incidents was smaller.



Table 14 – Estimate of confidence intervals

|                  | Population     | Sample size  | Calls – Precision at 95% confidence interval | Incidents – Precision at 95% confidence interval |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|--|--|
| 101              | 93,790         | 1,255        | 1.7%   | 2.2%   |
| 999              | 18,413         | 246          | 3.7%   | 4.0%   |
| Week 1           | 55,866         | 751          | 2.1%   | 2.8%   |
| Week 2           | 56,337         | 750          | 2.1%   | 2.7%   |
| Aberdeen         | 14,931         | 200          | 4.2%   | 6.5%   |
| Bilston Glen     | 32,854         | 440          | 2.8%   | 3.8%   |
| Dundee           | 9,395          | 142          | 4.9%   | 6.1%   |
| Govan/Motherwell | 46,556         | 622          | 2.4%   | 2.8%   |
| Inverness        | 8,467          | 97           | 6.0%   | 8.0%   |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>112,203</b> | <b>1,501</b> | <b>1.5%</b>                                  | <b>2.0%</b>                                      |



Table 15 – Results

|                      | Was the caller polite, helpful and professional? |            | Was the call result appropriate? |            | Was the best opening code used? |            | Was the information from the caller accurately recorded on the incident? |            | Was the incident closed correctly? |            | Was the best closing code used? |            | Was the call correctly graded? |            | Was the call an appropriate use of the 999 service? |             |
|----------------------|--|------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|--|------------|------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|---|-------------|
|                      | Yes %  | No %       | Yes %                            | No %       | Yes %                           | No %       | Yes %  | No %       | Yes %                              | No %       | Yes %                           | No %       | Yes %                          | No %       | Yes %   | No %        |
| 101                  | 97.1   | 2.9        | 94.4                             | 5.6        | 96.2                            | 3.8        | 97.5   | 2.5        | 95.9                               | 4.1        | 93.4                            | 6.6        | 94.3                           | 5.7        |   |             |
| 999                  | 96.3   | 3.7        | 98.8                             | 1.2        | 97.3                            | 2.7        | 99.5   | 0.5        | 92.7                               | 7.3        | 90.0                            | 10.0       | 92.7                           | 7.3        | 70.3  | 29.7        |
| Week 1               | 96.8   | 3.2        | 96.3                             | 3.7        | 95.9                            | 4.1        | 98.2   | 1.8        | 94.0                               | 6.0        | 91.0                            | 9.0        | 96.1                           | 3.9        |   |             |
| Week 2               | 97.1   | 2.9        | 94.0                             | 6.0        | 97.0                            | 3.0        | 97.9   | 2.1        | 96.2                               | 3.8        | 94.1                            | 5.9        | 91.9                           | 8.1        |   |             |
| Aberdeen             | 93.5   | 6.5        | 93.0                             | 7.0        | 95.1                            | 4.9        | 92.6   | 7.4        | 95.1                               | 4.9        | 95.1                            | 4.9        | 91.4                           | 8.6        |   |             |
| Bilston Glen         | 97.5   | 2.5        | 91.6                             | 8.4        | 96.6                            | 3.4        | 99.6   | 0.4        | 94.5                               | 5.5        | 91.6                            | 8.4        | 95.8                           | 4.2        |   |             |
| Dundee               | 96.5   | 3.5        | 97.2                             | 2.8        | 93.5                            | 6.5        | 93.5   | 6.5        | 97.8                               | 2.2        | 96.8                            | 3.2        | 94.6                           | 5.4        |   |             |
| Govan/<br>Motherwell | 97.3   | 2.7        | 97.4                             | 2.6        | 98.0                            | 2.0        | 98.9   | 1.1        | 94.3                               | 5.7        | 91.8                            | 8.2        | 92.5                           | 7.5        |   |             |
| Inverness            | 100.0  | 0.0        | 97.9                             | 2.1        | 90.7                            | 9.3        | 100.0  | 0.0        | 100.0                              | 0.0        | 92.6                            | 7.4        | 100.0                          | 0.0        |   |             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>96.9</b>                                      | <b>3.1</b> | <b>95.1</b>                      | <b>4.9</b> | <b>96.5</b>                     | <b>3.5</b> | <b>98.0</b>  | <b>2.0</b> | <b>95.1</b>                        | <b>4.9</b> | <b>92.6</b>                     | <b>7.4</b> | <b>93.9</b>                    | <b>6.1</b> | <b>70.3</b>   | <b>29.7</b> |

## Results of the public online questionnaire

### Our questionnaire

438. To inform our review of police call handling, HMICS launched a public online questionnaire to gather the views of a wide audience. The questionnaire was open from 29 July to 23 August 2015. A total of 3,826 questionnaires were completed, with 46% being completed by members of the public, 46% by police officers and police staff, 2% by elected representatives and 7% by others.
439. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information about people's experience of contacting the police via the 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency numbers. We asked questions about what is working well and what could be improved. For any police officers and police staff that responded, we asked additional questions about their experience of Contact, Command and Control (C3) facilities (i.e. the centres where 999 and 101 calls are answered). For any elected representatives who completed our questionnaire, we asked additional questions about whether members of the public had spoken to them about police call handling, and whether elected representatives had discussed any issues raised with Police Scotland.
440. We used the results of our questionnaire to inform the key lines of enquiry explored during our review of policing call handling, and to inform the findings and recommendations in our final report.
441. We would like to thank all of the 3,826 people who have taken the time to share their views and experiences of police call handling in Scotland.
442. Detailed results, on a question by question basis, are provided on our website at [www.hmics.org](http://www.hmics.org).

### Sample profile

443. The following tables provide information about the respondents to the online questionnaire.

| Q. Are you responding as?   |              |                |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Position                    | Number       | Percentage (%) |
| A member of the public      | 1,750        | 45.7           |
| A member of police staff    | 598          | 15.6           |
| A police officer            | 1,156        | 30.2           |
| Elected representative      | 64           | 1.7            |
| Other professional capacity | 147          | 3.8            |
| Do not want to disclose     | 111          | 2.9            |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>3,826</b> | <b>100</b>     |

| <b>Q. Please tell us which local authority area your experience of police call handling relates to?</b> |               |                       |                                    |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Local authority</b>  | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> | <b>Population (%)<sup>84</sup></b> |
| Aberdeen City   | 214           | 6                     | 4                                  |
| Aberdeenshire   | 161           | 4                     | 5                                  |
| Angus   | 54            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| Argyll & Bute   | 40            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| Clackmannanshire  | 35            | 1                     | 1                                  |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar   | 33            | 1                     | 1                                  |
| Dumfries & Galloway   | 281           | 7                     | 3                                  |
| Dundee City   | 108           | 3                     | 3                                  |
| East Ayrshire   | 42            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| East Dunbartonshire   | 23            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| East Lothian  | 81            | 2                     | 2                                  |
| East Renfrewshire   | 14            | *                     | 2                                  |
| Edinburgh City  | 463           | 12                    | 9                                  |
| Falkirk   | 212           | 6                     | 3                                  |
| Fife  | 287           | 7                     | 7                                  |
| Glasgow City  | 286           | 7                     | 11                                 |
| Highland  | 348           | 9                     | 4                                  |
| Inverclyde  | 25            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| Midlothian  | 126           | 3                     | 2                                  |
| Moray   | 35            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| North Ayrshire  | 40            | 1                     | 3                                  |
| North Lanarkshire   | 97            | 3                     | 6                                  |
| Orkney Islands  | 27            | 1                     | *                                  |
| Perth & Kinross   | 62            | 2                     | 3                                  |
| Renfrewshire  | 64            | 2                     | 3                                  |
| Scottish Borders  | 106           | 3                     | 2                                  |
| Shetland Islands  | 10            | *                     | *                                  |
| South Ayrshire  | 32            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| South Lanarkshire   | 69            | 2                     | 6                                  |
| Stirling  | 198           | 5                     | 2                                  |
| West Dunbartonshire   | 26            | 1                     | 2                                  |
| West Lothian  | 107           | 3                     | 3                                  |
| Blank   | 120           | 3                     | -                                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>3,826</b>  | <b>100</b>            | <b>100</b>                         |

444. Data are unweighted as weighting the data was not deemed appropriate given the questionnaire was self-selecting and not a random sample. The raw data is therefore reported on. Caution should be exercised when reporting this data as it is not representative of Scotland as a whole; rather it represents the views of those that responded to the questionnaire.

<sup>84</sup> Population figures based on Office for National Statistics, *Annual mid-year population estimates*, 2014.



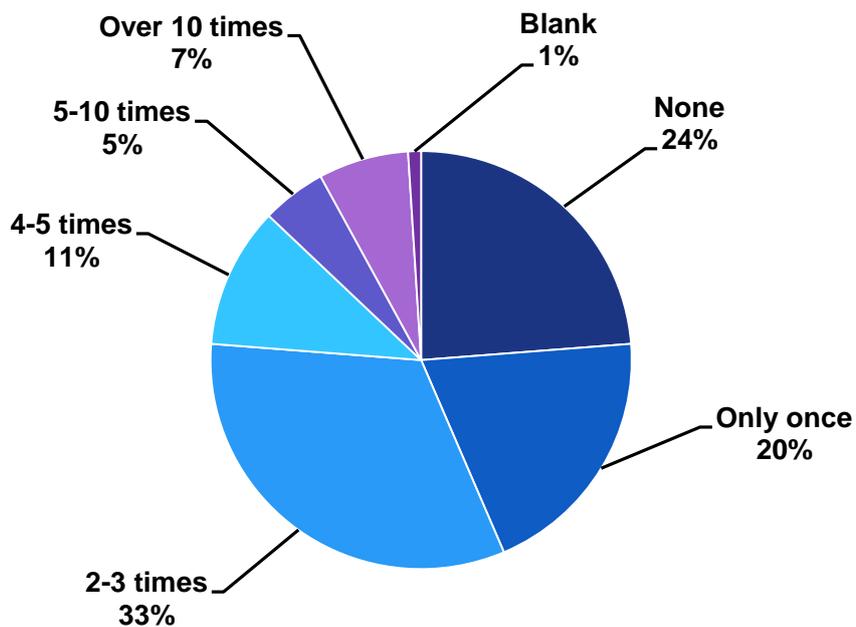
- 445. Where percentages do not sum up to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know'/'not stated' categories or multiple answers. Throughout the report, an asterisk (\*) denotes any value less than one half of a per cent but more than nought and a hyphen (-) represents nought.
- 446. Throughout the report, difference between groups is compared. There is no comparison between local authorities as the sample sizes are too small.

## Findings

### Contacting the police using 101

- 447. Three quarters (75%) of those that responded to the questionnaire had contacted the police using 101 in the last two years. The majority had used 101 up to three times (52%) while a small proportion had contacted the police using 101 over five times in the last two years (12%). The frequency of calling 101 was similar across all groups with the exception of those responding in another professional capacity who were more likely to have called 101 over 10 times (40%)<sup>85</sup> compared to other groups.

### On how many occasions, if ever, in the last 2 years have you called 101?



<sup>85</sup> Twenty six people responded to the questionnaire in another professional capacity. The sample size is therefore small and the results should be treated with caution.



448. When asked what had worked well when calling 101, almost four in 10 (39%) provided positive comment about their experience of calling 101. The service advisors were often described as being polite, friendly and professional. The local knowledge of the service advisor was also commented upon positively and calls were viewed as being answered quickly. Conversely, just over a quarter (26%) thought that nothing was working well and a further one in 10 (12%) detailed improvements that need to be made rather than stating what was working well. One in five (21%) left the question blank.

*The 'customer service' aspect of the call. I have felt listened to, understood and to an extent comforted by the staff on the end of the phone.*

**A member of the public, Midlothian**

*Friendliness and willing to try and help.*

**A police officer, Moray**

*Good local knowledge. Friendly staff. Calls answered quickly during office hours. Dealt quickly with reports made.*

**Other professional capacity, Aberdeen**

449. When asked whether there was anything that could help improve the 101 service, respondents highlighted a range of issues. The main issues cited by almost half of those that responded (46%) were a lack of local knowledge of the service advisor; the internal transfer system; service advisors being unable to find the details of the person dealing with the incident; the way in which the service advisor spoke to the individual including a lack of explanation of police processes; and being asked to call back or not getting a call back when the initial service advisor said a message would be passed on. In some cases, people stated that they had stopped using 101 altogether or have had to call back on multiple occasions about the same issue which will add to the high call volumes experienced by staff.

*I was lost in the phone system. The call handler couldn't help me because she wasn't familiar with the area 'you've come through to what used to be Tayside - you need Fife, you'll need to call back'.*

**A member of the public, Fife**

450. The length of time it takes to answer calls and the suggestion to remove the automated message at the start of the call were also cited by a quarter (25%) of respondents as areas that could be improved.

*It's far too slow. You expect to get to speak with a person within a minute if not seconds yet I've been on hold for 25 minutes before. Now I don't bother.*

**A member of the public, Edinburgh**



451. As well as the issues highlighted above, a key issue highlighted by police officers and staff were improvements to the staffing levels and the training of those that work in the service centres.

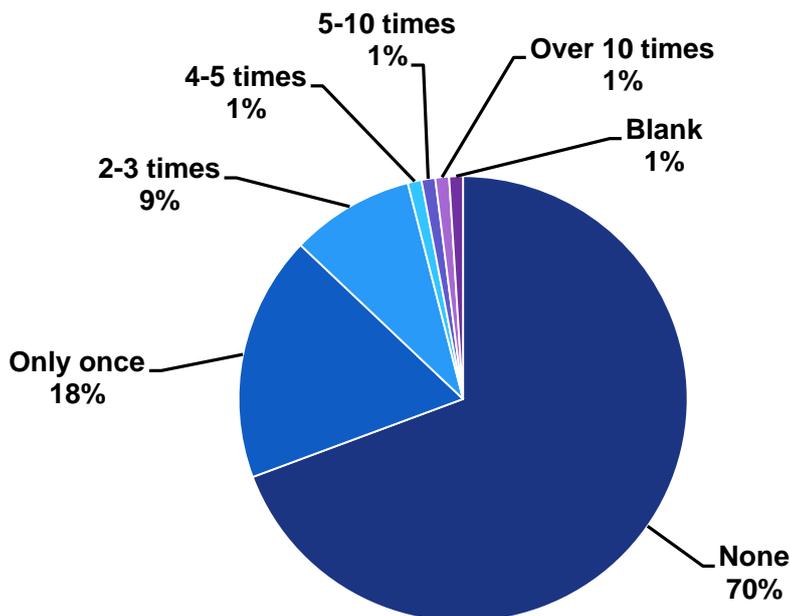
*More call takers to avoid the lengthy delays callers seem to be experiencing. More training for call takers to avoid the current confusion over local geography and issues. If the information passed from the control room to the local station is limited, this can be frustrating for the caller and the local staff who have to go through everything again.*

**A member of police staff**

### Contacting the emergency services using 999

452. The majority (70%) of those that responded to the questionnaire had never called 999. Almost a third had called 999 at least once (29%) in the last two years. As shown in the chart below the majority of those that have called 999 had done so once. Those that had called the emergency services most frequently commented on the response of police, ambulance and fire.

**On how many occasions, if ever, in the last 2 years have you called 999?**



453. Almost half (47%) of those that had called 999 in the last two years provided information on what worked well. Police staff (57%) and elected representatives (58%) were more likely to provide positive comments than police officers (44%) or members of the public (46%). These comments included the call being answered quickly, a quick response by officers and polite service advisors. A third of respondents did not state an answer when asked what was working well with the 999 service (34%). One in 10



(10%) thought nothing was working well and 8% highlighted the need for improvement to the 999 service.

*Calls are answered quickly and professionally and police officers arrived very quickly and resolved the matter.*

**A member of the public, Edinburgh**

*The way that they were very calm, got the correct information from me and also made sure that I was ok. The knowledge of the area of Grampian and how long help would arrive.*

**A member police staff, Aberdeen**

454. When asked whether there was anything that would help improve the 999 service, almost half (46%) stated that there could be improvements in response times, the service advisors' manner and professionalism, and having local knowledge. There was little variation between different groups of people or geographically. A high proportion stated that the 999 service was working well (30%), and one in 20 (5%) thought nothing needed to be improved.

*Again, a person answering who actually understands your report and not just in a hurry to 'get it on system' and then answer another call per 'targets'. Also if operator was local or even from reasonable locality then it would make sense.*

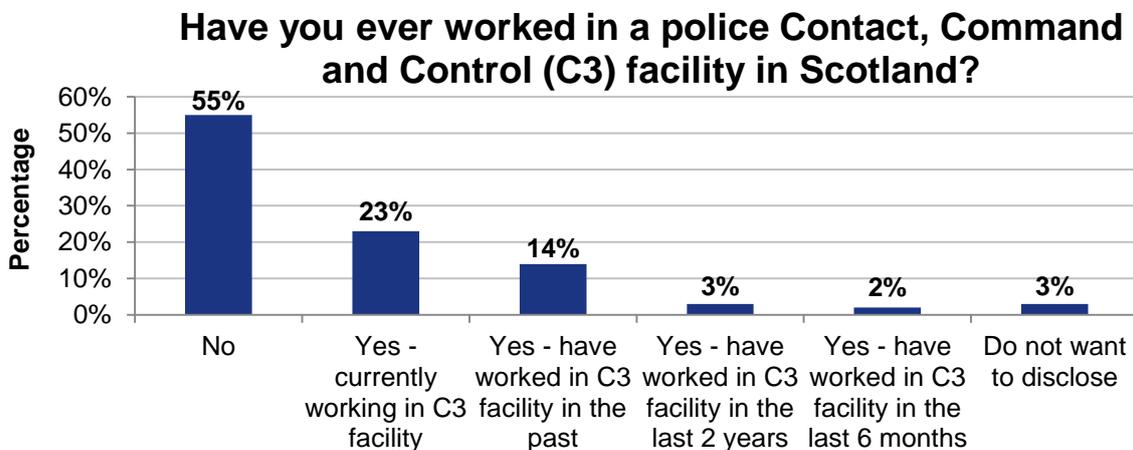
**A member of the public, Glasgow**

*Local people with local knowledge helps with a stressful phone call as you feel the call is being dealt with straight away and not having to look at maps etc.*

**A member of the public, Dumfries and Galloway**

### Views of police staff and officers

455. Almost a third of those that responded to the questionnaire were police officers (30%) and one in six (16%) were police staff. While just over half (55%) of officers and staff that responded had never worked in a police Contact, Command and Control (C3) facility in Scotland, a quarter (25%) worked in such a facility at present or had done so within the last six months. As shown below, a further 14% had worked in a C3 facility in the past.



456. The majority of the views of police officers and staff in relation to how calls are handled, graded and dispatched and staffing, training and systems used in C3 were negative (93%). The main issues raised were in relation to taking calls, having local knowledge and transferring of calls internally (42%); issues relating to demand such as having enough staff to answer and respond to calls (39%); and training (23%). Other issues that were raised as concerns included how key processes work and impact on other areas of the business (16%) and technology (12%).

*The volume of calls due to closure of other contact centres has put a lot of strain on the staff within the remaining call centres which has resulted in staff from other areas within contact command and control with limited experience required to back fill the gap.*

**A member of police staff, Glasgow**

*Control rooms needs to remain in the local area. Loss of local knowledge would not benefit the service and the response times at all. The technology is not fast and reliable enough at present.*

**A member of police staff, Moray**

*Local knowledge is very important when it comes to being able to prioritise, grade and dispatch units covering vast areas.*

**A police officer, Highland**

*Dispatchers are sometimes not able to gain access to local systems, such as Crimefile. There has been a clear trend that dispatchers will not take on any tasks such as dialling 999 for ambulance services and not forwarding details to custody centres. Many of the tasks that are now declined by dispatchers can cause delay to front line services.*

**A police officer, Falkirk**

457. When asked what was working well in relation to the non-emergency 101 service, just over a third (34%) of police officers and staff identified something that was working well. This included the professionalism and commitment of call handling staff, calls being answered more quickly, taking pressure off the 999 emergency service, 101 being an easy to remember number and having one number for all non-emergency calls. Over a quarter (26%) did not think anything was working well in relation to 101.

*Integrity and commitment of staff within the centres to work without complaint to provide the service.*

**A member of police staff, Scottish Borders**

*The public are able to report a minor issue to police without having to search for their local station number or clog up the 999 calls.*

**A police officer, Glasgow City**

458. In relation to the 101 non-emergency service, police officers and staff thought that areas for improvement included having enough people to receive and respond to calls (43%), local knowledge and transferring of calls (39%), the number of calls and how these are distributed internally (19%), training (18%) and reviewing of key processes (17%).



459. When asked about what was working well with the 999 emergency service, almost a third of officers and staff (31%) provided positive feedback. This related to how quickly emergency calls are answered, the expertise of the service advisors, dedicated staff and the response of officers. One in eight (12%) officers and staff did not think anything was working well in relation to 999 and one in 10 cited issues with the service (10%). Many officers and staff did not provide any comments on what was working well in relation to the 999 emergency service (35%) and a further one in eight (12%) did not know what was working well.
460. When asked whether any aspects of the 999 emergency service required improvement, most comments made by police officers and staff related to call taking in terms of local knowledge, mapping systems and transferring calls (30%), reviewing how key processes work and impact on other processes (14%), and having enough staff to respond to emergency calls (11%).

### Views of elected representatives

461. Elected representatives were asked a series of questions relating to issues that had been raised by members of the public and subsequently with Police Scotland. Overall, 64 elected representatives responded to the questionnaire, from 19 of the 32 local authority areas. The East, North and West areas of Police Scotland were represented.
462. Over three-quarters (77%) of elected representatives have had members of the public speak to them about police call handling. The main issues raised by members of the public include the length of time taken to answer 101 calls, the lack of local knowledge of service advisors, lack of feedback and the way in which incidents were managed.

*Length of time before call answered, staff unfamiliar with local area, lack of co-ordination between call centre and police on ground.*

**Elected representative**

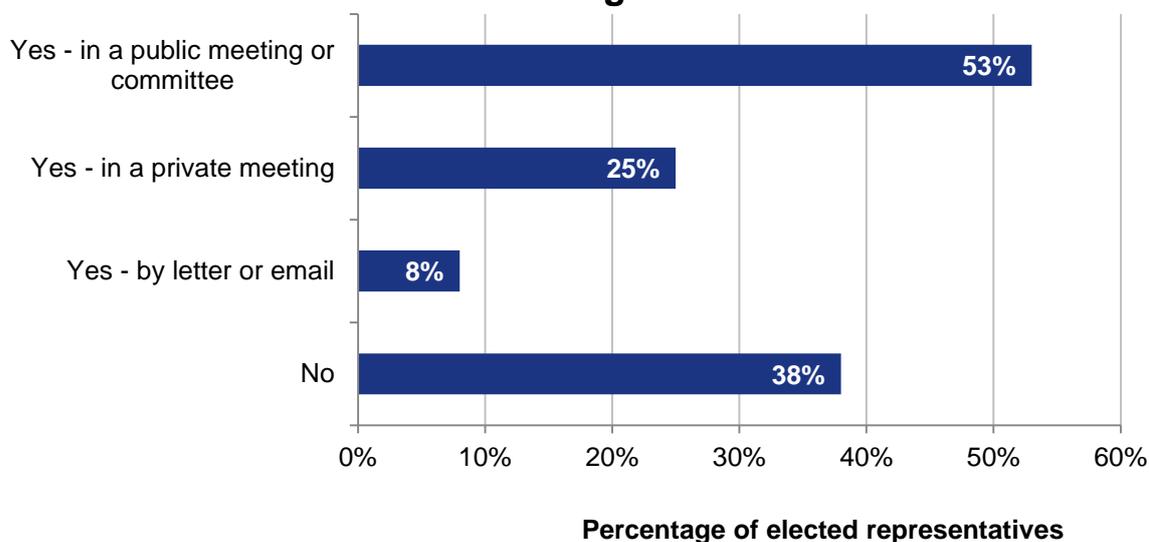
*Time taken to respond to emergency calls, response from call handling staff, lack of feedback/response following calls, lack of local knowledge at times.*

**Elected representative**

463. As demonstrated in the chart below, many elected representatives had discussions with Police Scotland about the issues raised. The majority raised this through a public meeting or committee (53%) and/or a private meeting (25%). Some of the elected representatives had not raised the issues with Police Scotland at the time of the questionnaire.



### As an elected representative, have you had discussions with Police Scotland about police call handling?



- 464. The issues that elected representatives had discussed with Police Scotland echoed those raised by members of the public. Elected representatives also raised issues with policies and strategies, asking if decisions were based on sound evidence and how these decisions were reviewed after implementation.
- 465. Overall, a quarter (25%) of elected representatives stated that assurance was provided about the issues raised, however over two-thirds (70%) were not satisfied by the response provided by Police Scotland to the issues raised.

#### Additional information

- 466. The final question in our questionnaire invited respondents to provide any further information or comments about police call handling in Scotland. While a third (34%) left this question blank, many respondents opted to provide more information. Overall, almost two-thirds (62%) of the comments were further suggested improvements. Police officers and staff were more likely to provide further issues for improvement than any of the other groups. Many of the comments related to poor morale, pressure to answer calls quickly, training and leadership.



*The training is poor, lack of support, unreliable computer systems...*

**A member of police staff, Edinburgh**

*There is too much pressure on the staff to answer calls quickly. Some of the incidents have insufficient information on them. More training for staff would be of benefit.*

**A member of police staff, Fife**

*All control rooms and service centres working across Scotland have developed their own way with practices peculiar to their area. There is a need for standardisation of procedures and for making efficiency savings that is clear however more time should be taken to look at what each area has to offer in terms of best practice and savings may not necessarily mean cutting centres but rather retain facilities within communities and jobs and make savings by employing more efficient technology, shared resources with other public sector agencies.*

**A police officer, Aberdeen**

467. Of the members of the public, elected representatives and other professionals who responded to this question, the main improvements suggested related to the local knowledge of the service advisors, attendance times, keeping appointments, providing appropriate advice and having enough resources to answer calls.
468. Members of the public also took this opportunity to provide views on Police Scotland overall with many suggesting more localisation of policing and service centres.

## Appendix 1 – Methodology

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Our review commenced with a short pre-review planning and preparation phase. This included the development of review tools, identification of key documents and liaison with Police Scotland, police staff associations and key stakeholders. It also involved the design and launch of an online public questionnaire and the detailed design and scoping of our call handling audit.

This phase was followed by three weeks of initial fieldwork with a team of inspectors visiting Govan, Motherwell, Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness and Bilston Glen sites. Our second phase fieldwork involved a number of further interviews and drop-in sessions for staff. During our fieldwork we have:

- interviewed 85 staff
- conducted 34 focus groups involving approximately 200 staff
- observed daily and weekly management meetings
- conducted general observation of service centre staff and processes.

We also made a formal information request for documents to Police Scotland which included:

- strategies, policies, guidance and standard operating procedures
- agendas, minutes and internal memorandums and emails
- briefings and presentations
- action and improvement plans
- ICT specifications and plans for development
- training materials
- quality assurance and quality control processes
- staffing structures and management reporting.

This request was followed by a number of individual follow up enquiries for specific documents which have been highlighted to us during our fieldwork. Over 1,500 documents have been provided alongside statistical, performance and benchmarking information. We have reviewed a selection of key documents and relevant supporting information to inform our findings and identify relevant evidence for our final report.

HMICS launched a public online questionnaire on 29 July 2015. This questionnaire was closed on 23 August 2015. A total of 3,826 questionnaires were completed, with 46% being completed by members of the public, 2% by elected representatives, 46% by officers and police staff and 7% by others. Feedback from the questionnaire informed the key lines of enquiry used during our fieldwork and was subject to detailed analysis.

HMICS has sought views from all local authorities across Scotland and has also undertaken an analysis of the responses received.

We have also completed a benchmarking exercise, examining good practice elsewhere in policing and other emergency services. We visited both the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service.



HMICS also carried out a detailed audit of 1,501 calls made to the police via the emergency 999 and non-emergency 101 numbers from across Scotland. This involved listening to calls, assessing how well they were handled, reviewing computer systems and records to ensure they accurately reflected the contents of the call and concerns of the caller, and assessing whether the calls were appropriately prioritised. This work was undertaken independently from our review fieldwork and has been used to provide specific assurance within this report over the quality of call handling and accuracy of recording across Scotland.

We have maintained regular liaison with the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) throughout the review to ensure the exchange of relevant information and the integrity of their ongoing investigation.

We have provided feedback to Police Scotland and briefed both the SPA and the Scottish Government on the basis of the evidence we have obtained from our review. We have highlighted our emerging findings and shared our recommendations in respect of the future direction of police Contact, Command and Control across Scotland.



## Appendix 2 – Scottish police force call handling performance data 2007-13

The following data has been sourced from Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF) publications by the Scottish Government.

### 1. Percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds

| Force               | 2007-08   | 2008-09   | 2009-10   | 2010-11   | 2011-12   | 2012-13   | Number of 999 calls, 2012-13 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Central             | 89        | 93        | 92        | 95        | 94        | 96        | 25,851                       |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 96        | 96        | 96        | 98        | 99        | 99        | 9,960                        |
| Fife <sup>1</sup>   | 96        | 96        | 91        | 92        | 93        | 93        | 40,514                       |
| Grampian            | 92        | 91        | 96        | 98        | 99        | 98        | 52,183                       |
| Lothian & Borders   | 91        | 95        | 95        | 96        | 96        | 96        | 104,608                      |
| Northern            | 85        | 87        | 86        | 87        | 86        | 94        | 17,860                       |
| Strathclyde         | 92        | 94        | 96        | 95        | 96        | 97        | 264,087                      |
| Tayside             | 88        | 93        | 93        | 91        | 88        | 88        | 46,687                       |
| <b>Scotland</b>     | <b>91</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>95</b> | <b>95</b> | <b>95</b> | <b>96</b> | <b>561,750</b>               |

1. The 2011-12 figures for Fife Constabulary are for the period 1/4/2011 to 21/3/2012. Data are not available for the remainder of the year due to an upgrade to its telephone system on 22/3/2012.



## 2. Emergency response incidents

| Force                 | Number of emergency response incidents |         |               |               | Percentage responded to within target time <sup>1</sup> |         |         |         | Average response time (seconds) |         |         |         |
|-----------------------|--|---------|---------------|---------------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                       | 2009-10                                | 2010-11 | 2011-12       | 2012-13       | 2009-10   | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2009-10                         | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Central               | 8,714                                  | 8,798   | 9,421         | 11,645        | 87  | 85      | 83      | 86      | 455                             | 462     | 507     | 479     |
| Dumfries & Galloway   | 935                                    | 847     | 802           | 585           | 75  | 78      | 82      | 81      | 523                             | 483     | 506     | 536     |
| Fife <sup>2</sup>     | 34,129                                 | 19,697  | 1,646         | 2,388         | 90  | -       | -       | -       | 437                             | 409     | 357     | 366     |
| Grampian              | 4,712                                  | 4,700   | 4,341         | 3,496         | 92  | 92      | 95      | 95      | 380                             | 368     | 323     | 344     |
| Lothian & Borders     | 24,353                                 | 22,383  | 22,504        | 22,944        | 85  | 87      | 87      | 88      | 528                             | 511     | 514     | 510     |
| Northern <sup>3</sup> | -                                      | -       | 3,116         | 2,777         | -   | -       | 68      | 66      | -                               | -       | 921     | 975     |
| Strathclyde           | 17,077                                 | 14,269  | 12,213        | 13,666        | -   | -       | -       | -       | 927                             | 822     | 777     | 777     |
| Tayside <sup>4</sup>  | 45,662                                 | 49,782  | 29,446        | 41,042        | 67  | 63      | 58      | 56      | 961                             | 1,025   | 1,079   | 664     |
| <b>Scotland</b>       | -                                      | -       | <b>83,489</b> | <b>98,543</b> | -   | -       | -       | -       | -                               | -       | -       | -       |

1. Strathclyde Police does not have a force target time and therefore is unable to report on this indicator.

2. From September 2010 onwards, Fife Constabulary recorded only Grade 1 calls as emergency response incidents. Prior to this Fife recorded both Grade 1 and 2 calls emergency response incidents. In addition, from September 2010 onwards Fife Constabulary no longer had a target response time for emergency response incidents.

3. The emergency response incident figure for Northern Constabulary is for urban calls only.

4. Tayside Police changed its call grading process at the start of 2011-12, resulting in fewer calls being classified as emergency response incidents.

## Appendix 3 – Glossary

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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| ACC                          | Assistant Chief Constable   |
| ACR                          | Area Control Room. Formerly a Force Control Room. Responsible for the command and control of incidents within its own geographical control area.  |
| ACD                          | Automatic Call Director   |
| BAU                          | Business as usual   |
| BCCU                         | Business Change and Co-ordination Unit  |
| BC                           | Business continuity   |
| C3 Division                  | Contact, Command and Control Division of Police Scotland  |
| C3IR                         | Contact, Command and Control Integration and Remodelling Project  |
| Call grade                   | Priority allocated to a call requiring some form of police response   |
| Complainer                   | Formerly an informant/reporter. An individual personally affected by or at loss as a result of a crime/offence (NB: a complainer can also be the reporter).   |
| Contact, Command and Control | Common term used to describe the combined functions of contact with the public (call taking or front office counters), deploying resources to attend incidents and providing a co-ordination function to those resources. |
| Controller                   | Common term used to describe a Dispatcher or Controller of incidents.   |
| Corporate governance         | The systems and structures used by an organisation to direct and control that organisation. This includes ethical behaviours and principles of openness, accountability and integrity.                                    |
| Crime report                 | Record of crime or offence, also referred to as a crime file in Edinburgh, Lothians and Scottish Borders, Forth Valley and Fife Divisions.  |
| CRM                          | Customer Relationship Management System   |
| DCC                          | Deputy Chief Constable  |
| DCMS                         | UK Department for Media, Culture and Sport  |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| DCU               | Divisional Co-ordination Unit   |
| Demand management | Understanding demand by type and volume over time allowing prediction of resources required to meet a pre-determined level of response at the required level of quality to a forecasted level of calls. |
| Discontinued call | A telephone call which has been terminated (hung up) by the caller.   |
| Dispatch          | Sending of police officers or resources to a destination  |
| Division          | Divisional policing areas of Police Scotland, each led by a divisional commander.   |
| DWP               | Dealing with the Public – Police reform workstream.   |
| EA                | Emergency Authority   |
| EAP               | Employee Assistance Programme   |
| FTE               | Full-time equivalent  |
| HMIC              | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for England and Wales  |
| HMICS             | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland  |
| HRRC              | Human Resources and Remuneration Committee  |
| H&S               | Health and safety   |
| i6                | New integrated national police ICT system   |
| ICT               | Information and Communications Technology   |
| IR                | Integration and Remodelling   |
| ITT               | Invitation to Tender  |
| MSP               | Managing Successful Programmes  |
| North/East/West   | Territorial policing areas – the three operational policing areas in Scotland.  |
| NPIA              | National Policing Improvement Agency  |
| NVSC              | National Virtual Service Centre   |
| OBC               | Outline business case   |
| OHU               | Occupational Health Unit  |
| OSD               | Operational Support Division  |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| PAD                        | Public Assistance Desk  |
| PDR                        | Performance and Development Review  |
| PIRC                       | Police Investigations and Review Commissioner   |
| PNC                        | Police National Computer  |
| PRINCE                     | PRojects IN Controlled Environments   |
| Programme management       | Management of a specific set of related projects identified by an organisation that together will deliver some defined objective, or set of objectives, for the organisation.   |
| Resource Management system | ICT system to systematically register and measure staff and activities in real-time   |
| SC                         | Service centre. Common term for a public service centre/contact centre.   |
| SCOPE                      | System Co-ordinate of Personnel and Establishment. Computer-based system to monitor resource availability and location within Police Scotland.  |
| SCRS                       | Scottish Crime Recording Standard   |
| SG                         | Scottish Government   |
| SLB                        | Senior Leadership Board   |
| SOP                        | Standard Operating Procedure  |
| SPA                        | Scottish Police Authority   |
| Touchtone                  | System which provides the menu options for 101 call routing as the caller has to touch one of the numbers on the keypad of their phone which in turn produces a tone that is recognised by the system and used to route the call. |
| UAT                        | User Acceptance Testing   |
| VR/ER                      | Voluntary Redundancy/Early Retirement   |
| Workforce planning         | The ongoing planning process for the numbers, demographics, locations, working patterns and skills of staff and officers required to meet call demand.  |



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### **About Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

HMICS operates independently of Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government. Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, our role is to review the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We support improvement in policing by carrying out inspections, making recommendations and highlighting effective practice.

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