

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

Date: 12 June 2023

Subject: Force Contact, Crime and Operations Branch Performance Update

Report of: Head of the Force Contact, Crime and Operations Branch – ACC Chris Sykes

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Deputy Mayor and members of the Panel on the Call Handling service provided by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to the public of Greater Manchester.

The report provides a GMP performance update and details the considerable progress across key measures and provides context of the comprehensive measures implemented to address the performance issues identified and details the continued upwards trajectory of Force performance improvement.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note the contents of the report.

Contact Officers

Chief Superintendent Chris Gibson

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BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Nothing to note.

Risk Management

The Force Contact, Crime and Operations (FCCO) Branch currently has an improved but limited ability to effectively track a call journey that channel shifts/abandons the call within a positive abandonment time threshold. This is due to the constraints of the current version of AVAYA system that the FCCO operate with. The National Digital Public Contact programme is aware of the challenges and seek to continue to explore IT solutions.

The analysis clearly evidences that a large percentage of calls that channel shift/abandon, are within the assumed positive threshold of the welcome message (and reasonable wait time thereafter) for all Intelligent Call Routing (ICR) options available.

There are future proposals in flight under the Contact Centre Transformation (CCT) project whereby the AVAYA platform will be upgraded in circa June 2023 which will incorporate all contact services available in the FCCO (101/5050, Single Online Home and Live Chat) into one reporting suite.

The FCCO continues to make significant improvements in its 999/101 service with a focus on reducing abandonment rate across all telephony areas.

Legal Considerations

None to note.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None to note.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None to note.

Number of attachments to the report: 0.

1. Overview

The National Contact Management Strategy clearly outlines the performance framework for all forces to work towards in respect of their telephony and online service which is as follows:

Contact Management Performance

- Reduce misuse of the '999' emergency system.
- Reduce demand within serviced channels, including the '999' emergency system and '101' non-emergency system.
- Increase the number of calls on the '999' emergency system answered within the nationally agreed target.
- Seek to eradicate '999' calls waiting for more than 2 minutes to be answered by police
- Increase use of self-service channels as a proportion of all contacts
- Increase the number of contacts resolved without deployment of officers or staff to the scene.

Since 2022 GMP's FCCO Branch has made significant improvements within its 999 and 101 telephony service. Once highlighted as one of the worst performing forces in the country where 999 calls waited on average up to and over 1 minute and 101 calls waited on average an excess of 7 minutes, the Force is now achieving excellent performance across all telephony and digital online services available to the public, which is in line with the National Strategy.

The focus remains to continually achieve and seek to improve the 999/101 service and enhance the Force's online services within the national performance framework and expectations.

Whilst the Force can manage/monitor long wait times on its 999/101 service and identify points of potential channel/shift it can only make 'assumptions' in respect of its channel shift/positive abandonment rate. To fully track the transition from telephony to online this would require significant IT development.

To achieve the required standards/targets, improve the telephony/online services and deliver against a national performance framework, the FCCO journey has been broken down into a number of stages:

Financial Investment – To ensure the Force was in a position to improve the telephony/digital services available to public, a significant financial investment was allocated to the FCCO. This enabled the FCCO to recruit a key senior leadership role, establish a number of additional management and supervisory posts and allow recruitment to exceed the baseline Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and recruit 10% above the required resource levels (which is in line and common practice amongst other forces).

The investment in IT projects such as the Contact Centre Transformation (CCT) project, to improve the customer journey and enhance the FCCO reporting suite was critical to improving the overall customer journey, ensuring the Force was being measured accurately, and able to design an effective performance framework.

Stabilisation of FCCO establishment – A dedicated Gold structure was aligned to the investment project to ensure that the required FTE resources levels (plus 10%) were achieved, the FCCO reduced the attrition levels, the wait time for new recruits was reduced and the FCCO stabilised its resources. In conjunction with the resourcing uplift, the FCCO sought to stabilise its already existing FTE by way of implementing force policies and ensuring a robust governance structure was in place to support this.

Review of the Senior Leadership Structure – A review of the senior leadership structure identified the requirement to increase and invest in a number of key leadership roles. This would ensure GMP had subject matter experts in place to manage the telephony demand at a strategic level, with the right skillset to lead the Force Contact Centre effectively whilst meeting its telephony and online demand.

Implementation of new IT systems – The FCCO saw the implementation/upgrade of two key IT systems managed under programme 1.

The CCT project adopted a two-stage phased approach which saw the FCCO move from an outdated reporting suite to a more enhanced system, with greater additional reporting functionality. Phase 1 saw the implementation of the ICR options which streamlined the 101-customer experience at first point of contact, significantly enhanced reporting suite, provided visible staff accountability and visually enhanced the FCCO environment (wall boards).

Phase two, scheduled for September 2023, will see the implementation of additional functionality to the system, allowing the FCCO to improve the customer experience further

by directing calls more efficiently at the first point of contact and enhance the reporting suite further.

In addition to the above, the FCCO Work Force Management System (WFMS) was replaced with an updated version which enabled the FCCO to improve the forecasting/scheduling of its resources, enhance the performance framework and accountability of staff and provide additional services available to the FCCO staff by way of booking leave etc.

Review of reporting methodology and in built 999 service protection – The FCCO utilises a number of systems to manage and report on its incoming telephony and online service demand. In June 2022 a full review of the FCCO reporting suite commenced which included the following:

- System health checks
- Redesign of reporting methods
- Review of daily/monthly and quarterly reporting cycles
- Implementation of a supporting governance structure.

Several changes were made within the FCCO which enabled GMP to manage its demand efficiently, improve the 999 service significantly, refocus on its 101 service levels and understand its telephony and online demand further.

Implementation of a Performance Framework – Due to the new reporting suite, revised reporting methodology and stabilisation of resources, the FCCO were able to implement a robust performance framework across all areas, allowing the senior leadership team to track performance more effectively. This ensured that the FCCO is working within internal/national frameworks and effectively managing team and individual performance.

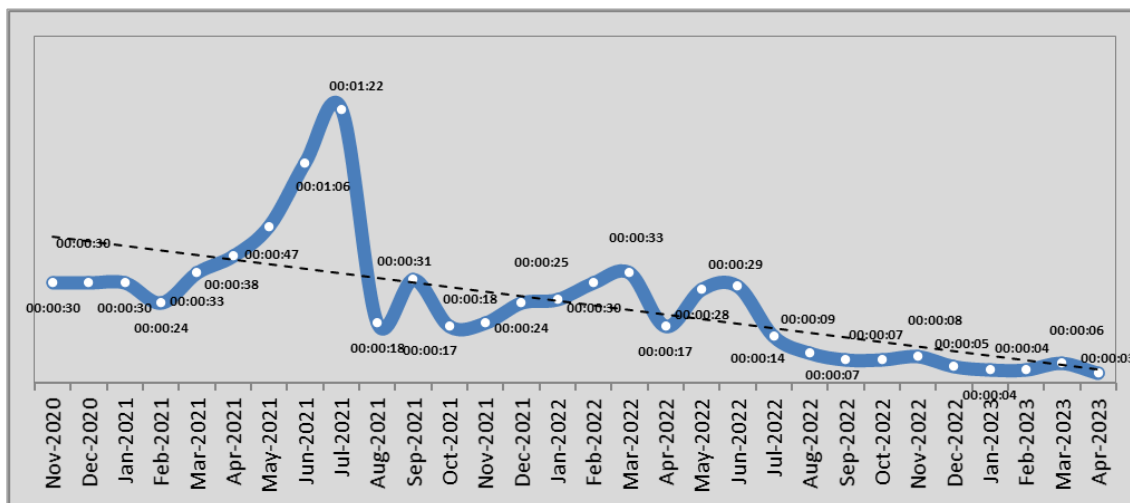
Call taking and incident attendance performance

Answering 999 emergency calls

Significant performance improvement in 999 and non-emergency average speed of answer (ASA) has been delivered. Overall, the linear trend highlights a reduction in delay of answering with notable sustained improvement made since the peak during July 2021 (999 ASA was 1 min 22 secs) for April 2023 – 999 average speed of answer is now just 3 seconds.

In terms of national performance, 999 performance data (April 2023) show GMP to be placed 1st out of all England & Wales police forces in terms of the percentage of calls answered in under 10 seconds. Also, national data shows GMP is placed 2nd out of all forces for 999 average speed of answer.

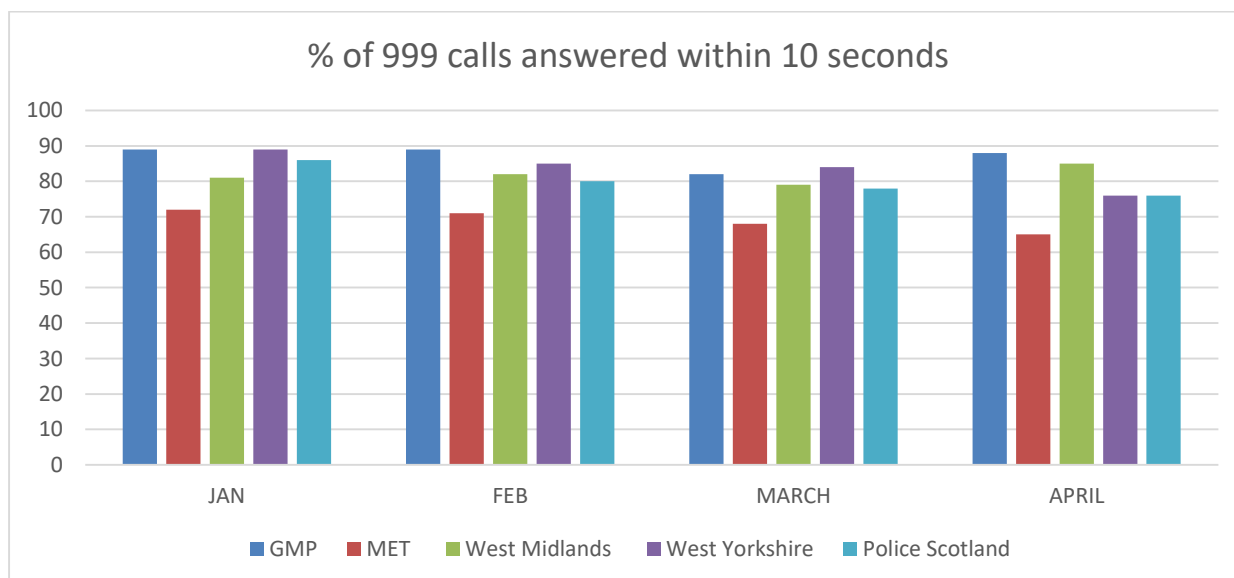
999 ASA Average Speed of Answer (minutes: seconds)



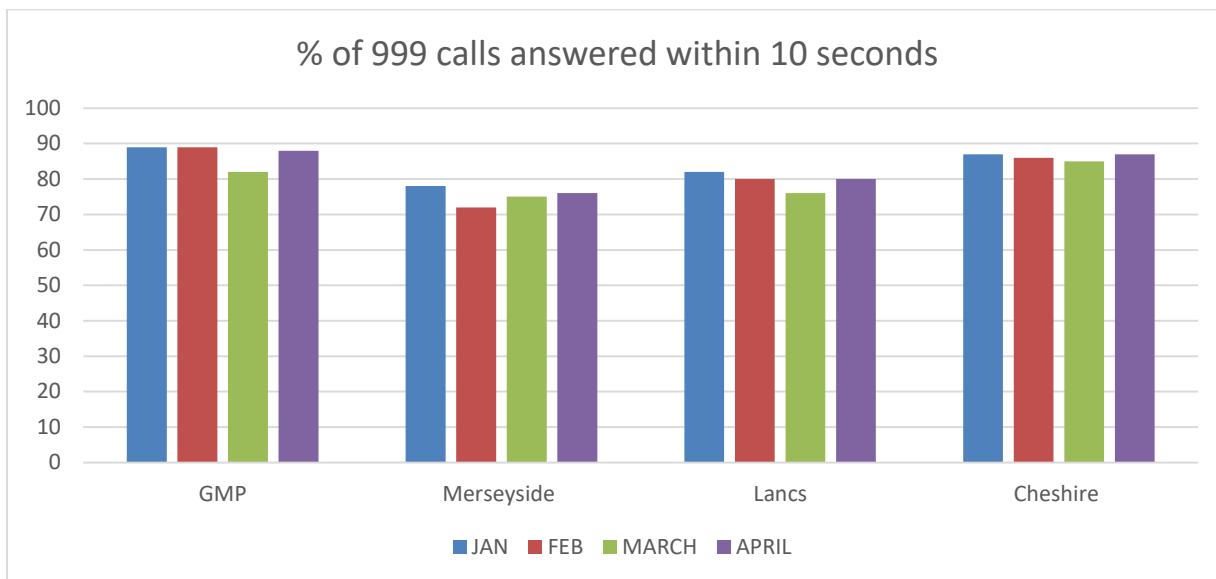
National League Table

The national 999 league table published each month highlights GMP’s excellent improvement in its performance. The data is supplied by BT and forces are highlighting inconsistencies within the BT data, and their own internal measures; however, it does identify a trend in 999 performance nationally.

GMPs comparison to most similar groups (MSG)



GMPs comparison regionally



GMP 999 calls lost and received to/by other forces

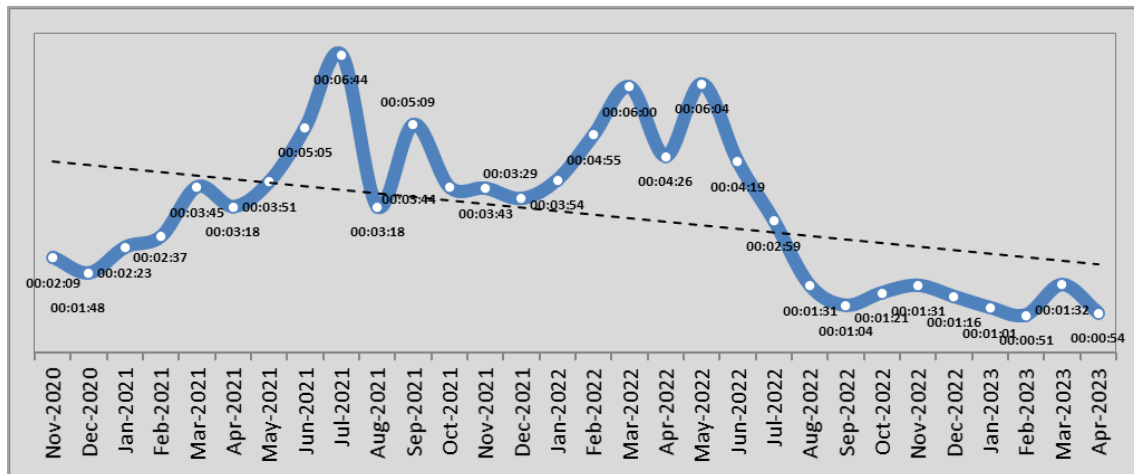
GMP has seen a noticeable reduction of 999 calls lost to other forces in addition to significant improvements in the overall telephony performance.

	999 calls lost to other Forces	999 Calls Received by GMP from Other Forces
July 2021	862	7
August 2021	51	3
September 2021	20	6
October 2021	14	3
November 2021	17	26
December 2021	52	7
January 2022	119	19
February 2022	113	19
March 2022	91	18
April 2022	22	5
May 2022	130	19
June 2022	68	8
July 2022	16	32
August 2022	20	50
September 2022	8	10
October 2022	22	65
November 2022	20	20
December 2022	8	27
January 2023	6	8
February 2023	1	8
March 2023	12	7
April 2023	0	5

Answering non-emergency calls

For non-emergency (ASA) the overall linear trend also indicates a positive reduction in answer time. It is notable that performance in most months since the July 2021 peak (6 minutes 44 seconds) has improved. Performance has improved significantly with times in recent month showing under one minute. In April 2023, Non-emergency (ASA) was at 54 seconds.

Non-Emergency Average Speed of Answer (minutes: seconds)

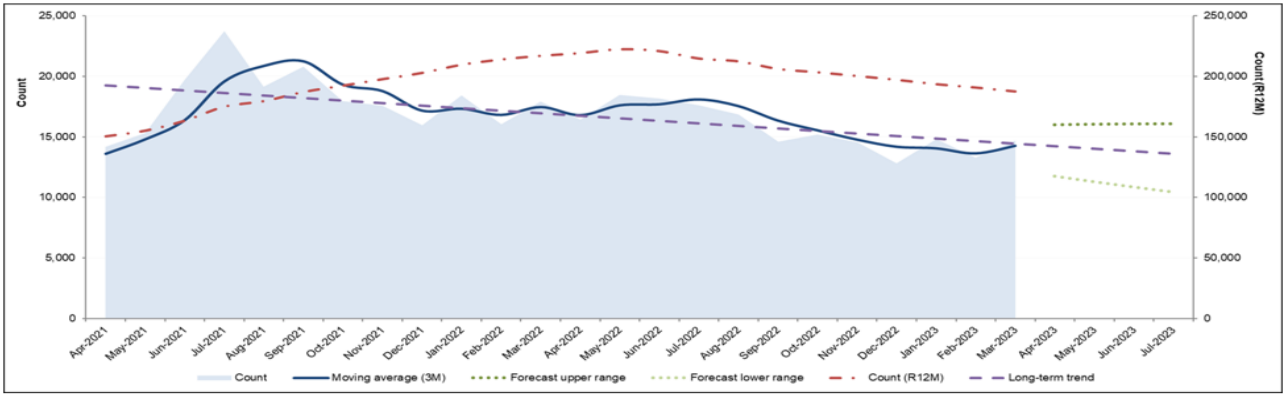


Digital online services

The FCCO has several online services available for the public of Greater Manchester to report incidents, make general enquiries or report a crime. GMP was an early adopter of the national Single Online Home system and is now one of the country's biggest users.

GMP can expect to see an increase in online demand moving forwards as we head into one of the busiest seasonal periods. GMP will be launching a revised online campaign advertising the multiple ways the public can contact us.

GMP online services, demand and performance.



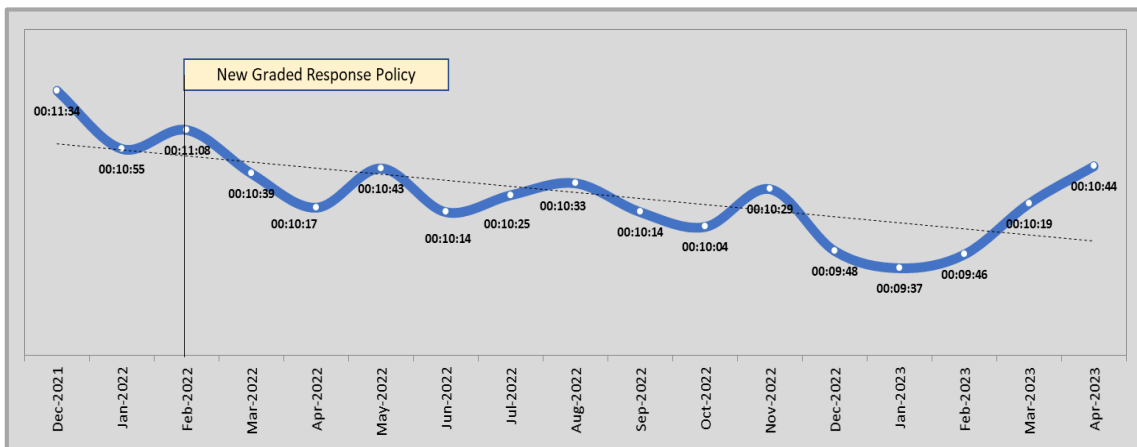
	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
LIVE CHAT	5525	4376	4997	4798	4402	4736	4028	4279
SOH CH	3972	3545	3621	3360	2883	3631	3452	3915
SOH CRRU	7340	6669	6600	6388	5538	6458	5815	6503
LIVE CHAT ASA	00:00:24	00:00:28	00:00:32	00:00:26	00:00:22	00:00:24	00:00:22	00:00:19

FORECAST		
MAY	JUNE	JULY
3832	3669	3506
3723	3689	3656
6262	6260	6257
00:00:22	00:00:23	00:00:25

Grade 1 (immediate) incident attendance

Improved attendance times have been achieved with more appropriate incident grading delivered. The overall linear trend highlights notable improvement in Grade 1 response times has been made since the peak during September 2021 (13 min 35 seconds). In April 2023 – Grade 1 average attendance was 10 min 44 secs (against the target of within 15 mins).

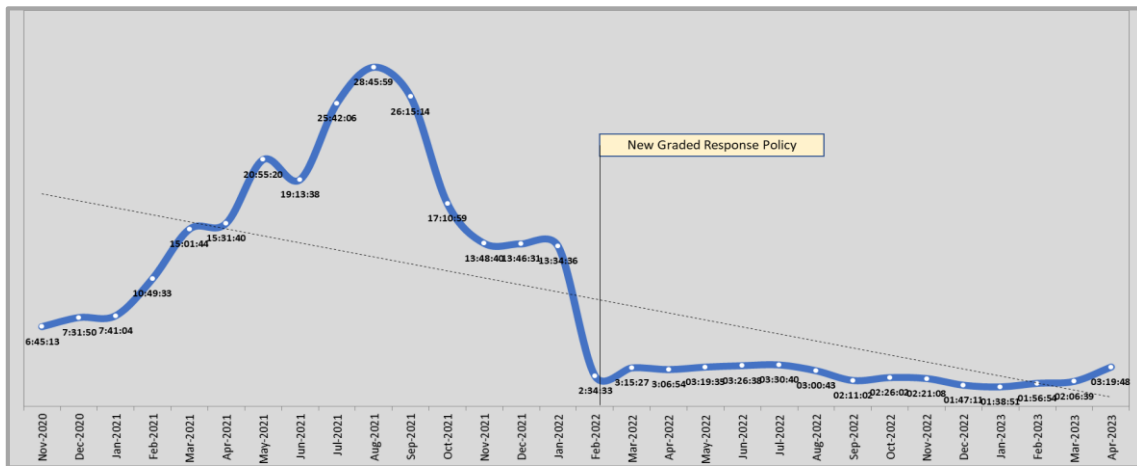
Grade 1 (Immediate) Attendance Time (minutes: seconds)



Grade 2 (priority) incident attendance

The overall linear trend highlights a clear reduction in Grade 2 attendance times. Sustained improvement has been made since August 2021 (28 hrs 45 min 59 seconds), compared to April 2023. Grade 2 average attendance is now 3 hrs 19 mins 48 secs. This has increased on previous months and is a key area for Force focus.

Grade 2 Attendance Time (hours: minutes: seconds)



Call abandonment/channel shift

999 abandonment/line switch rate was at 11% in July 2021, this is now down to 0.2% in April 2023. Non-emergency abandonment/ channel shift rate is at 7.4% in April 2023, compared to 20.7% in July 2021, but we now know a large proportion of these are being directed to online reporting.

This is a positive channel switch and means members of the public have alternative means of reporting to GMP for recording calls for service and obtaining a response.

- Broadened reporting lines to be accessible to more of the community
- Improved outcomes illustrated through DIP sampling
- Improved performance & outcomes – Victim Community Performance Framework (VCPF)/ Victim Safety Assessment (VSA)
- Improved timeliness and response to Vulnerable Adult and Child Referrals
- Improved capacity and capability of workforce, with dedicated workforce profile produced

These developments are sustainable, and the following can be identified as milestones:

- Effectively matching resources to demand with an investment of new staff into the FCCO.
- Introduction of new technology into the FCCO
- New Graded Response Policy implemented in February 2022, the proportion and volume of Grade 2 significantly reduced (-50%) post new graded response policy
- Crime Futures – expansion of the Crime Recording and Resolution Unit (CRRU)
- Detective Investment uplift plans
- Embedded & formalised Investigation units
- Neighbourhood & Response Review

In May 2022 within the wider Contact Centre Transformation project the FCCO transitioned from an old/out of support telephony provider (ENGHOUSE), to a new, improved, and singular solution (AVAYA) enabling the FCCO to enhance its reporting methods, track the service provided on 999 and 101 services more efficiently and understand the caller journey throughout, from the point of selecting an ICR option.

At the present time, there are no opportunities to track a customer journey from telephony to online services, GMP can make ‘assumptions’ in respect of a channel shift/positive abandonment at certain touch points within the ICR journey. Whilst management information has improved significantly there are evident gaps where the FCCO are unable to understand the full journey of a non-emergency call that channel shifts or abandons and re-presents via an online service. This is not a dissimilar to many other forces.

The Contact Centre Transformation project objective, governed under Plan On A Page (POAP) Programme 1, is to implement the wholesale transition from the current AVAYA Blue to the AVAYA Red platform. The migration of the new platform is scheduled for September 2023 and will provide additional functionality to improve the customer journey and will enable greater tracking and reporting on the customer touchpoints.

2. Conclusions

GMP recognises that it is unable to effectively track its 101-channel shift/abandonment fully at this time and can only provide an overview based on ‘assumptions’ until further IT solutions are developed.