

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report To:** Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11 November 2009

**Subject:** GMP Contact Management Service

**Report of:** Supt John Graves – Partnership Supt, City of Manchester  
Insp Pete Walsh – OCB Quality Assurance

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**Summary**

An overview of the methods employed by the Greater Manchester Police to -

- Manage incoming telephone calls requesting Police Services via the Force's Operational Control Rooms
- Quality assuring the handling and resourcing of such calls
- Highlight the performance management structures that have been employed

**Recommendations**

That the contents of this report are noted.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

## 1.0 Introduction

GMP's Contact Management Service is the responsibility of the Operational Communications Branch (OCB) who take responsibility for 'telephone contact' – public calls made for policing services via the Emergency 999 number, and less urgent 872 5050 number. In addition, the Branch now has responsibility for the quality of service provided by Enquiry Counter Clerks at Police Stations – this fits in well with the Force's Policing Priorities for 2009-11 – see figure 1.



*Figure 1*

As well as managing public telephone contact, the OCB also shares responsibility with Divisional Staff for the 'Command and Control' of the initial response to incidents requiring a Police attendance – OCB manage the process of prioritising incidents in terms of attendance and the dispatching of the appropriate Police resource, whilst Divisional Management are responsible for ensuring the availability of resources.

The telephone and radio dispatch service is provided from four Operational Communication Rooms (OCR) at Trafford, Leigh, Claytonbrook and Tameside. Over 850 staff work hard to ensure that the best possible service is provided to the public – and it is a service that meets with public expectations. Each year, 3.2 million calls are assessed, prioritised, and actioned according to the needs of each caller. The radio dispatch staff manages approximately 1.2 million incidents, and the Public Assistance Desk (PAD) record over 95,000 crimes, equating to over 30% of all crimes recorded by the Force.

## **2. Managing Telephone Contacts**

Both emergency and non-emergency calls are dealt with in the OCRs; calls are routed to Call Handlers through Contact Centre technology that automatically prioritises them, ensuring 999 calls have precedence and are delivered to a Call Handler with the appropriate skillset (see Appendix 2) to deal with them.

Improving public confidence is the most important of the Police's priorities, and is underpinned by the achievements in the other three priority areas shown in Figure 1. Every 'contact' with the public contributes to this overarching priority, and managing calls for Police Services represents a primary opportunity to build public confidence – measuring the overall public satisfaction levels with the service received and also the promptness with which calls are answered are the key methods against which we measure success.

## **3. Building in Quality Assurance**

The quality of service for all police calls is governed by National Call Handling Standards (available on the Home Office website). Call Handler's calls are audited regularly against this standard, and their performance discussed during a monthly 1:1 meeting with their line manager. Call audits are performed in different ways, and take the form of:

- Random audits, performed by Supervisors
- Themed audits, performed by Supervisors and Quality Assurance Unit
- Enhanced audits, performed by Supervisors, Mentors, and Quality Assurance Unit
- These audits are performed on live calls in order that relevant developmental feedback, including praise, can be given soon after the event.
- In addition to proactive audits, reactive audits are conducted as the need arises.

The OCB Quality Assurance Unit perform in depth auditing where performance issues or trends are identified – or in response to a particular concern, e.g. a complaint. This approach has been recognised as good practice by the HMIC and the Force Professional Standards Branch, particularly in relation to the OCB's progress in

tackling complaints of incivility, which has seen a year to date reduction of 42% compared to last year.

The results of analysis are part of the feedback loop between the QA Unit, Line Managers and OCB Training Unit and can incorporate activities such as specific action planning for members of staff. This is part of the way in which the OCB continues to strive to improve the quality of the services being given to the public. To demonstrate how this can work effectively, a review of recent activity has resulted in changes to the Call Handlers' initial training course in response to Incivility Complaints, resulting in a whole week of the course now dedicated to Customer Service Skills and conflict resolution training.

The Quality Assurance Unit has also pioneered a survey methodology to identify and capture performance relating to the skill areas identified as important by the public. This innovative approach has been recognised by both the HMIC and NPIA as good practice – see Appendix 1.

### **3. The Policing Pledge**

The introduction of the Policing Pledge (as contained with the 'From the Neighbourhood to the National' Green Paper – Policing our Communities together) has placed an even greater emphasis on the need for the delivery of a truly local policing service that is influenced by, and reflects public expectations and priorities.

This created a challenge for the OCB in that Contact Management technology routes calls as quickly as possible to the next available Call Handler with the requisite skillset – not necessarily in the area the call is being made from. This meant that the Call Handler would not necessarily know the locally agreed priorities, and recognise the need for this to be escalated to receive a more urgent Police response – a commitment under the Policing Pledge to respond quickly to locally agreed priorities.

To meet that need, GMP's public facing Neighbourhood Policing Website (accessed through [www.gmp.police.uk](http://www.gmp.police.uk)) is used to provide Call Handlers with up to date information on locally agreed Neighbourhood priorities which influences their grading decisions when creating computerised incidents – for the Manchester Division's, local priorities are identified through RESPECT Activity, KINS Surveys, GMP Quarterly Neighbourhood Surveys, and through Neighbourhood Partnerships, and the outcomes

are managed by the relevant Neighbourhood Policing Team. In addition, through this medium, Call Handlers can also access details about local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and local issues in the caller's area.

Calls that are not a locally agreed priority are still prioritised according to the Force Graded Response Policy that applies a triaging process to ensure that incidents are managed with respect to their seriousness and importance.

#### 4. Public Satisfaction Results

To indicate the current picture and highlight how the data is presented, Figures 2 and 3 provide comparative data from the last quarter of year 08/09 to the first quarter of the current year.

Note – the following customer satisfaction data is gathered through the random calling of a percentage of a set cohort of service users. The volume of the sample has varied considerably between quarters, and this should be borne in mind when considering changes in satisfaction levels. In addition, the nature of the cohort will involve callers who are reporting certain crime types and road collisions.

#### Force Results

	Percentage satisfied		Percentage very or completely satisfied	
	0809	0910	0809	0910
	Q4	Q1	Q4	Q1
999	91.4% [358]	94.0% [83]	76.6% [358]	84.3% [83]
5050	94.5% [389]	93.5% [93]	86.2% [389]	87.1% [93]
Other number	100.0% [49]	83.3% [12]	94.0% [49]	75.0% [12]
<b>Overall</b>	<b>93.4%</b> <b>[796]</b>	<b>93.1%</b> <b>[188]</b>	<b>82.3%</b> <b>[796]</b>	<b>85.1%</b> <b>[188]</b>

Figure 2

Key outcome – data indicates an increase in satisfaction in relation to ‘999 calls, whilst ‘5050’ calls remain fairly static. The “other number” category has very small sample sizes

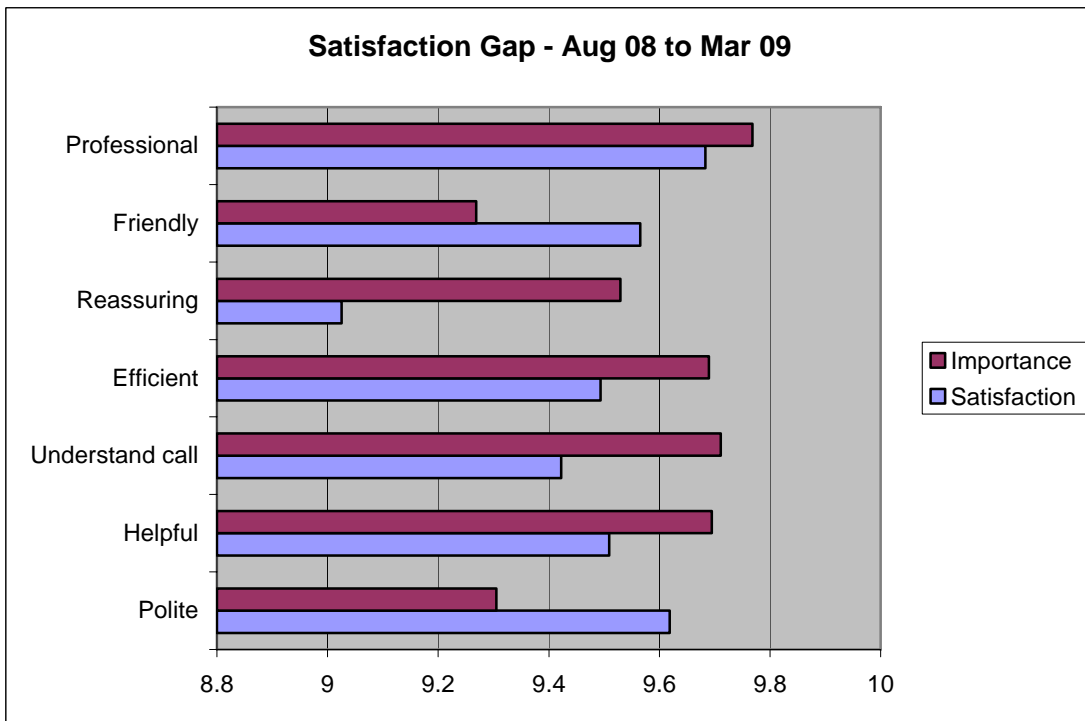
<b>Table 2 – Satisfaction with the ability of the person who took the telephone call to deal with enquiry</b>				
	<b>Percentage satisfied</b>		<b>Percentage very or completely satisfied</b>	
	<b>0809</b>		<b>0809</b>	
	<b>Q4 only</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q4 only</b>	<b>Q1</b>
999	91.7% [357]	92.8% [83]	80.1% [357]	83.1% [83]
5050	94.5% [388]	95.7% [93]	87.0% [388]	86.0% [93]
Other number	99.1% [49]	91.7% [12]	98.2% [49]	83.3% [12]
<b>Overall</b>	<b>93.4%</b> <b>[794]</b>	<b>94.1%</b> <b>[188]</b>	<b>84.2%</b> <b>[794]</b>	<b>84.6%</b> <b>[188]</b>

Figure 3

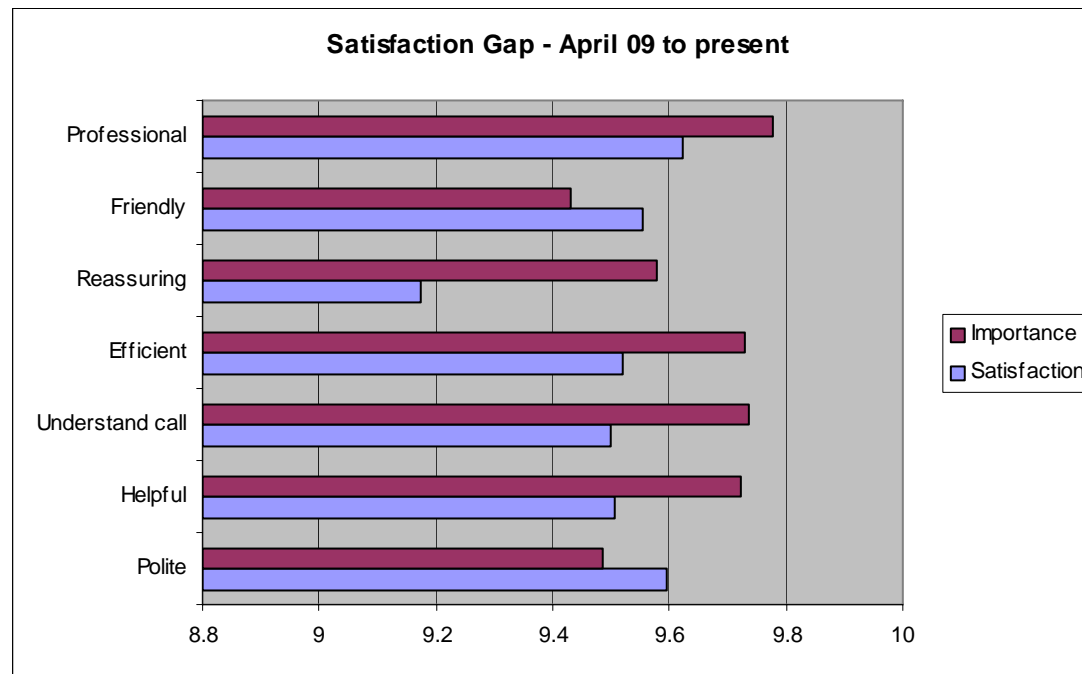
Again, the outcomes indicate a similar direction of travel with quarterly improvement in ‘999’ performance, with ‘5050’ performance remaining fairly static.

**Appendix 1**

**OCB Monthly Audit Results**



*Baseline graph (above)*



*YTD Satisfaction levels (1/4/09 to 30/9/09). This indicates a 19.7% reduction in the satisfaction gap for reassurance. Our year-end target for 2009/10 is to reduce the gap by 20%.*

**Appendix 2**

**Call Handling Skillsets**

