This procedure is part of North Yorkshire Police policy to which all Chief Constable personnel and the functions provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner are required to adhere.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The telephone is seen as the primary means of individuals initiating contact with North Yorkshire Police (NYP). Calls that are received into the organisation need to be handled so as to ensure that the caller is dealt with professionally and expeditiously with minimum time spent waiting for a response.

NYP has incorporated National Call Handling Standards (NCHS) and consistently works to those guidelines.

This procedure outlines individuals’ responsibilities in relation all call handling including emergency, non-emergency and the automated switchboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKAGES</th>
<th>Overarching Policies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veritel Voice Recording Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Documents:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>Call handling takes place within the Force Control Room (FCR) Only suitably trained, tutored and accredited members of staff will undertake call handling.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These members of staff will have their skills and performance reviewed as part of the department’s performance and development processes. This will ensure that all staff within the FCR are competent to undertake their role, and that a consistent level of service is given to all callers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The FCR Manager has particular responsibility for the call handling service provided to the public by NYP and is also has responsibility for liaising with BT, as the designated service provider for 999 calls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All calls handled within the FCR automatic call distributor system will be recorded so as to preserve evidence, information and to facilitate service monitoring and improvement. The recording and retrieval of calls are strictly controlled under the Veritel Voice Recording Procedure.

**Public Non-Emergency Calls**

Non-emergency calls to NYP are made by dialling 101. NYP uses an automated switchboard facility to deal with calls at their inception. Callers will be represented with four options:-

- Option 1 will allow a caller to report an incident or crime. All these calls will be routed through to the Force Control Room where they are answered by FCR staff. There are no dedicated switchboard staff, therefore the calls are handled by staff who are also taking 999 calls.

- Option 2 will allow the caller to ask for a staff member or department by name or collar number.

- Option 3 will allow the caller to ask for a named custody office.

- Option 4 will allow the caller to report lost or found property.

The automated switchboard facility incorporates voicemail for departments and individuals within the force. At Option 2 callers asking for a named officer will be transferred by the automated switchboard directly to Airwave radios. Callers can leave a voicemail which can be retrieved via the airwave radio or by telephones within the force.

The FCR management team will receive daily updates on both performance and call volumes. The management team is responsible for ensuring that emerging trends of predicted call volume changes are appropriately catered for.

All non-emergency calls handled within the FCR will be recorded so as to preserve evidence and information and to facilitate service monitoring and improvement. The recording facility is “Veritel”. A procedure is in place to ensure force standards are maintained in relation to the recording and retrieval of calls.

**Emergency (999 or 112) Calls**

The 999 service is provided by NYP in line with the Public Emergency Calls Service agreement (PECS). A “buddy” arrangement exists between NYP and Humberside Police under the PECS agreement.

The service level target for emergency calls is to answer 90% in ten seconds.

The FCR management team will receive daily updates on both performance and call volumes. The post holder is responsible for ensuring that emerging trends of predicted call volume changes are appropriately catered for.

Only trained members of the FCR answer emergency calls (999 or 112). Calls on these
lines cannot be redirected and will be handled to conclusion by the FCR staff member receiving the call. The FCR staff member is responsible for taking sufficient details to enable an appropriate response to be initiated, if necessary holding the caller on the call whilst a response is dispatched.

NYP adopted the **THRIVE** principles for assessing the appropriateness of the response.

- Threat
- Harm
- Risk
- Investigation
- Vulnerability
- Engagement

Staff are fully trained in how to apply the THRIVE principles to calls and decide a suitable outcome at the time of the call. Whether this is deployment immediately, as soon as possible within the hour, an appointment or a discussion with the neighbourhood service desk.

Information obtained from calls will be logged in accordance with National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) and MOPI. Staff are fully trained in these standards according to their role.

If a 999/112 call is received which is intended for another force, the call taker should record the incident and then initiate contact with the relevant Force/organisation either by telephone or by direct electronic incident transfer.

In the event of a call being received on 999 or 112 that is not appropriate, the caller is to be informed that the call is inappropriate for an emergency line, they should be advised to call back on 101 and the call terminated.

**Diversionary Call Handling**

Where a call is received by an FCR staff member requesting a service which should be provided by an agency other than the police, the caller should be advised of the more appropriate agency and be provided with contact details for them. Application of this process may at times be sensitive and call handlers must ensure that they pay careful attention to what the caller is requesting to ensure that their decision to divert them to a more suitable service provider is the correct course of action.

**Enquirer Line (option 1 in the automated switchboard)**

In line with the contract management principles and guidance, NYP’s locally derived target is to aim to answer non-emergency calls within 30 seconds.

This line will be staffed by members of the FCR who will only undertake this role having been trained, tutored and accredited by a trained tutor under the guidance of the FCR Manager.

The variety of calls which may be handled on these lines is vast but will include:-
• members of the public reporting non-emergency incidents and crimes
• members of the public asking for advice
• members of the public reporting road traffic collisions
• members of the public requesting updates from a previously reported incident
• members of the public passing on intelligence or information
• Calls intended for other agencies

This list is not exhaustive.

As with all other calls these calls are recorded for both evidential and development purposes.

If a caller needs redirecting from the public enquirer line, the FCR Staff member will ensure they direct the caller back to the automated switchboard, having advised them of the appropriate name or department to request.

Internal Extension Numbers and automated switchboard facility - Responsibilities of Users

The internal Force directory is the designated database which holds information relating to individual and department details such as name, department, directorate and a telephone extension. The details held on this database also link into the automated switchboard. This information is used to direct calls at Option 2 to the correct person and destination.

Members of staff retain responsibility for ensuring that their personal details, including extension number, job title and department shown on the electronic Force telephone directory are correct.

Supervisors will check that their team’s contact numbers are accurate.

Updates to the internal telephone directory are to be notified by e-mail to “Comms Updates”. Systems Administrators in the FCR will ensure that details are correctly transferred to the automated switchboard facility.

Departmental managers are responsible for dip sampling extension numbers shown on the internal directory.

Departmental managers will also receive a weekly voicemail report and will be responsible for ensuring all staff within the force are managing their voicemail efficiently.

The Force intranet has a “pop up” service which allows staff to check their details and amend as necessary.

Voicemail

Members of non-operational staff will ensure whilst they are away from their telephone extensions, either the line is diverted to a staffed extension, or voice mail is activated.
In respect of operational officers and staff, in the first instance calls will be routed to the handheld radio. If the intended recipient is unable to take the call, the caller will be able to leave a message on the voicemail facility.

The use of voice mail is a valuable tool providing the extension holder with services. The automated switchboard facility routes calls to a voicemail facility should the intended recipient or department be unable to answer the call.

All staff members are required to regularly access their accounts to listen to and deal with any voicemails. The majority of individual voicemail accounts will escalate into a group voicemail account after 24 hours. They will then be deleted from the individual account. Managers are required to ensure that processes are in place to retrieve escalated voicemail messages and to ensure that they are dealt with. The focus should be on providing customer service.

Team leaders and departmental managers will ensure compliance is dip sampled and action taken where necessary. Weekly performance management information will be published by the corporate performance team so that managers can review backlogs of any voicemail messages in the system and take action to clear and deal with these.

When meeting the public, Officers should complete a contact slip with the relevant details to allow calls to be transferred to the correct destination by the automated switchboard. This will include:

- Name
- Collar number
- Department

This approach will minimize the number of calls being incorrectly transferred and will also enable the automated facility to “recognise” more names, therefore building up its voice recognition capability.

**General user interface facility**

Officers at the rank of Chief Inspector and above and Managers of PO grade will have the” General user interface” facility to direct their calls to either a desk telephone, a mobile telephone or a hand held radio. This can be changed on a daily basis to suit individual circumstances.

**Direct Dial Calls**

Members of staff should only give out direct dial telephone numbers to their internal extension number when there is one of the services outlined above in place i.e. voice mail or divert, whilst they are unable to service calls on the extension. This will prevent callers from receiving no response and becoming frustrated at a perceived poor level of service.

All internal telephone extensions will be answered as follows:

“Good morning/afternoon/evening, you are through to (give name of unit where call is being received followed by the name of the person taking the call), how can I help you?”
Telephone Access for the Hard of Hearing

BT operates a service called “Text Relay”, endorsed by The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). BT receive text messages from the person who requires help, and then speaks to a member of the control room. Responses from the control room by voice, are then passed back to the originator by text message.

BT also provide an SMS text message service for 999 calls to be sent to them by text message. These calls are relayed by voice between NYP on the 999 line and BT operators. It is necessary for the public to register with BT for this service.

The call presented to the FCR staff from BT will have a “whisper tone” via the headset, alerting them that the call is coming via Text Relay.

FCR staff are trained in the use of Text Relay and documented guidelines are available to staff on the Control Room subsite.

National Call Handling Standards (NCHS)

Calls will be answered in line with NCHS. The target times are:

- 999 calls – 90% within ten seconds
- Non-emergency calls – aim to answer within 30 seconds

Calls relating to incidents will be logged on the STORM and Niche systems according to whether attendance is required or not. Calls relating to incidents will be logged under NSIR for which all FCR staff are trained.

Crimes will be logged on STORM and Niche in accordance with NCRS and the Incident Management and Deployment Procedure

Performance Management

FCR Deployment Managers will monitor calls in accordance with guidelines set down in NCHS and log results on the designated database.

A process is in place whereby volunteer colleagues monitor calls. This is to assess the level of customer service. (Had the volunteer monitor been the caller, how would they rate the service.) Guidance has been provided by the control room manager and the volunteer colleagues have been fully trained in contact management principles and guidance and THRIVE.

FCR Deployment Managers will monitor incidents under the guidelines set down in NSIR. The Crime and Incident Registrar will dip sample both crimes and incidents under appropriate standards.

FCR Deployment Managers will dynamically monitor the call management system (CMS) to ensure staff availability to take calls is maximized. This includes ensuring the after-call work codes are managed correctly by the staff.
Individuals have performance indicators in relation to their own management of the telephony system (i.e. availability to take calls, wrap time, input time) which are published each month by the Performance Unit and should be monitored by Deployment Managers and discussed at monthly performance meetings.

A quality monitoring process is in place with guidelines to assist deployment managers whilst making their assessments. The guidelines are in line with national call handling standards.

**Additional telephone services provided by the Force Control Room**

In the event of a major or critical incident the force control room can provide a bespoke telephone service to the public and to the investigation team. This is when the situation does not require the national NMAT service to be used.

On request of SIO, incident commander or Gold Commander, direct dial telephone numbers are available which route into the control room. For example:-

- Major incident line
- Kidnap line
- BBC Crimewatch

These lines can be set up in a matter of minutes by FCR Deployment Managers. The lines can be designated to as many or as few staff as required, depending upon the nature of the incident.

*E.g.* sightings of wanted persons, witness information. Kidnap line for use of victim’s family.

The staff will receive a whisper tone advising them of the nature of the call.

The benefits are:-

- no engaged tone
- volume of calls queuing can be monitored and staffing levels assigned to the line accordingly.
- volume of historic calls available
- monitoring service available for incoming telephone numbers
- calls are recorded and are retrievable

A process for recording or passing the information to the appropriate department should be discussed at the time of the incident with FCR Management. *E.g.* Add details from all phone calls to a command and control log / e-mail details to Major crime unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL TERMS</td>
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**Appeals Procedure**
In the event an individual wishes to challenge a NYP policy/procedure they are initially invited to address their concerns to the Chief Constable or the Commissioner of NYP. Additionally, any NYP employee wishing to challenge a NYP policy/procedure may also do so through the Grievance Procedure. If the matter is not resolved the following can be pursued:

- The regulatory body appropriate to the subject with which the policy/procedure is concerned
- The courts

Examples include the Independent Police Complaints Commission and The Information Commissioner.

**Legal Basis**

The legal basis in which the guidance is to operate can be found in:

- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001

The Human Rights Act 1998 creates 'Convention Rights' which are set out in Section 1 (1) of that Act. They are rights drawn from the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

The provisions of this guidance are compatible with the 'Convention Rights'.

In application of this guidance, North Yorkshire Police will not discriminate against persons on the basis of age, sex, race, colour, language, religion, disability, political, or other opinion, sexual orientation, nationality or social origin, association with national minority, property, birth, or other status as defined under Article 14, Prohibition of Discrimination (ECHR).

**Start Date of document:**
01/07/2004

**Head of Function:**
C/Supt Ali Higgins, Director of Response and Reassurance, 01/07/2004

**Author & role:**
Superintendent Iain Spittal, Head of FCR, 01/07/2004

**Extent of consultation:**
Mandatory: Legal/Risk & Staff
Associations Optional: All Heads of Departments, Information Management, Health & Safety
01/07/2004

**Date of Equality and Human Rights Assessment:**
05/08/2016
(to be reviewed when policy/procedure reviewed)

**Date tested against the Code of Ethics:**
05/08/2016, next compulsory review 31/08/2019
(to be reviewed when policy/procedure reviewed)

**Date of approval Joint Corporate Risk Group:**
Not applicable, JCRG not responsible for this role at time of inception.

**Reviewer & role:**
Jane Larkin, Force Control Room Manager

**Version:**
v2.0

**Date published onto policy/procedure subsite:**
15/08/2016

**Communication:**
Force wide e-mail / Message of the Day / In the Loop / Organisational Learning

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**EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ASSESSMENT**

**Call Handling Procedure**

An Equality and Human Rights Assessment must be used to inform your decision making when developing new or existing policies, procedures, initiatives, working practices or functions (hereafter referred to as ‘initiatives’).

The Assessment must be completed before decisions are made, and remain a live document to be reviewed and continually updated at key milestones during development.
Please refer to the guidance document when completing the assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the initiative?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This procedure outlines individual staff members’ responsibilities in relation to all call handling including emergency, non-emergency and the automated switchboard to ensure that NYP consistently works to the guidelines outlined in the National Call Handling Standards (NCHS), to which it aspires. To consider the equality impact of the Call Handling procedure.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2) What research/resources have been used or considered in the initial stages of this assessment?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCR already has a working relationship with BT and their “Text Relay” facility. FCR Manager is a member of the National Contact Management Steering Group where diversity matters are discussed in relation to members of the public contacting the Police Service. The “PECS” agreement has been considered in relation to this policy.</td>
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<tr>
<th>3) Who have you consulted with and what did you consult about?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The procedure provides access to all members of the public in having the ability to contact the Police by telephone. There are arrangements in place for those members of the public who have a speech or hearing defect. Letters have been sent to “RNID” and “Text Relay” to advise them of how to operate the Automated Switchboard and how to use the 101 non-emergency number. FCR staff are trained in the ethical recording of crimes and incidents under national standards</td>
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<tr>
<th>4) Following assessment of available information, has a beneficial (positive) or adverse (negative) impact been identified OR is the initiative equality neutral? e.g. no particular impact or minimal affect on any group? Provide details on ALL decisions for ALL the protected characteristic groups below. Specify what actions, if any, will be taken as a result of the assessment, provide any findings and the reason any decisions were reached, and determine what changes may be necessary to either reduce any adverse impact or enhance any beneficial impact. If an adverse (negative) impact has been identified question 5 must be completed.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beneficial (positive)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Reassignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage and Civil Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and Maternity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion or Belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex (Gender)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
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5) If an adverse (negative) impact has been identified, please provide further details stating how any adverse impact can be justified for this initiative.

NYP staff ensure that reports from the public by telephone for crimes and occurrences are recorded ethically in line with guidelines set down in Incident and Crime Recording standards.

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### Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights came into force in the UK in 1953 and created convention rights and freedoms. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives further effect to these conventional rights and fundamental freedoms with, for example, a right for an individual to bring proceedings against a public authority.

The Human Rights Act contains 16 basic rights for all individuals, and these consist of:

- Absolute Rights (Articles) – they can never be taken away or withheld,
- Limited Rights – these may be restricted under explicit circumstances,
- Qualified Rights – these require a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the wider community or state, for example, Articles 8-11.

Interference of a Qualified Right is only permissible if ALL the following apply:

(a) There is a clear legal basis for the interference; and
(b) The action/interference seeks to achieve a legitimate aim; and
(c) The action is necessary in a democratic society.
1) Will the initiative engage anyone’s Convention Rights?

No

2) Will the initiative result in the restriction of a right?

No

3) If any of the rights are Qualified Rights, you will need to undertake a balancing exercise. Consider the following:
   (a) Is the restriction on the right lawful? Is there a law which allows you to make the initiative?
   (b) What is the legitimate aim you are trying to achieve through this initiative?
   (c) Is the restriction necessary and proportionate? Are you restricting one person’s rights to protect the rights of another individual? Is there another way to achieve the aim identified in (b)?

Not applicable