



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

**Scrutiny Panel Dip
Sampling Exercise
Force Communication Centre – Rural
Crime Calls**

Panel Members' Findings & Feedback

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1.0 Overview, Background, Purpose and Methodology

The Quality Assurance Terms of Reference, available on the OPCC's website <https://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/khad1skc/qap-tor-final-2025.pdf>, states the background and purpose of the Panel along with how the dip sampling is carried out and what the Panel is asked to consider.

At the meeting of the Commissioner's Quality Assurance Panel held on the 16th March 2026, a random selection of Force Communication Centre (FCC) calls in relation to Rural Crime were considered. Members listened to a selection of calls and considered the accompanying STORM (Force Command and Control System) records. The Panel reviewed 8 calls to the FCC.

The Quality Assurance Panel members were asked to review the sample of calls considering the following overarching criteria:

- Establishing the callers needs
- Investigation and Data entry
- Victim/Vulnerability Established
- Rapport and Professional Manner
- Positive Service Offered
- Safeguarding/Scene Preservation Advice given
- Call Recap
- Closure Advice / Management of expectations

A copy of the full feedback form is provided at Appendix A. In addition the Panel was asked to consider whether the grade allocated to the call was in their opinion the correct grade. There are four possible gradings of calls:

1. Grade 1 – Immediate response

2. Grade 2 – Priority Response
3. Grade 3 – Standard Response
4. Grade 4 – Resolution without Deployment

2.0 Executive Summary

In total, the Panel reviewed 8 Force Communication Centre Calls.

Positive Feedback

Overall, there was good and logical questioning throughout the calls that allowed the call handler to understand what the relevant issues were.

Areas for Improvement

The main area for improvement is in relation to silences that occur during calls and the panel felt that this should be explained to callers with a statement along the lines of "You may experience some silence whilst I gather the information, this is because I am ensuring it is all recorded on the system".

In several calls the call handler did not provide specific information on the next steps.

The panel felt that it is important for the call handler to use the callers name where possible because this may assist in putting their minds at ease.

3.0 Review of Incidents

Incident 1
<p>Circumstance</p> <p>Theft of a goat that was graded as a Standard response</p>
<p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel noted good questioning from the handler. • Made good use of the callers name and kept calm when asking questions.
Areas for Improvement

- There were significant periods of silence during the call that could have been explained to the caller that the handler was typing up information when they were silent.
- It was noted that the purpose of the call was established early on but further information gathering did not appear to be in a logical sequence.
- The panel felt that as part of the closure of the call more information could have been provided to the caller on the next steps.

Queries Raised

- Has the process now changed in relation to asking about vulnerabilities as they were asked at the end of all calls considered, whereas in previous panels it has been asked earlier on in the calls.
- The call handler asked if the caller had any vulnerabilities but as the theft had happened on the callers parents' farm the panel felt that the caller should have been asked if her parents had any vulnerabilities. Why didn't this occur?

Incident 2

Circumstance

A case of livestock worrying by a dog that was graded a standard response

Positives

- Logical progression of questioning which allowed for good data capture.
- Explained what would happen next and that the Police would be in contact within 72 hours.
- The call handler made sure that the dog had gone and was still not causing problems.

Areas for Improvement

- Whilst a good rapport was established the call handler did not use the callers name until quite a way through the call.

Queries Raised

- The panel asked whether the priority was correct as there had been previous incidents and the owner of the dog was provided. Could his have possibly been a priority response instead.

Incident 3

Circumstance

A suspicious incident reported following a theft at a neighbor's property and graded as a standard response.

Positives

- The caller was professional with clear and logical questioning.
- A good opening to the call that put the caller's mind at rest.

Areas for Improvement

- The call handler did not advise on the next steps to manage the caller's expectations.
- Some silences during the call that could have been explained by

call handler.

Queries Raised

- The caller advised that there were footprints present that could be evidence that could be used. Should this have been a priority response as opposed to standard.
- The panel asked if this call would be cross referenced with the call made in relation to the theft at the neighbours.

Incident 4

Circumstance

Traffic Matter in relation to the sighting of a number of off-road motor cross bikes that was graded a Standard Response

Positives

- Good questioning provided a good understanding of the number and types of bikes in question.
- Call handler advised that the reference number would be sent through via email and text message.

Areas for Improvement

- The panel felt that at the start of the call, there was no structure in obtaining the information and the caller was allowed to submit lots of detail with no way of the panel knowing what information had been captured. It was noted that there was a delay in ascertaining the callers personal details.

Queries Raised

- Given the nature of the incident and the unlikelihood of perhaps locating the bikes should this have been grade as resolution

without deployment and the information contained within the call record used for any future occurrences.

- Over the course of a year how many calls are graded as a four or is the default position to grade at least to level 3?

Incident 5

Circumstance

An incident involving the theft of the caller's van that was graded a Priority Response

Positives

- A logical questioning process that gathered the relevant information.
- The call handler advised during the call that work was already ongoing to try and locate the van.

Areas for Improvement

- The panel noted that during the call the call handler did not mention the callers name at all during the call.
- Some silences that could have benefited from an explanation to the caller that it would happen.

Queries Raised

- It was noted by the panel that during any shift a call handler may have to answer many calls that could be quite in depth and require vast concentration. What training is put in place to ensure call handlers are able to give full concentration to all calls and not perhaps suffer from compassion fatigue where they may just request the information required in possibly a non-empathetic manner.

Incident 6**Circumstance**

An incident in relation to a possible horse and hound hunt that was graded a Priority Response

Positives

- The call handler advised that the information would be shared with the rural crime team.

Areas for Improvement

- It took the call handler a while to establish what the callers concerns were?
- The caller was not asked about any vulnerabilities.
- As the call was graded a priority response the call handler should have advised what action will be taken and provided the caller with timescales.

Queries Raised

- At the start of the call the caller asked to speak to a specific individual. The call handler checked their availability and then advised the caller that they were on rest days and not available. Is it standard practice to provide that level of information as the Panel felt that this may have been sharing some personal information of a specific officer?
- Would Dyfed Powys Police have been advised of any hunts that are due to take place?

Incident 7**Circumstance**

A call to report suspicious activity that may be Poaching that was graded a Standard Response

Positives

- The call handler asked relevant questions to obtain the required information.
- A good rapport was established between the caller and the call handler.

Areas for Improvement

- There were periods of silences that should be explained to the caller.
- The call handler said that someone would be in contact in due course and it was felt that this could have been more specific.

Queries Raised

- The caller contacted the Force Communication Centre because of an incident on his Aunt's land. The call handler asked if the caller had any vulnerabilities but did not ask about the Aunt. Should they have explore whether the Aunt had any vulnerabilities?

Incident 8**Circumstance**

An incident of a dog being observed worrying livestock that was graded an Immediate Response

Positives

- Good questioning and the call handler explained what they were doing.
- The call handler advised the individual not to put themselves in harm's way.
- There was a good end to the call that would have managed the callers' expectations and they would understand the next steps.

Areas for Improvement

- There were no areas for improvement identified during this call and the panel felt that it should be used as an example of good practice.

Queries Raised

- There were no queries raised from consideration of this call.

4.0 Response to Queries Raised

Panel Members made the following observations:

Observations	Force Response
Has the process now changed in relation to asking about vulnerabilities as they were asked at the end of all calls considered, whereas in previous panels it has been asked earlier on in the calls.	There is no set time where the call takers must ask the vulnerability question. Only that it should be asked at some point during the call. Many operators opt to ask towards the end of the call as this is when they (hopefully) have managed to build a good rapport with the caller and therefore the idea is that the caller will be more likely to disclose. However, the matter may come up earlier on in the call if appropriate, too.

<p>The call handler asked if the caller had any vulnerabilities but as the theft had happened on the callers parents farm the panel felt that the caller should have been asked if her parents had any vulnerabilities. Why didn't this occur?</p>	<p>I agree with this and this is actually part of the policy. Callers should establish whether anyone in relation to the incident has any vulnerabilities. This is considered best practice by HMICFRS.</p>
<p>The panel asked whether the priority was correct as there had been previous incidents and the owner of the dog was provided. Could his have possibly been a priority response instead.</p>	<p>As there is nothing on-going at the time and the risk had ended, I agree with the call taker's decision to grade as a standard response. The enquiries regarding the suspect could be carried out in slow time, ideally by our Rural Crime Team.</p>
<p>Given the nature of the incident and the unlikelihood of perhaps locating the bikes should this have been graded as resolution without deployment and the information contained within the call record used for any future occurrences.</p>	<p>In the past few years, there have been some big changes in how forensics can be processed, they can attend fewer incidents on an immediate / priority basis (I am no expert on this at all – it has to do with the standards of the laboratory and actions that can/cannot be carried out at the scene of an incident – Sharlene Watkins would be able to explain in full detail). As such, this is not an incident where our forensics staff would be able to attend on a priority basis.</p>
<p>Over the course of a year how many calls are graded as a four or is the default position to grade at least to level 3?</p>	<p>In 2025 we graded 49,243 incidents as a Grade 4. This will have happened after the call had been investigated remotely in many instances. Crimes and ASBs cannot be graded as a 4 because there is always something further that our Neighborhood Policing and Prevention Team or the Crime and Incident Hub to do with these call types. Grade 4s are mostly used when we are receiving information only calls or accidental 999 calls.</p>
<p>It was noted by the panel that during any shift a call handler may have to answer many calls that could be quite in depth and require vast concentration. What training is put in place to ensure call handlers are able to give full concentration to all calls and not perhaps suffer from compassion fatigue where they may just request the information required in possibly a non-empathetic manner.</p>	<p>As members of Dyfed-Powys Police staff, we are incredibly fortunate to have access to a wealth of welfare facilities, from in-person counselling, to peer debriefs. The operators all have 4 mandatory breaks that they must take during their shift, where they are welcome to use our in-department games room and quiet room, as well as socialize in the communal rest areas. In initial training, learners are taught to understand their triggers and the signs of how they will feel when a call is becoming too much, so that they can ask for an additional break if needed. We also train to look out for one another, so that the supervisor can be alerted if</p>

	<p>someone is struggling. As the teams are not very big, supervisors will keep an eye as well and speak to those that have taken difficult calls, and our Inspectors are very proactive in highlighting difficult calls and checking in with team members as well. Senior members of staff will also check-in with staff members regularly especially if a difficult call has come in. We are incredibly lucky that we have an incredibly caring culture up here.</p>
<p>At the start of the call the caller asked to speak to a specific individual. The call handler checked their availability and then advised the caller that they were on rest days and not available. Is it standard practice to provide that level of information as the Panel felt that this may have been sharing some personal information of a specific officer?</p>	<p>We do give vague details about an officer's availability. Call takers are told not to answer questions when the caller attempts to find out what their specific working pattern is, but advising that they are on rest days but will be back on 'x' date is generally considered safe. We are more careful when someone is on sick leave or maternity leave, and language used is considerably more vague in these circumstances, for example 'PC123 is not available at the moment, but I will speak to their sergeant so someone can get back to you'. If asked why the officer is unavailable, we train that the operator would say something like 'I cannot disclose that, but what I can do is...'</p>
<p>Would Dyfed Powys Police have been advised of any hunts that are due to take place?</p>	<p>In theory, legal hunts should notify us when they are taking place. It does not always happen that way as the onus is on the Hunt to inform us.</p>

<p>The caller contacted the Force Communication Centre because of an incident on his Aunt's land. The call handler asked if the caller had any vulnerabilities but did not ask about the Aunt. Should they have explore whether the Aunt had any vulnerabilities?</p>	<p>As discussed above, this would definitely be something that the call taker should have asked as it impacts the aunt and her household.</p>
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