



## Client

National Policing Improvement Agency

## Industry

Public Sector, Police, Emergency Services

## Country

England and Wales

## Challenge

Benchmarking contact centre performance for 45 Police Forces

## Solution

Design of Benchmarking Survey. Data collated to produce overall Police results and individual Force results. Comparisons made with global, UK and Public Sector data from the Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report data.

## National Police Contact Management Benchmarking Report

### Benchmarking 45 Police Forces' contact centres in England and Wales

#### Client Overview

NPIA was created in 2007 as a non-departmental public body and is police service owned and led. It works closely with ACPO and the Association of Police Authorities (APA), as well as the Home Office. Its main purpose is to make a unique contribution to improving public safety. It aims to bring this about by:

- driving improvement and leading-edge practice where it matters, fostering self-improvement and helping to shape the future of policing;
- delivering and developing critical essential services and infrastructure to support policing day-in and day-out;
- providing accessible, responsive and joined-up solutions, enabling the police services to put more time into front line police work.

"The creation of the NPIA is an opportunity to challenge and reconsider national level support available to policing and to agree on how best it can be shared and delivered. This is the first time that we have brought together a number of functions to streamline and simplify policing improvement and represents a major milestone for the future of the police service."

Peter Neyroud, Chief Executive, NPIA

#### Business Challenge

The Police Service has always recognised its responsibilities in relation to customer care and the importance of its relationship with the public. This responsibility has been identified within a number of national reports, including 'Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce', 'Open All Hours', 'The National Policing Plan 2005 – 2008', 'The Police Reform Agenda', 'Building Communities, Beating Crime', 'The Quality of Service Commitment' and 'Citizen Focus Policing Guide'.

The Police Service acknowledges that prior to the introduction of the National Call Handling Standards (NCHS) in 2005, the public's expectations in respect of call handling and primary contact with the police had not been sufficiently well met. There was and remains a requirement for consistency and harmonisation between forces in contact management methodology. This point was reinforced by HMIC in the thematic inspections of police contact management - 'First Contact' and 'Beyond the Call'. These reports recommended that an independent and externally led benchmarking exercise be carried out

## Results

- ▲ Overall Report detailing background, approach, KPIs and results
- ▲ Overall presentation pack containing all the charts produced, together with Observations and Recommendations
- ▲ Individual reports for all 45 Forces, comparing each Force with Police overall results, together with individual Observations and Recommendations
- ▲ The full set of data collected and collated
- ▲ ACPO Conference preview presentation of the results
- ▲ National Police Contact Centre Management Benchmarking Launch Event attended by Government Minister for Police and all 45 Forces

## Solution Provided

The National Police Contact Management Benchmarking exercise will provide the Service with the opportunity to compare itself internally and with other public and private sector organisations from across the globe. The report also considers the uniqueness of the Police Service, whilst acknowledging that the vast bulk of police contact with the public is similar to other public or private sector service providers and therefore open to productive benchmark. To address the unique aspects of police contact, potential international police benchmarking partners will in the near future, be identified and appropriate comparison activity commissioned.

## How We Delivered

The approach agreed was to create a police-specific benchmarking questionnaire based on the survey questions that go to produce the Merchants' Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report (GCCBR). The GCCBR was first published by Merchants in 1997. It is a rich and comprehensive information source on the day-to-day realities faced by contact centres and the trends occurring in the industry.

The report is an industry-renowned study of contact centres around the world and has a proud history of comprehensively investigating and reporting the performance levels achieved and operational realities experienced by global contact centres. The intention was to add value to Police Forces and their contact centres: providing information and analysis of operational daily productivity benchmarks through to helping them articulate the true purpose and value of their centres. The GCCBR is concerned with the current status of the global contact centre market. Its content encompasses the entire sphere of today's contact centre environment. It includes all aspects of contact centre operations and performance from strategy, customer management and financial management, through processes and procedures, human resources and training, to technology environment and overall performance management. The goal was to use GCCBR data to provide Forces with global contact centre information of an unparalleled depth and scale. The research approach for the National Police Contact Management Benchmarking exercise commenced by identifying those standard questions contained within the Merchants GCCBR data set that were agreed to be applicable and of statistical value to the survey. A number of questions were amended to remove specific commercial contact centre terminology (e.g. marketing and sales) to ensure relevance of the results. Additional questions and responses to questions by forces from a previous NCHS Review Questionnaire were used and populated by Merchants in the on line survey to enhance the overall findings and to avoid duplication of effort by forces.

Each question was allocated the standard data markers for comparators taken from the overall GCCBR data - those being the Global, Public Sector and UK results. It was however determined that specific questions would benefit from comparison against a sub set of the three (e.g. UK results only). Forces were contacted and provided with details of the survey process and timelines.

**"I am grateful to all the Forces who took part in this exercise and to Merchants for the production of this excellent report. For the first time the Police Service has an opportunity to establish a true baseline position around contact management. Forces will now be able to benchmark against one another and to make effective comparisons against the public and private sector, both within the UK and globally."**

**Commander Simon Foy, National Contact Management Programme, ACPO Lead**

The survey was completed online by Forces allowing daily activity reporting and support was provided by both Merchants and the Police National Contact Management Programme lead.

The collected data was checked and transferred to data tables for comparison with the GCCBR comparator data. In a small number of cases minimal data normalisation and the removal of outlying data points was required to produce the Force averages. The data tables were then utilised to produce comparative visual data charts to present the results. These charts show the positioning of the average Force results against the Global, Public Sector and UK average scores. Each section has been reviewed by Merchants and where applicable observations and recommendations have been added to highlight trends and notable points reflected by the survey data.

A Fundamental KPI Scorecard was produced that highlights the seven main performance indicators for contact centres which have also had summary observations included within the report based on the key trends identified. Commentary has also been provided regarding "good practice" against each of these key performance indicators.

A standard subset of key data charts have been produced for each individual Force which has had data markers added to clearly identify the actual scores, responses and positioning against the overall charts. This enables Forces to review their individual responses and positioning against the overall Police averages.

The final outputs of the National Police Contact Management Benchmarking survey include a presentation to the Forces and the production and distribution of a printed report. In addition, 45 Force-specific CDs were produced containing copies of the report, the overall presentation including all of the survey charts and a copy of the Forces' individual presentation (each force receiving a personalised CD containing their own presentation).

## Value Derived

This National Police Contact Management Benchmarking exercise will help the Police Service to identify where there are similarities of approach as well as to determine areas where it differs, (or are perhaps unique), from other organisations, in its approach to the management of public contact. Better understanding of trends and variations in performance will allow the Police Service to identify those factors that are critical in terms of improving public service delivery. Benchmarking not only focuses on the strengths and good practice of others but it also provides an opportunity to identify and validate that which works well in Policing. The National Police Contact Management Benchmarking Report shows that there are areas in which the Police Service is already at the leading edge.

This benchmarking exercise is a significant event in the drive to develop a truly citizen-focused approach to policing. The outputs of this exercise will also inform ongoing work around a Review of National Call Handling Standards (NCHS), and the creation of a National Contact Management Standard (NCMS). The NCMS will exist to ensure that contact management in the police service is truly citizen-focused, reflects advances in technology and appropriately meets the needs of the public in the 21st century.

The aim of this exercise is to support performance improvement in the round and not to create a system of leagues and tables. It is likely that a programme of annual benchmarking will be introduced to allow individual Police Forces, and the Police Service as a whole, to understand what improvements have been achieved over time.

Selected key findings include:

- Police Force contact centres are considered to be of a very high standard and are doing a very good job, e.g. call handling for 999 is predictably good, but forces also do well in non-emergency calls
- Police contact centres are extremely customer service and citizen focused, with excellent customer satisfaction, scoring results as high as 90%
- Many Police Forces achieved good first call resolution (FCR) rates - this is considered a good indicator of high customer service levels
- Staff retention and length of service rates are generally much higher than average. This is partly because careers in Police contact centres appear to be highly skilled, rewarding and complex places to work
- Police contact centres spend a high proportion of budget on salaries, and lower than average proportions on training and technology. This is reflected in Staff Utilisation and Speed to Answer KPIs
- The majority of contact centres in UK use call recording analysis and contact centre agent review sessions to improve their knowledge and understanding of customers. Fewer than 25% of police forces do this
- It takes 56 working shifts for an agent to become competent in role in Police Force contact centres, compared with 40 shifts globally
- 96% of Forces ranked "improving service" as one of their top three priorities, compared with 82% in the public sector generally

**Tony McNulty MP**, Minister for Police, Crime, Security and Counter Terrorism said: 'How the Police conduct and manage contact with the public is a key element of our citizen focused approach to policing, which has customer service at its core. Public confidence in the Police is key and I'm pleased to find results of this survey show that the professionalism and quality of service from the Police when handling calls from the public is as good as, or better, than other public and private sector organisations.'

**Superintendent Peter Major**, NPIA's Project Leader on the Contact Management Programme said: 'We are delighted with the key findings of this pioneering report. As a national first, the survey clearly demonstrates that modern policing does take a public focused approach and in key areas of contact management, it is considered world-class. This benchmarking exercise allows the Police Service to confidently quantify and identify where performance has been good, allowing this to be shared between Forces and it also highlights where improvement is required. The survey forms a fundamental part of a review of Police contact management for the 21st century.'