

Briefing paper

Review of the early implementation of the Contact Assessment Model¹

October 2019

Summary

HMICS has reviewed the early implementation of the Contact Assessment Model (CAM) in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions. We support the operation of THRIVE,² an assessment tool that is a key component of CAM. We audited calls for police assistance as part of our review, and found that the vast majority of people who contact the police receive an effective service. Their call is dealt with professionally and an appropriate response is provided. Under CAM, we consider that a better quality assessment of their individual circumstances is carried out and this assessment is more likely to result in a policing response that best meets their needs and which is delivered timeously.

Our review was not a full inspection of CAM, but rather an assessment of Phase 1 of its implementation. It was carried out within three months of CAM commencing and several issues that arose during our work have already been identified by Police Scotland and work is underway to address them. Some of the issues we have identified are the result of the phased rollout of the project, meaning some of the intended benefits may not be fully realised until CAM is implemented across Scotland. While our review has identified learning points and opportunities to maximise the success of CAM (which are highlighted in blue italics below), it was not intended to be used as the basis for Police Scotland's decision on whether to proceed to Phase 2. Nonetheless, we have identified no issue of such concern that it represents an impediment to the continued rollout of CAM.

¹ This review was undertaken by HMICS under section 74(2)(a) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and is laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 79(3) of the Act.

² THRIVE is a mnemonic which is explained at paragraph 6. In the remainder of this review, we refer to 'Thrive' both as a noun and a verb for ease of reference.

Aim

1. The aim of this review was to assess the early implementation of the Contact Assessment Model and provide feedback on its operation to Police Scotland.

Context

2. Requests for police assistance from the public and other agencies are most often made via calls to the 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency services. These calls are managed by Police Scotland's Contact, Command and Control Division (C3). Calls are initially taken by service advisors working in a national service centre based across three locations (Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen). Service advisors are members of police staff who either resolve the call at the first point of contact by providing advice, or create an incident which is transferred to an Area Control Room (ACR). Police Scotland has four ACRs in Govan, Motherwell, Bilston Glen and Dundee. They are staffed by controllers who are responsible for the command and control of incidents and who dispatch officers to attend. Controllers are police officers or members of police staff. Officers who attend incidents are most often those working in one of the 13 local policing divisions.
3. Prior to the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013, the eight legacy police forces operated their own service centres and control rooms. Police Scotland undertook a significant programme of change to integrate and remodel the contact, command and control function across Scotland. Since 2015, this change programme has been subject to extensive scrutiny by HMICS.³

Contact Assessment Model


4. On 12 June 2019, Police Scotland began Phase 1 of its implementation of the Contact Assessment Model (CAM). This model represents a new means by which Police Scotland will manage requests for police assistance made by the public and other agencies. Until the introduction of CAM, Police Scotland's approach to requests for police assistance was based on policies, standard operating procedures and the default prioritisation of calls which dictated how the police would respond. The default priority for a report of theft, for example, was Grade 2. This required the deployment of officers to attend within 15 minutes, regardless of the circumstances of the theft. While it was possible for calls to be up or downgraded depending on the circumstances, this was usually not done until the second stage in the call journey (by a controller, rather than a service advisor). In particular, there have been concerns that downgrading does not happen sufficiently often due to a culture of risk aversion.⁴
5. The introduction of CAM represents a significant shift in approach. It follows a recommendation made by HMICS in 2015 that Police Scotland should adopt a more formalised risk and vulnerability assessment model such as Thrive, a model used by several police forces in England and Wales.⁵ Police Scotland describes CAM as an:

'enhanced assessment and decision making model, using criteria such as risk and vulnerability that enables identification and direction of the most appropriate policing response at first point of contact'.

³ HMICS, [Independent Assurance Review: Police Scotland – Call Handling Interim Report](#) (2015); [Final Report](#) (2015); [Update Report](#) (2017); and [Update Report](#) (2018).

⁴ HMICS, [Independent Assurance Review: Police Scotland – Call Handling Final Report](#) (2015), paragraph 341.

⁵ Recommendation 24, HMICS, [Independent Assurance Review: Police Scotland – Call Handling Final Report](#) (2015). We closed this recommendation and restated it as Recommendation 6, taking into account the latest developments in policing, in our [Update Report](#) (2018).

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6. CAM involves the application of the Thrive assessment framework from the first point of contact. This means that service advisors will assess all 999 and 101 calls for:
 - Threat
 - Harm
 - Risk
 - Investigative opportunity
 - Vulnerability
 - Engagement required to resolve the issue.
 7. The application of Thrive will help the service advisor select the most appropriate policing response from four options, replacing the previously used six priority grades.⁶ The four options are:
 - Immediate
 - Prompt – attendance within four hours
 - Local policing appointment – at a time that suits the caller, but usually within one or two days
 - Other resolution – this may include advice being given over the telephone, signposting to a more appropriate agency or taking a crime report by telephone (known as ‘direct crime recording’).
 8. To support the delivery of the most appropriate policing response under CAM, Police Scotland has established a Resolution Team within the C3 environment and has revised its approach to local policing appointments. The role of the Resolution Team is to reduce the demand placed on local policing divisions by resolving calls and incidents over the phone by providing advice and guidance, recording crimes and conducting remote investigation. Much of the work of the Resolution Team will be in relation to lower level incidents and crimes, although it may also provide investigatory support on higher tariff matters to the ACR and local policing divisions where appropriate. The Resolution Team is staffed by police officers and police staff.
 9. While it has previously been possible for Police Scotland to make appointments to see callers, this approach has not been used consistently across local policing divisions. Under CAM, it is envisaged that local policing appointments will become the standard policing response to a call, unless a more urgent response is required. Local policing divisions are expected to make resources available to meet any appointments made by service advisors or the Resolution Team.

⁶ The pre-CAM grades of priority were Grade 1 (dispatch within five minutes of acceptance at ACR); Grade 2 (dispatch within 15 minutes); Grade 3 (dispatch within 40 minutes); Grade 4 (scheduled attendance at a mutually agreeable time); Grade 5 (non-attendance, including resolution by telephone) and MCAS (Managed Call Appointment System).

Strategic benefits

10. CAM is a key project within the SPA and Police Scotland 10-year strategy for policing in Scotland, and a key component in their strategic objective to improve public contact, engagement and service.⁷ Five key strategic benefits of CAM have been identified as:

(1) **Improved service delivery to the public.** Under CAM, the individual needs of every caller and the circumstances of each incident will be assessed to ensure that the policing response is appropriate. The overall experience of contact with police will improve, callers' expectations will be better managed and their frustration and anxiety will reduce. Callers will have a greater opportunity to resolve their issue at the first point of contact.

(2) **Significantly improved assessment of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability at first point of contact.** The police response will be based on a Thrive assessment, rather than dictated by policy or default prioritisation.

(3) **Improved management of demand.** Because failure demand will be reduced and many incidents will be managed by the Resolution Team rather than local policing divisions, full time equivalent (FTE) productivity gains are expected. This is expected to equate to 79 FTE in Phase 1 of CAM.⁸

(4) **Improved partnership working.** Unless a police presence is required, CAM will reduce the deployment of police to attend incidents already attended by other agencies. This may result in an 8.5% reduction in initial deployments.

(5) **Empowered and enabled workforce.** Service centre staff will be trained and supported to make deployment decisions based on their informed assessment of the circumstances of calls.

Implementation of CAM

11. CAM is being implemented in a phased approach across Scotland. Phase 1 involves the implementation of CAM as a proof of concept in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions. Calls made to the police from these areas will be diverted to Thrive-trained advisors within the service centre. They will assess calls using the Thrive framework and will select an appropriate resolution. All calls to 999 and 101 from Dumfries and Galloway will be diverted to Thrive-trained service advisors, but only 101 calls from Lanarkshire will be so diverted. This is due to a technical restriction which means emergency calls from Lanarkshire cannot be identified and separately routed from other emergency calls from the legacy Strathclyde area. However, 999 calls from Lanarkshire which result in an incident that is transferred to the ACR will have Thrive applied by a controller (that is, at the second stage in the call journey, rather than at first point of contact).

12. It is expected that Phase 2 of the implementation of CAM will commence in late October 2019. This will involve CAM being rolled out across Scotland in a phased approach as set out in Table 1.

⁷ SPA & Police Scotland, [Policing 2026: Our 10-year strategy for serving a changing Scotland](#) (2017).

⁸ Police Scotland, [Contact Assessment Model – Full Business Case](#) (paper submitted to SPA Board, 24 September 2019).

Table 1 – CAM rollout

Phase	Local policing division	Timescale
2a	Greater Glasgow	Late October 2019
2b	Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Ayrshire Renfrewshire and Inverclyde	By end January 2020
2c	Edinburgh Lothians and Scottish Borders	March 2020
2d	Fife Forth Valley	May 2020
2e	North East Highland and Islands Tayside	July 2020

Scope of review

13. Given the public interest in police call handling and our previous work in this area, Police Scotland, the SPA and the Scottish Government expressed a desire that HMICS examine the early implementation of CAM. In determining the scope of our review, we considered what other internal and external scrutiny has already taken place around CAM and what further work is planned. In particular, we took account of the following:

- Police Scotland developed a quality assurance framework for CAM, comprising a mix of internal and external activity
- Police Scotland has developed a CAM evaluation matrix, which includes data that will be reported publicly
- Police Scotland’s stated intention to commission an independent evaluation of CAM as well as research on the public’s experience of CAM
- the SPA has established a CAM Oversight Group, which first met in June 2019,⁹ to provide oversight and scrutiny of the preparation and implementation of CAM, with a particular focus on the programme and change management process, Police Scotland’s governance and assurance arrangements, and the evaluation of the impact made by CAM against the benefits described in the business case.

14. Bearing this activity in mind, HMICS has focused our review on the operational implementation of CAM and aspects of the model which we consider to be new and/or particularly critical to its success. Our review has therefore focused on:

- the application of Thrive
- the work of the Resolution Team
- the referral of callers to more appropriate agencies.

15. We are mindful that we have reviewed CAM in the very early stages of its implementation in only two divisions. Many of the issues we identified during our review will already have come to the attention of Police Scotland as a result of its own monitoring activity and may already have been addressed by the time this review is published. Given Police Scotland was planning to implement Phase 2a at the time of our review, we provided informal feedback about issues during the course of our fieldwork. Nonetheless, this review highlights issues which will continue to be relevant as CAM is rolled out to additional local policing divisions in 2019 and 2020. The review should also provide assurance to Police Scotland, the SPA and others about the policing service being provided to the public.

⁹ See HMICS, [Thematic inspection of the Scottish Police Authority](#) (2019), paragraph 61, in which we note that this group should have been established earlier.

Methodology

16. We sought to gather information about the implementation of CAM by carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with officers and police staff working in C3, Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions. We also interviewed the officer leading the CAM Project Team and met with partner agencies working in the two local policing divisions. In total, we interviewed almost 80 officers and staff and had informal discussions with several more.
17. To supplement this qualitative work, we carried out an audit of calls to the police that originated in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions. The calls audited were a sample of those made to the police between Monday 29 July 2019 and Sunday 4 August 2019. This week was chosen as it allowed sufficient time to pass before our audit commenced (in late August) to allow incidents resulting from the calls to be concluded. The calls were made around six to seven weeks after CAM had commenced, allowing some time, albeit limited, for the new approach to bed in.
18. The calls audited were randomly selected by HMICS from across the week to ensure that some calls were received at peak times, and to ensure a spread of calls across different teams of service advisors. Of the 352 calls we audited, 261 were calls made to the 101 non-emergency service and originated from Lanarkshire. A further 91 calls originating from Dumfries and Galloway were also audited. Of these, 65 were to 101 and 26 were to the 999 emergency service. The number of calls audited from each division and to 999 and 101 was proportionate to the total number of calls received by Police Scotland during that week. We sought to report on statistically significant call results with a confidence interval of $95\% \pm 5\%$.

The application of Thrive

19. In our review, we considered how the Thrive assessment framework is being applied. Thrive is used by service advisors to evaluate all calls to 999 and 101 and helps them decide how the police should respond. Where service advisors transfer the call to the ACR or the Resolution Team, the circumstances are Thrived again by the controller or Resolution Team member. Each time a Thrive assessment is carried out, the rationale for the assessment is recorded either on the incident or, if no incident is created, on the 'callcard' on Police Scotland's customer relationship management system. Where a previous Thrive assessment is agreed, it is sufficient for the second assessor to record 'Thrive agreed'. Where new information comes to light, the call or incident will be re-Thrived.

Training

20. As an assessment framework newly adopted by Police Scotland, officers and staff required training on Thrive. Training was provided to selected service advisors and service centre team leaders, all controllers for Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions and the Resolution Team. This was a two-day training course covering the theory of Thrive and providing participants with the opportunity to discuss various scenarios, how Thrive should be applied, and how the call should be resolved. Front counter assistants working in the two local policing divisions also received this two-day training, as members of the public may report an incident directly to them rather than phoning the police. Additional awareness raising sessions on Thrive and about CAM more broadly were also delivered to local policing officers working in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire. Information about Thrive and CAM was also disseminated to all via written briefings and the intranet.

21. The majority of officers and staff we spoke to welcomed the training they had received and felt that it prepared them for the introduction of CAM and their use of Thrive. One aspect of the training that was particularly welcomed was the fact that the training sessions had a mix of service advisors, controllers and Resolution Team members. *For many this was the first time they had experienced mixed training and they felt it helped them get a better understanding of the different functions within C3. They felt this approach should be used more often.*
22. Many felt the training delivered as much as it could, and it was only through applying Thrive to live calls and incidents that they felt sufficiently confident. Service advisors relied on their peers for support in the early days of implementation and welcomed being grouped together with other Thrive-trained advisors so they could ask each other questions. However, they said Thrive-trained advisors were soon dispersed around the service centre and this meant they could struggle to get advice easily, particularly if their team leader was not trained. *As more service advisors are trained in Thrive in preparation for Phase 2 of CAM, they felt it would be useful for them to be paired with more experienced advisors for support.*
23. Officers and staff welcomed the presence of floorwalkers¹⁰ immediately after implementation as they could provide support and guidance when needed. While floorwalkers were visible and easily accessible to some, others reported rarely if ever seeing them and not benefiting from their input.
24. During our audit and our focus groups with C3 personnel, it became clear that different approaches were being taken to the same issue. Some personnel reported there being inconsistencies in training and in further instructions they received about Thrive and CAM. Inconsistencies in training may have resulted from the training being carried out over a long period of time, and processes only becoming finalised close to the date of implementation. Training had originally begun in preparation for Phase 1 commencing in March 2019, but implementation was delayed pending the expected withdrawal of the UK from the EU on 29 March 2019. Nonetheless, any changes in approach or new information should have been cascaded to all Thrive-trained personnel. This has not happened sufficiently well, as some staff only became aware of their different approaches during our discussions with them.
25. While staff told us about various sources of information about Thrive and CAM, including briefings, FAQs and a learning spreadsheet, awareness of each of these was mixed across our focus groups. *There is a need for clear, consistent instructions and more effective communication about processes and decisions taken about Thrive and CAM.* Any changes to training should be cascaded to those who have already been trained. Discrepancies in practice should be identified during supervision by team leaders and regular quality assurance.
26. Some Thrive-trained service advisors were supervised by team leaders who had not yet been trained and did not have a full understanding of Thrive and the new resolution options available to advisors. Some service advisors told us that this affected the support they received and made them more reliant on their peers for guidance. They felt those team leaders who had not been trained did not understand that CAM calls (i.e. those from Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire) may take longer to complete and may require a more protracted period of after-call work. They felt under pressure from their team leaders to complete this work as quickly as possible and make themselves available to take the next call. *We understand that Police Scotland is aware of this issue and work is underway to prioritise the training of team leaders for Phase 2.*

¹⁰ A floorwalker is a knowledgeable and experienced individual who is made available to provide support and guidance to others and answer their questions.

27. During our fieldwork in C3 Division, we met several individuals who had been designated as 'CAM champions'. This role seemed a good idea in principle, if it involved acquiring more knowledge and experience in Thrive and CAM and providing support and advice to colleagues. However, the champions we met said that while they had received additional training, they did not feel this added to the initial two-day training course. They were also unclear about the scope of their champion role, and had no free time to support colleagues. *We welcome the idea of a CAM champion, but if the role is to be continued, clarity is required regarding the nature of the role and champions should be supported to deliver what is expected of them.*
28. Awareness raising sessions on Thrive and about CAM more broadly were delivered to local policing officers working in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire. Information about Thrive and CAM was also disseminated to them via written briefings and the intranet. Constables and most sergeants and inspectors felt this was sufficient. However, some sergeants and inspectors felt they would benefit from more formal training in Thrive so that if they needed to challenge the resolution option selected by C3 Division, they could do so appropriately and using the same assessment framework. *Some local sergeants and inspectors told us they had been instructed never to challenge the Thrive assessment made by C3. However, we believe it is appropriate for such challenge to be made, particularly where the officer has local knowledge of a person or issue which may influence how the police respond. When preparing to implement CAM, local divisions should be clear about expectations of their sergeants and inspectors under the new approach.*

The use of Thrive

29. The Thrive assessment framework should be applied to calls received from the two CAM divisions and a rationale for the Thrive assessment should be recorded. In our audit of CAM call handling, we found that the Thrive assessment was used by service advisors and its use was recorded in 61.4% of the calls to which we listened. We were surprised that Thrive was not used more routinely. There appeared to be four main reasons for this:

(1) Many of the calls in our audit were taken by service advisors who had not been trained in Thrive, meaning that Thrive was not used. Although calls from Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire should have been taken by only those service advisors who had been Thrive-trained, calls may have been routed to any available service advisor at times of peak demand, so that the caller was not waiting too long.

(2) Some 999 calls in our audit were not explicitly Thrived by service advisors. Due to the urgency of many 999 calls, service advisors may immediately create an incident and transfer it to the control room for action while still on the phone to the caller gathering additional information. In such cases, the service advisor's assessment that the risk of threat or harm is high is implied by the way in which they have dealt with the call. However, *it is expected that they will still explicitly record their Thrive assessment and rationale at the conclusion of the call*, albeit that this may be added to the incident after it has been transferred and even after the ACR has already dispatched officers to attend. Of the 26 calls to 999 that we assessed, Thrive was explicitly applied to only eight by the service centre. Of the remaining 18 calls:

- 15 were Thrived by the ACR at the second point of contact
- one was not Thrived at any stage but the call was graded as a pre-CAM priority 1 and a policing resource was deployed accordingly
- two calls were a clearly inappropriate use of the 999 service and the callers were advised to use 101 instead. There was no record of a Thrive assessment being used to support the advisor's decision in these cases.

(3) Some of the calls in our audit were taken by Thrive-trained service advisors who simply failed to apply it. Service advisors acknowledged this sometimes happened when they had been dealing with several calls from non-CAM divisions and then dealt with a CAM call but forgot to adopt the new approach. They said it would have been much easier for them if they only had to deal with CAM calls, or if they just applied Thrive to all calls, regardless of where they originated. To remind service advisors to apply Thrive to CAM calls, Police Scotland has added information to the 'whisper' that service advisors hear immediately prior to connecting with the caller. As well as telling the advisor which area the call is from, the whisper now specifies if the call is from a CAM area.

Some advisors told us they had been instructed to Thrive all calls, regardless of origin, as this would help them get into a routine of using Thrive. The only difference was that for non-CAM calls, they would select from the old priority grades to resolve the call and would not be able to select a CAM option, such as transferring the call to the Resolution Team. However, not all advisors had received this instruction, illustrating inconsistent messaging as highlighted above at paragraph 24. In addition, some advisors who had taken the approach of Thriving all calls said that ACRs for non-CAM areas had complained and so they had stopped. *To help embed Thrive, consideration should be given to instructing Thrive-trained service advisors to apply Thrive to all calls taken, regardless of origin.*

(4) Some calls which were resolved by a Thrive-trained service advisor at first point of contact were not Thrived. The advisor may have resolved the call by providing advice or by signposting the caller to another, more appropriate agency. For these easily resolved calls, some service advisors recorded their Thrive assessment on the callcard, while others did not. Some recorded 'Thrive not applicable', suggesting they had at least considered using Thrive. When we spoke to service advisors, there appeared to be some confusion and differences of opinion as to whether they were supposed to use Thrive and record their assessment for these lower level, easily resolved calls. *It is the CAM Project Team's preference that Thrive is applied to all calls even when it appears there is no threat, risk or harm.* At the least, this gets service advisors into the routine of using the Thrive framework and recording the rationale.

30. Even where a call has not been Thrived by a service advisor, where the call results in an incident and is transferred to the ACR, it should be Thrived at this second point of contact. In our audit, in addition to the 61.4% of calls that were Thrived by service advisors, a further 19.6% of calls were Thrived by the ACR at second point of contact. However, in a small proportion of cases (4.3%), the ACR also failed to apply Thrive (or at least failed to record a rationale for their assessment and the resolution selected). We were unable to establish any reason for this.¹¹ *Controllers for CAM divisions should be reminded to Thrive all incidents.*
31. Due to the number of calls not being Thrived at first point of contact, or not Thrived at all, CAM is not yet working exactly as intended during Phase 1 which may contribute to its full benefits not yet being realised. The issues described above, of calls being taken by service advisors who are not Thrive-trained and those who are trained having to operate Thrive and the previous approach at the same time depending on where the call come from, are linked to the phased rollout of CAM. *While this phased approach is appropriate, it may mean that the model will not fully bed in and its benefits not be fully realised until CAM is implemented across Scotland. Bearing in mind that the rollout is not due to complete until mid-2020, Police Scotland should consider what actions it can take to manage the effect of these issues in the meantime.*


¹¹ 13.1% of calls that were dealt with by service advisors only and which did not result in an incident being transferred to the ACR did not have Thrive applied. The lack of Thrive was due to a mixture of the reasons listed at paragraph 29. The proportions do not sum to 100 because a small number of calls were made from CAM divisions but concerned incidents in non-CAM divisions. It was therefore appropriate that when these calls were transferred as incidents to the relevant ACR, no Thrive assessment would have been made.

Quality of Thrive assessments

32. In our audit of CAM call handling, we reviewed the Thrive assessments made by service advisors, controllers and the Resolution Team. In the vast majority of cases, we agreed with their assessment and with their view on what the policing response should be. In the few cases where we felt the initial assessment made by the service advisor was incorrect, we noted that the ACR had generally re-Thrived the incident and selected the correct policing response. There were no clear themes in the cases where we felt the assessment was incorrect, although we did note that threats to property were often assumed to be minor incidents when this may not always be the case.
33. Those working in the ACR and the Resolution Team also told us that the Thrive assessment carried out by the service advisors at first point of contact was generally accurate, but that there were processes in place to change the assessment if they disagreed with it. For example, the ACR can redirect an incident to the Resolution Team if it feels it could be managed over the phone, and the Resolution Team can upgrade an incident to the ACR if it feels police attendance is needed. Where reassessments are made, they are most often based on new information coming to light, rather than the initial assessment being wrong. In our audit, however, we noted a few incidents where the policing response was downgraded on the basis of no resources being available to attend, rather than on the basis of new information. *This is not in keeping with the Thrive approach and Police Scotland should ensure this practice is eliminated.* Since our fieldwork, Police Scotland has taken steps to address this issue.
34. When we spoke to those working in the two local policing divisions, they too felt that Thrive assessments were generally of a good quality. However, they also said they still attended some incidents which they felt were not appropriate for a policing response. The incidents could either have been dealt with remotely by the Resolution Team, or were more suited to a partner agency. The partner agencies most often cited were social work, the NHS, the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). They felt that there was still some degree of risk aversion within C3 and that Police Scotland should be more robust in decisions not to attend an incident. This would allow local officers to focus on those incidents for which attendance was essential. *The CAM Project Team has acknowledged that there is scope for more calls to be dealt with by phone or via remote investigation and hopes that the proportion managed by the Resolution Team will rise as CAM beds in.*
35. *There were two areas in which some of those we spoke to during our fieldwork felt Thrive assessments could be improved. The first was in relation to incidents that are no longer ongoing.* There was a perception that those in C3 were too ready to downgrade such incidents, when there might still be risk or vulnerability that merited attendance. *The second was in relation to reports of shoplifting.* Some local policing officers in Dumfries and Galloway felt that greater consideration could be given to the impact of shoplifting on businesses and communities during the Thrive assessment.
36. *Some of those we spoke to also felt there was scope to improve the recording of the Thrive rationale, particularly the rationale recorded by controllers.* This would allow those who review the call or incident at subsequent points in the process to better understand the reason for the Thrive assessment and why a particular resolution option was chosen.

Vulnerability

37. A key element of the Thrive assessment is assessing the vulnerability of the caller or the person they are calling about. If a service advisor determines that a caller is particularly vulnerable, this may result in police attending where they would not otherwise have done so. To help inform the vulnerability assessment, Police Scotland has given service advisors access to its Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) for the first time. While controllers have had access to this database for some time, giving service advisors access



means that information Police Scotland has about a person's vulnerability can be taken into account at the first point of contact.¹² However, service advisors have access to a limited version of the database whereas controllers have full access. Service advisors only see markers about a person or address rather than the detailed information that led to their inclusion. For example, it may indicate that a person is a repeat victim of a crime, but not provide information about how often, what type of crime and how recently. It was thought this limited access was appropriate as service advisors would not have time to read all information on the full database while on a call. While we understand this reasoning, it has had the following unintended consequence.

38. During our audit, we noted limited evidence that service advisors were using iVPD to inform their Thrive assessments. We asked them why during our focus groups, and they said that the information available to them was so limited that it rarely resulted in any change to their assessment. As a result, some admitted they had stopped using it routinely. We understand that Police Scotland has data on how often iVPD is accessed. *This data should be monitored in the context of C3 and feedback should be sought from staff to understand underuse of the system and the impact this has on effective Thrive assessments.* Since our fieldwork, we understand that Police Scotland has taken steps to address this issue, including by monitoring iVPD usage and reminding staff of the importance of iVPD as a resource in assessing vulnerability.
39. Despite iVPD not being used routinely at the time of our review, there was a consensus among those we spoke to that using Thrive had prompted staff and officers to focus more on vulnerability and ensure that callers received a more tailored response that suited their individual needs.


Caller preference

40. One aspect of Thrive and CAM more broadly is that it better enables Police Scotland to take account of caller preference when deciding how best to respond. Those working in the service centre, ACR and Resolution Team might all engage with the caller about how they would prefer their situation to be dealt with. A caller might prefer to have their crime report taken by phone rather than have to wait for police to attend at their home. Alternatively, a vulnerable person may prefer the reassurance of a police visit, in circumstances when the police might not otherwise attend. Feedback from officers and staff suggests that they are much better placed to accommodate caller preference than previously. As a result, they feel they are delivering a better quality of service to the public. It should be noted that caller preference will not always dictate how the police respond – the police may override caller preference based on an assessment of threat, harm and risk.

Call duration

41. An appropriate balance must be struck between listening to the caller, asking questions and capturing all relevant information, and ending the call promptly so the service advisor is available to receive another call. Police Scotland had anticipated that the application of Thrive by service advisors may result in calls being longer. This is because the service advisors are required to ask sufficient questions so as to establish the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability relating to the call, as well as any opportunities for investigation. Police Scotland's resource model for implementing CAM had taken account of this potential increase in call duration.
42. While we found that the balance between gathering sufficient information from the caller and ending the call promptly was achieved in the majority of calls we audited, there were several calls which we felt went on much longer than was necessary.

¹² This is in addition to information about vulnerability that is already held on Police Scotland's customer relationship management system which service advisors use for each call. This system holds information about, for example, repeat callers that will routinely be used by advisors when deciding how to manage a call.

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43. One possible reason for unnecessarily long calls is that service advisors are using the time to complete tasks which would usually be done post-call. During our focus groups with service advisors, some suggested that they felt under pressure from their team leaders to complete their post-call work quickly, so that they would be available to receive another call. Some felt that post-call work could take longer when applying Thrive, and that this was not always understood by team leaders (particularly those who had not themselves been trained in Thrive). They were therefore carrying out post-call work while still talking to the caller, to ensure all tasks were completed and to avoid being rushed by their supervisors.
 44. Police Scotland monitors the average call handling time and has noted that this has risen by 38 seconds for CAM calls.¹³ It is anticipated that as service advisors become more experienced at applying Thrive and their confidence grows, average call lengths may reduce. However, they may not return to pre-CAM levels given that service advisors are expected to gather more information to apply Thrive effectively. *Police Scotland will continue to monitor call length and use this data to inform its service centre resourcing model.*

Feedback and quality assurance

45. Most of the service advisors we spoke to said they had received little feedback on their Thrive assessments, whether from their team leaders, the ACR or the Resolution Team. They would welcome feedback, both to provide reassurance that they are getting it right, and to ensure that any learning is identified. In the absence of feedback, some advisors monitored incidents they had created to see if the ACR or Resolution Team had agreed with their initial Thrive assessment and used this information to support their own learning.
46. ACR and Resolution Team staff told us they did sometimes provide feedback to service advisors or their team leaders about Thrive assessments, but this was usually when they thought the assessment had been wrong. Team leaders routinely quality assure two calls taken by members of their team each month and provide feedback. One team leader told us she had doubled this for Thrive-trained service advisors so that she could assess how well Thrive was being applied. We welcome this initiative.
47. C3 Division also has a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) which has updated its assurance framework to take account of CAM. It carries out regular end-to-end quality assurance of calls managed by C3 as well as targeted assurance activity. In August 2019, the QAU carried out a targeted review of how vulnerability and risk are managed within C3. It found a 98% compliance rate in non-CAM divisions, compared to a 100% compliance rate for CAM divisions where Thrive was being used routinely.
48. Additionally, the CAM Project Team reviewed a sample of 252 incidents from the two CAM divisions during the third and fourth weeks after CAM had been introduced. At that early stage, it found that 78.2% had been managed in line with Thrive training (i.e. that the Thrive assessment had been appropriate and the correct resolution had been selected). Of the remainder, 18.3% could have been downgraded and more appropriately managed by the Resolution Team, and 3.6% could have been upgraded to receive an immediate response.
49. *While quality assurance and scrutiny of the application of Thrive has been carried out by Police Scotland, there may be scope for staff to receive more regular feedback, particularly when they first begin to apply Thrive. This feedback should include positive feedback, to help build staff confidence in applying the new approach.*

¹³ Police Scotland, [Contact Assessment Model – Full Business Case](#) (paper submitted to SPA Board, 24 September 2019).

Localism

50. Given that service advisors may receive calls from anywhere in Scotland, it would be unreasonable to expect them to have knowledge of each area's local policing priorities and for these local issues to influence how they apply Thrive. However, a theme that arose during our review was how a national model such as CAM can be tailored in such a way that it respects localism, one of Scotland's strategic police priorities.
51. It is possible for C3 as a national division to take local issues into account in decision making. Its control room function is organised so that it is aligned to local policing divisions, meaning controllers are dedicated to particular areas. This allows controllers to become familiar with their geography, repeat victims and offenders, problem addresses and crime trends. *Those working in local policing divisions told us that controllers will sometimes take local factors into account when deciding whether to deploy resources to an incident. This is good practice.* Equally, sergeants and inspectors in local divisions may monitor incidents being dealt with by C3 and may intervene, using their local knowledge to suggest to the ACR that an incident be re-Thrived and dealt with differently.
52. Currently, the Resolution Team works across both Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire Divisions and staff are generally not aware of local priorities. It is expected that the Resolution Team will continue to work as a national resource as the roll out of CAM progresses. As with the service centre, it would therefore be challenging for the Resolution Team to take account of local issues when applying Thrive and managing incidents. *Many of those we spoke to in local policing divisions and some within C3 highlighted the need for localism to be a factor in decision making.* A few suggested that Thrive be extended to Thrive+L (for localism). This view was particularly strong in Dumfries and Galloway, where local officers highlighted the need for CAM to be adaptable for their more rural context and where the public's expectations of the police are often higher.
53. We agree that there is a need for national approaches to be tailored to meet local needs. As the implementation of CAM continues, *Police Scotland should draw lessons from the structure of the ACR and explore the extent to which those working in the Resolution Team could be dedicated to working across a small number of local divisions so that they can develop local knowledge and effective working relationships with local officers.* It may be necessary to allow resources to flex within the Resolution Team to accommodate high demand from particular areas, but individuals could be dedicated to work on specific areas in the first instance. In the meantime, Dumfries and Galloway Division has sought to address this issue by sending a weekly briefing for distribution to the Resolution Team about issues in its sub-divisional areas.
54. As well as a need for those working in C3 to be aware of local priorities, *there is a need for local policing divisions to be sighted on incidents managed by the Resolution Team which take place in their area.* This can provide them with information about repeat callers, repeat victims, repeat offenders, problem addresses and crime trends. Local divisions should consider how they do this. At present, local supervisors in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire monitor incidents, while local crime analysis should also alert the division to any issues. *Consideration could also be given to whether there is any need for management reports about the work of the Resolution Team in each division.*

The work of the Resolution Team

55. The role of the Resolution Team is to resolve calls and incidents over the phone by providing advice and guidance, recording crimes and conducting remote investigation. Their work aims to meet the needs of callers who do not require police attendance and thereby reduce the demands placed on local policing divisions. Service advisors may warm transfer¹⁴ callers to the Resolution Team or can create an incident and send this to the team for action. Incidents can also be transferred to the Resolution Team from the ACR. The Resolution Team is similar in role to the Public Assistance Desks that previously existed (and which still operate for non-CAM divisions), but it is anticipated that it will deal with a broader range of issues and a greater volume of work. All members of the Resolution Team are currently based in Govan, but it is planned that as CAM is implemented across Scotland, some members of the team will be based at Bilston Glen and some in Inverness.
56. The Resolution Team is currently made up of five teams of officers and staff working on a shift basis. There are various roles within the team including investigator and direct crime recorder. Most of the officers and staff we spoke to were positive about the opportunity to work in a mixed team and felt this offered good support and opportunities to learn. Some suggested, however, that there was still some division between officers and staff that needs to be addressed. They also said clarity was needed about particular roles within the team, including the respective responsibilities of the team leader and team sergeant. They acknowledged that the team had only been operating for a couple of months and that these issues may be resolved as they settle into their work.
57. As noted above, members of the Resolution Team participated in Thrive training, which they welcomed and felt was sufficient for their needs. *They felt there was a need for more role-specific training, including on the processes that they should follow and the systems they use.* Since its establishment, members of the team have received some training, including on using iVPD and improving the quality of their submissions, but they felt this should have been available before they became operational. They also felt systems access issues and some basic systems training should have been in place before they became operational.
58. Some members of the Resolution Team felt there was scope for their shift patterns to be reviewed. They were not sure they were needed overnight when, for example, they were unable to contact complainers to take direct crime reports.
59. The majority of calls and incidents being transferred to the Resolution Team are appropriate for it to manage. Where the team believes police attendance is required, either because it has disagreed with the initial Thrive assessment or because it has uncovered new information, the team can easily transfer the incident to the ACR for a police deployment.

¹⁴ A 'warm transfer' is when the service advisor transfers the caller to the Resolution Team and explains to the Resolution Team the circumstances of the call. The service advisor does not hang up until the caller is connected with the Resolution Team.

60. Even where the Resolution Team deals with an incident, the involvement of other policing resources may still be required. For example, the team may directly record a crime but also request that scenes of crime officers attend. Enquiries by local policing officers may also be required, for example, to carry out door-to-door enquiries. In the early stages of CAM being implemented in Dumfries and Galloway, the local division experienced problems with the way in which the Resolution Team was sending tasks to local officers. Incidents were being sent to local work baskets for action, but these baskets were not routinely monitored. This issue likely arose because the Resolution Team staff based in Govan were mostly recruited from the local area and therefore likely to be familiar with processes in nearby divisions, rather than those in Dumfries and Galloway. While this issue has now been resolved, *it highlights the need for divisions in Phase 2 (particularly 2c to 2e) to agree workflow management processes with the Resolution Team in advance of implementing CAM.*

Resources

61. The resource model for the Resolution Team was based on an externally validated algorithm. It was anticipated that the team would deal with up to 23.6% of incidents and that the team would take an average of 40 minutes to deal with each one. The experience of Phase 1 of CAM so far has suggested that the Resolution Team is only dealing with 12% of incidents and that its average handling time is only 30 minutes. Police Scotland believes there is scope for the Resolution Team to take on a larger proportion of demand and it predicts that as confidence in Thrive and CAM grows, the work of the Resolution Team should increase to 17% of incidents. Police Scotland is therefore keeping its resource model for the Resolution Team under review – if the current work profile continues, the additional resources that were thought to be required to staff the Resolution Team will reduce as additional phases of CAM are delivered.
62. Those working within the Resolution Team felt that they had sufficient resources to meet the demand from Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire. However, there was a perception among service advisors and within local policing divisions that the Resolution Team had insufficient capacity. The services advisors thought this because they often struggled to warm transfer callers to the Resolution Team as no one was available to receive the call. As a result, some had stopped trying. They dealt with the call and transferred it to the Resolution Team as an incident instead, or made an appointment for a call back. Resolution Team staff told us that warm transfers for direct crime recording purposes may not always be possible because its staff are still taking crime reports for all West divisions and some in the East, as well as for the two CAM divisions. Officers in local policing divisions thought the Resolution Team had insufficient capacity as they felt they were still dealing with incidents which could have been dealt with remotely and which did not require local policing attendance.
63. Linked to this view among local policing officers was the fact that many lacked a clear understanding of the role of the Resolution Team. This lack of understanding at times extended to the work of C3 as a whole, and the journey a call takes from the service centre to the ACR. This lack of awareness sometimes resulted in unjustified criticisms of C3.


Direct crime recording


64. During our review, local policing officers in the two CAM divisions told us about problems they had experienced with the quality of crime reports that had been input by the Resolution Team. They felt these crime reports were not up to local standards, and lacked a narrative of events and key information. They were also concerned that some crimes had not been classified appropriately under the Scottish Crime Recording Standard. The two CAM divisions raised these issues with the Resolution Team and work was undertaken to address them. We were advised the quality of direct crime recording has since improved and is more in keeping with local divisional expectations.

65. In Dumfries and Galloway, some crime recording problems can be attributed to the Resolution Team's lack of familiarity with the divisional crime management system. This system is only used in Dumfries and Galloway, and staff in the Resolution Team are more accustomed to using the legacy Strathclyde system (which is used in Lanarkshire). The Resolution Team also experienced issues with access to the system. To address these problems, crime management staff from Dumfries and Galloway provided training and guidance to the Resolution Team. This has had a positive impact. *Again, the experience in Dumfries and Galloway highlights the need for divisions in Phase 2 (particularly 2c to 2e) to work with the Resolution Team in advance of implementing CAM to ensure that direct crime recorders are familiar with local processes and systems and the standards expected of them.* Ultimately, the challenges associated with different systems will be resolved when Police Scotland implements a national crime management system, but this is not expected until after CAM is rolled out across Scotland. Until then, *the Resolution Team will face a growing challenge as CAM is implemented and it is required to use the five types of crime management system in operation across Scotland. This challenge will require to be managed.*
66. *The difficulties experienced with direct crime recording and the tasking of local officers by the Resolution Team highlight the need for local divisional crime managers to be involved in planning for CAM implementation.* Their knowledge and experience is key to ensuring that effective processes are introduced and that crime recording standards are maintained. *It is likely that they would benefit from visiting the Resolution Team to get a better understanding of its work, and to establish links with staff so that any issues can be more easily resolved. Crime managers from Phase 2 divisions would also benefit from discussions with those in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire,* to understand the issues that arose, how they were addressed and how to prevent them arising in their own divisions. In 2020, HMICS intends to review the accuracy of crime recording by Police Scotland. We will use that review to consider direct crime recording by the Resolution Team in more detail.
67. Some local officers were concerned that when recording crimes, the Resolution Team might miss opportunities for further enquiry because of a lack of local knowledge (such as the presence of CCTV in the area). However, all crime reports, whether recorded by the Resolution Team or local officers, are reviewed by the local crime manager before they are closed. This provides a final safeguard to ensure that any local issues, including investigative opportunities, have been taken into account. The crime manager in Dumfries and Galloway performs a different role, focusing more on compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard rather than investigative opportunities. *For any Phase 2 divisions where the crime manager has a similar role to that in Dumfries and Galloway, the division may wish to consider what safeguards it can put in place.*

Local policing appointments

68. When dealing with a call, a resolution option available to both service advisors and the Resolution Team is to make a local policing appointment. This means local policing officers will attend to meet the caller. This can be at a date, time and location that suit the caller, such as at their home, workplace or at a police station. Appointments are made by the service centre or Resolution Team and allocated to local officers by their local sergeant.
69. There is scope for the approach to local policing appointments to be tailored to meet the needs of the local division which we welcome. In Lanarkshire, the division operates a dedicated diary car. At the beginning of each shift, the response sergeant allocates constables from their team to the diary car and they deal with all the appointments in their area. There are multiple diaries and diary cars for Lanarkshire, organised by area. Each appointment is scheduled for 90 minutes. Local officers thought that having a dedicated diary car was critical to meeting appointments.

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70. Due to the lower volume of incidents in Dumfries and Galloway and the more rural nature of the division which means appointments may be spread over a much greater area, there is no dedicated diary car. Instead, local policing appointments are attended by response officers. Callers are given a four-hour diary slot. This should give the officers sufficient time to deal with their appointments and attend incidents to which they have been deployed by the ACR. Generally, the response officers contact the caller at the start of their shift to narrow down the four-hour slot to a more precise time that suits the caller and the officers.
71. During our review, we heard that the new approach to local policing appointments was generally thought to be working well, although some officers had concerns which are highlighted below and there is scope to develop the approach further. Compliance is very high, with Police Scotland reporting that 98% of appointments are being met and appointments are generally made within one or two days of the initial call. *Anecdotally, we have heard about positive feedback from the public, but their views should be explored further in research commissioned by Police Scotland on the public's experience of CAM.*
72. Some officers were initially sceptical about using appointments to deal with issues such as domestic abuse. However, we heard that they were content with this approach in light of their experience, as appointments were only being made in cases where it was appropriate (such as when a caller reports threats from an ex-partner who lives some distance away and there is no imminent threat or risk of harm, and where the caller themselves would prefer to meet officers at a time that suits). *Police Scotland should be alert however, to the possibility that those who report domestic abuse and accept a local policing appointment may lose confidence in reporting their abuse before the appointment takes place. This should be monitored.*
73. Where local officers thought appointments were not appropriate, it was generally because they felt the issue could have been dealt with by the Resolution Team instead. Local officers told us that when they are allocated appointments at the start of their shift, they review them and are sometimes able to resolve the issue by phone rather than by attending. This suggests that the case could have been dealt with by the Resolution Team, without local policing involvement. *Local divisions should monitor this and provide feedback to C3 so that learning can be shared and better use made of Resolution Team resources.*
74. Some local policing officers in Lanarkshire complained that sometimes they are allocated to a local policing appointment that is particularly complex, and that it can take much longer than 90 minutes to deal with it. If they are tied up with an appointment, it means later appointments will be missed or another resource must be allocated to them. While it cannot always be predicted which appointments will take longer, they say appointments for some types of cases, such as those involving domestic abuse, should be allocated more time. *When making local policing appointments, consideration should be given by service advisors and the Resolution Team to which cases may require a double appointment. Local sergeants who allocate appointments to their team should also proactively review them, and consider whether any require to be rearranged or reallocated to other officers.*

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75. Local officers were also frustrated by the timing of some appointments. They said no appointments should be available during periods of peak demand (such as Saturday nights) as their time could be better spent responding to incidents requiring an immediate or prompt attendance. They also said appointments close to the end of their shift were difficult, as they lacked time to complete enquiries and submit all relevant paperwork before their shift ended. We understand these concerns and note that under CAM, it is open to local policing divisions to decide when local policing appointments should be available. *Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire, as well as all Phase 2 divisions, should give careful thought to when appointments should be available in way that meets the needs of callers and takes account of local demand and shift patterns.*
76. Divisions should also be clear about their cut-off times for same day appointments. We heard that in the early stages of CAM implementation, some appointments were being made for later that day, but local supervisors had already dispatched their diary car for the day with information for each appointment. *Phase 2 divisions should agree cut-off times with C3 in advance of CAM implementation.*
77. During our review, we considered which resources the CAM divisions allocated to local policing appointments. Both divisions had chosen to allocate response officers. We heard that very occasionally, an appointment might be allocated to a community officer instead. This was usually because the officer was already involved with the caller, such as when there was an ongoing neighbour dispute. While we welcomed this flexibility, we thought *there was significantly more scope for local divisions to review local policing appointments and allocate a resource best suited to deal with them.*
78. Under CAM, it is possible that a non-urgent domestic abuse call or a historic sexual assault may be dealt with by appointment if this suits the caller. In such circumstances, the division should consider allocating a specialist resource to the appointment, such as a member of its domestic abuse or rape investigation team. A report of sexual assault is likely to be passed from a response officer to a specialist, and it would be helpful if the victim only has to tell their story once, rather than telling a response officer and then repeating it to a detective at a later date.
79. We raised the possibility of such an approach during our discussions with officers and staff. Some agreed that it could be more efficient and victim-centred, while others were sceptical that specialist resources would be willing to attend, or would have time. While this approach would require a cultural shift and a move away from the default option of sending response officers, we believe there is an opportunity for Police Scotland to deliver a more effective and efficient service that better meets the needs of the public. All divisions implementing CAM should give greater thought to how appointments can be managed. We think it is unlikely that such appointments would be common, but analysis of appointments made to date could be carried out to understand the likely impact.
80. Generally, we saw scope for local policing supervisors to take a more proactive role in managing diary appointments, ensuring that complex appointments are allocated sufficient time and that the most appropriate resource is allocated, whether it be response, community or specialist. *Local supervisors should be made aware that this is part of their role when divisions are preparing to implement CAM.*

The referral of callers to more appropriate agencies

81. A challenge for policing in Scotland and, indeed, across the UK is the extent to which the police are called upon to deal with incidents where they may not be the most appropriate responder. In England and Wales, HMICFRS has reported on how the police are having to fill gaps left by cuts to other public services.¹⁵ In our recent report on local policing in Greater Glasgow Division, we noted officers' frustrations about the time they spent dealing with people in mental distress, knowing that they were not best placed to offer support and that the presence of a police officer can in fact escalate the situation.¹⁶ One of the strategic benefits being sought via CAM is improved service delivery to the public, including by signposting callers following a Thrive assessment to other agencies that may be better placed to provide support. Police Scotland also hoped to minimise the deployment of officers to incidents that are already being managed by others.
82. There is no data available on the extent of referrals and signposting pre and post-CAM. However, in our audit of CAM call handling, we noted that 7.7% of callers were signposted to another agency, although this happened in addition to police attendance in 2.0% of calls. Callers were directed to a range of other agencies, but the most common were the local council in respect of complaints about noise and roads, and other emergency services such as the SFRS.
83. During our review, we heard mixed views about whether there had been an increase in signposting since CAM had been introduced. Some officers felt the police were still filling the gaps, and dealing with calls where other agencies had refused or were not able to offer support. They felt that too often, they were attending calls that did not require a policing response and that the police were being used by other public and private sector agencies as an out-of-hours response service. Other officers felt there had been a reduction in their attendance at such calls, at least in the immediate aftermath of CAM implementation, but they were concerned they were now slipping back to a pre-CAM approach. All thought that *more could be done, either locally or nationally, to ensure the police attend only where they are the most appropriate agency to do so.*
84. Prior to implementing CAM, Police Scotland carried out extensive engagement with national partners as well as partners in Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire to raise awareness of CAM and the fact that, based on a Thrive assessment, police may no longer attend incidents when previously they had done so. Police Scotland also informed partners that it would be seeking to provide the most suitable response to callers which might include referring them to partners. HMICS attended some of these engagement events and found that partners were generally supportive of CAM, and surprised at the breadth of incidents with which the police had been dealing and which they agreed were not ideally suited to a policing response.
85. In preparation for CAM, Police Scotland also sought to develop initiatives that would facilitate the referral of callers to more appropriate agencies. For example, the government's Health and Justice Collaborative Board is funding a project to place community psychiatric nurses within NHS 24. It was planned that Police Scotland would be able to transfer appropriate calls to this new resource, so that callers receive a service that better met their needs. However, this plan is currently on hold following a Data Protection Impact Assessment which highlighted that due to limitations of the current telephony system, Police Scotland would not be able to stop recording the call after it had been transferred. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has advised that this arrangement would not be GDPR compliant. Police Scotland intends to work with the ICO and health partners to identify a solution to this problem, and in the longer term, it intends to procure a telephony system which will allow the recording of calls to stop upon transfer.


¹⁵ See, for example, HMICFRS, [Policing and mental health: picking up the pieces](#) (2018); and [State of Policing: The annual assessment of policing in England and Wales](#) (2016).

¹⁶ HMICS, [Local Policing+ Inspection Programme: Inspection of local policing in Greater Glasgow Division](#) (2019).


86. Despite the extensive partner engagement that had taken place in the two local policing divisions prior to implementing CAM, we found evidence that information about CAM had not always reached those working for partners in operational roles yet it is these individuals who are most likely to request police attendance. Once CAM was implemented, service advisors continued to receive calls where police attendance was not an appropriate response, and faced challenges when trying to explain the reasons why officers would no longer attend when they had previously done so. *There is a need for partners to cascade information received about CAM to frontline staff. To help them do this, partners told us it would be useful if they could be provided with information about CAM that can be easily circulated to staff, such as leaflets or emailed briefings.*
87. *Partners should also be encouraged to review any policies and procedures which require the police to be informed or their attendance requested.* Officers provided us with several examples of partner procedures that included a default action of requesting police attendance. Partners should check whether such action is necessary, and discuss with the police whether a response is likely. If not, procedures should be revised. To help facilitate this work, *local divisions which are preparing to implement CAM could review the calls they most frequently receive from partners, and highlight to them types of calls that are not appropriate and which might necessitate a change to procedures.* The local divisional lead on partnership working will be a key member of the division's CAM implementation team.
88. The referral of callers to more appropriate agencies is an element of CAM which has the potential to result in significant, long-term benefits both for Police Scotland and for members of the public in need of assistance. In order for referrals to be dealt with effectively by receiving agencies, changes may be required to their service design and resourcing, not just policies and procedures. Such changes may require considerable lead-in time to identify, negotiate and implement. *The CAM Project Team, working with local policing divisions, should engage partners as early as possible to facilitate this work. This engagement should commence pre-CAM, but may continue through CAM implementation and in the longer term, so as to ensure members of the public receive the most appropriate service.* If Police Scotland continues to fill gaps left by other services, there may be a need for a broader public debate about the purpose of policing in law and in practice, and a discussion about appropriate resourcing.
89. We are aware that in preparation for Phase 2a, the CAM Project Team and Greater Glasgow Division worked together to brief a range of partners on CAM and that this included some frequent callers not covered in Phase 1 divisions such as children's homes and care homes. We welcome this approach.
90. Service advisors taking calls from all over Scotland will be familiar with national or well-known agencies to which they might refer callers. However, they may be less familiar with support services that are local to a particular area and the key features of that service such as opening hours and eligibility criteria. While advisors told us they use Aliss, an online directory of support services, *this may be another area in which those with local knowledge, such as controllers, the Resolution Team if its staff were dedicated to specific areas, and local policing divisions would be able to assist.*

Impact of CAM

91. Police Scotland has advised us that, across Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire, it is responding to around 40,000 calls per month using the new approach and that, in over 95% of cases, the police respond as agreed with the caller. It reports that CAM has eliminated the 15% of incidents where it had advised a caller police would attend, but the police failed to do so because they were dealing with higher priority incidents. Police Scotland believes this represents a significant improvement in service and says it is better able to manage demand.

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92. Our own audit of CAM call handling shows that the vast majority of people who contact the police by phone receive an effective service. Their call is dealt with professionally and an appropriate policing response is provided. Under CAM, we consider that a better quality assessment of their individual circumstances is carried out and that this assessment is more likely to result in a policing response that best meets their needs and which is delivered timeously.
93. In 99.7% of calls we listened to, the service advisors were polite, helpful and professional. In a previous audit of police call handling carried out in 2015, we had found that service advisors were polite, helpful and professional in 96.9% of calls.¹⁷ As we noted then, service advisors often deal with callers who are distressed, panicked and incoherent due to the circumstances that led them to contact the police. We noted that service advisors managed calls well. They asked probing questions which allowed them to gather relevant information and either resolve the call at the first point of contact or create an incident which was sent to the control room or Resolution Team for action.
94. Under CAM, members of the public are no longer required to wait for police attendance when attendance is not strictly required. Instead, their issue can be dealt with either over the phone or in person at a time and location that suits them. Members of the public are also much less likely to be told that officers will attend but then this fails to happen due to higher priority incidents. These deferred incidents, which were a particular issue in Lanarkshire, have decreased significantly. This better meets the goals of CAM in terms of managing public expectations, reducing frustration and resolving issues at the first point of contact wherever possible. *Further work is required however to truly test and understand the public's perception of their policing service under CAM and we welcome Police Scotland's intention to commission this work externally.*
95. Amongst the C3 personnel we spoke to, there was very strong support for the introduction of Thrive. Those working in the service centre in particular welcomed having a consistent framework for decision making, and were pleased to have the opportunity to use their skills, knowledge and experience to ensure a caller's needs were met in a proportionate and appropriate way, rather than simply following default procedures. They felt more empowered as a result, said they were delivering a better quality of service to the public and reported increased job satisfaction.
96. Despite strong support for Thrive, many C3 personnel were nervous about the shift in approach. They cited a culture of risk aversion within policing, and were concerned at the cultural shift required for them to decide that police attendance was no longer required at incidents that previously would have been attended. Police Scotland is aware of the significant cultural shift required in Thrive assessments if CAM is to succeed. The issue is rightly included on the CAM project risk register and senior officers have sought to reassure staff that as long as Thrive is applied and an appropriate rationale is recorded, they will be supported in their decision making. Staff have appreciated this reassurance, but remain concerned about how the service will respond if something goes wrong. The work of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner is relevant here, and work has been carried out to brief its staff on Thrive.
97. Some of the issues we have identified, such as non-Thrive trained service advisors receiving calls from CAM divisions, are linked to the phased rollout of the CAM project. This means that the full extent of the benefits of CAM may only be realised when it is implemented across Scotland.

¹⁷ HMICS, [Independent Assurance Review: Police Scotland – Call Handling Final Report](#) (2015), paragraph 401.

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98. One benefit of having a Resolution Team dealing with incidents is that it frees up controllers and local policing officers to focus on incidents that require a local policing response. Because controllers are dealing with fewer incidents, they are able to carry out enhanced background checks and pass relevant information to officers being dispatched to an incident. This means attending officers will be better equipped to deal with the incident, and may promote officer safety. Controllers told us they felt they had a better grip of the incidents they were managing, were less stressed and had better job satisfaction as a result.
 99. As personnel within C3 gain experience in using CAM, there is scope for even more demand to be diverted from local policing and for the work of the Resolution Team to develop.
 100. By signposting callers to more appropriate agencies and by seeking to resolve callers' issues at the first point of contact or by having their call dealt with by the Resolution Team, it was intended that demand on local policing officers be reduced. There were mixed views among local officers about whether this had been achieved. Some felt there had been a reduction in demand, and that this had allowed them to take meal breaks which they previously had seldom opportunity to take. It had also allowed them more time to deal with ongoing enquiries and be more proactive. However, others felt any reduction in demand had simply mitigated the effects of members of their team being taken away to work on Brexit or for other duties. They still struggled to take breaks and be proactive, and were concerned that local policing appointments simply 'shifted today's demand to tomorrow'. Because their day-to-day experience had not changed significantly, they wanted to see data to show whether there had in fact been a reduction in demand.
 101. Each local policing division's experience of CAM will vary according to how well matched the division's resources already are to demand. Work is still ongoing within Police Scotland to understand demand and ensure resources are appropriately distributed across functions and local policing divisions. In a division where officers feel they are under-resourced, CAM may offer some benefits but may not allow officers to feel that they are fully meeting the local needs and the public's expectations. Their expectations that CAM will transform their experience of work may therefore not be met.
 102. An outstanding concern for local policing divisions is the productivity gains that Police Scotland hopes CAM will deliver. As demand on local policing falls, they are worried that officers will be taken from their divisions. They would prefer to use any productivity gains to reinvest in the quality of their local service by, for example, enabling more proactive and preventive policing and more community engagement. They also understand, however, the financial pressures which the service is under and the pressure on CAM to deliver savings.
 103. While the CAM Project Team has carried out a series of focus groups with local officers to understand their experience of CAM, it may be useful to *consider a staff survey pre and post-CAM implementation in a division to better measure the impact of CAM and assess whether it is delivering the benefits intended.*