

Initial Contact Enquiry (ICE) for call handling

Creating a search tool to support call handlers in risk assessments.

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Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Digital Organisation including workforce
Organisation	Cleveland Police
Contact	Rod Gray
Email address	rodney.gray@cleveland.police.uk
Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2018
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults Children and young people General public Victims
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Aim

There were several aims for Initial Contact Enquiry (ICE).

- Provide call handlers with awareness of specific information held in Niche (a police records management system). Information of the reporting person and anyone else involved in the incident this can include their address, the incident address and telephone numbers to allow a more informed assessment being made.
- Improve data quality by validating the details of anyone involved in the incidents details against the master record (golden nominal), highlighting whether the individual is vulnerable and/or a repeat caller.
- Provide efficient information sharing from Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) to Storm (command and control information management system).

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of ICE are to:

- Provide call handlers with an overview of relevant information by conducting searches on Niche to inform their decision on how they direct the call.
- Reduce call handling time by three minutes.
- Provide the public with confidence to report crimes and incidents.

Description

Background

Before ICE was implemented Cleveland Police had no golden nominal data to identify vulnerable or repeat callers. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection highlighted identifying vulnerable and repeat callers as an area of improvement. Initial discussions to implement a contact management system were led by the quality assurance/system admin force control room manager and supported by the force control room senior leadership team.

Further discussions were held with IT leads within the force to determine feasibility, and how the data can be extracted and managed. With information management systems such as Niche, Call Line Identification (CLI), Storm and EISEC, it can take time for call handlers to search these systems.

Developing ICE

An IT team was created to formalise the business requirement, with an external temporary contractor employed (using money from the existing budget) to build ICE as the department did not have the capacity. ICE was developed creating a landing page for call handlers as well as providing an interconnection between ICE and Niche to extract data. Six months were allocated to user testing allowing refinements to be made to user accessibility and to resolve bugs. For user accessibility, neutral colours were used to make it easier to read, and a free text box added to help call handlers with dyslexia so that they can check spelling before they commit to Storm, allowing them to minimise any errors.

Delivering ICE

ICE was introduced into the force control room in October 2018 and call handlers do not require a training script running in the background. Once a call is in progress an initial search is carried out automatically using the Call Line Identification (CLI). ICE will then extract any existing data from Niche, Storm and EISEC, establishing whether the caller is phoning repeatedly or is identified as vulnerable. Additional searches can be done by manually adding the caller's details if they are not already linked to a telephone number in the system.

There is no maintenance cost involved, with any updates built into the IT maintenance planning schedule. If ICE does stop working, there are four people within the IT team who can be assigned to fix any issues. Although specific information such as their address, previous incident(s) address and telephone numbers would not be available, call handlers can still take calls and record

information.

The system continues to be regularly refined with the option of recording firearm licencing being recently added allowing the call handler to be made aware if the individual, their address or incident address are linked to a registered firearms holder.

Overall impact

- Verbal feedback from call handlers highlighted that data held within the system and presented is easier to navigate.
- Improve knowledge sharing of early identification of those most vulnerable, allowing call handlers to have access operation guidance.
- Call handlers are able to make an informed deployment decision based on the information being passed from the caller supported by the information held on our system around the existence of any markers and an understanding of the caller's previous contacts with the police.
- A reduction in double keying (the process of duplicating information in different information management systems) improving efficiency.
- On average three minutes are saved per call, equating to approximately 1000 calls a day or nearly the workload of seven operators.
- During September–November 2023, ICE was offline with on average, 218 reporting persons being created. This compared to 159 during December 2023–January 2024, a reduction of 27%.
- Allows the user to search any additional people involved in the incident, it is displayed in the same format as the reporting person (this was done to minimise any training requirement), the additional details are transferred into Storm and update the additional person tab automatically
- Flags and marks now includes specific tabs to identify registered firearms holder and victims first.
- Recent incidents has been extended to make the occurrence reference a live hyperlink allowing the user to quickly navigate to the source data (Niche).

Learning

- Integration with Outlook would allow emails to be sent directly from ICE to the officer dealing with the case without coming out of the system.
- ICE has an understanding of how the call was initiated, whether to 999 or 101. Information could be passed into Storm and remove the need for the call handler to update the fields reducing time spent on call.

- Changing a couple of the markers enhancing the way victim first callers are shown to the call handler by making it a separate area, highlighting and identifying more quickly.
- Integrate wider channels coming into force, such as email contact and similar search.

Initial discussions have been held with several forces including Dorset, Avon and Somerset, Gwent and Norfolk about how they could implement ICE within their force.

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Tags

Information communication technology (ICT) Force control rooms