

Call handling training package for police officers

The implementation of a training package in call handling delivered to police officers, to tackle challenges in a decrease of public contact police staff.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Organisation including workforce
Organisation	Bedfordshire Police
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Region	Eastern
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2022
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

The aim of this initiative was to create training opportunities across the force to reduce the number of vacancies within the public contact department.

Intended outcome

- Address short term gaps in staffing.
- Increase capacity of public contact.
- Relieve stress within the public contact department caused by understaffing.

Description

To deal with the short-term gaps in staffing of public contact the force trained several officers to offer support in call handling.

The training

- The training is conducted by those within the call handling team.
- To balance the need in public contact and response, this was limited to 16 PCs on a three-month rotation.
- These officers are provided with a four-day course in taking 999 calls and additional system and process training that are used within the force control room.
- There is a mixture of officers who have asked to be trained and officers who have been picked.
- While they are working in call handling, they do not have any workload response and this is really important for the wellbeing and experience of officers.
- They follow the control room shift pattern.
- To ensure rotations can be effective and no one department is left understaffed, the force now has a policy of a maximum of two rotations lasting a total of six months.

These officers are held as a bank of staff who can work overtime within public contact. The force also trains those who have not worked in public contact but wish to work overtime. They are trained to the same level as those on rotation. The scheme has shown to be a success, as there is now a waiting list of officers to be trained.

Overall impact

- Increased capacity of public contact.

- A broadened relationship between established staff in public contact and officers. Staff and officers report a much better understanding of and empathy towards each role, and the exchanging of knowledge and experience has been invaluable.
- The force has trained 70 officers since the scheme started in July 2023. Officers are seen to enjoy their time working in public contact, and some have asked to extend their rotation in the control room.

Learning

- At first, officers were concerned about their workload, with it being unclear whether they would still work in both roles. There were a lot of unknowns, and this was a barrier to effective engagement. To address this, it is important to have open and honest conversations with officers to find out how they are feeling about the initiative.
- Removing their response workload and having them work solely in call handling is pivotal to the success of the initiative, as it meant the officers were not being given extra work.
- The testimonies of officers who enjoyed the call handling were circulated among the force to further promote involvement.

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Tags

Force control rooms