

Managing persistent, regular, and vulnerable callers

Identifying repeat callers, including those who use different phone numbers, and referring them to appropriate services.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Diversion
Topic	Crime prevention Neighbourhood crime Vulnerability and safeguarding
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Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	May 2022
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	General public
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Aim

The process aims to:

- capture details of persons not identified through their telephone number or details which would be identified and collated by the force crime registrar due to the frequency of calls made by the individual
- refer cases which are deemed to have met a threshold by which they may be considered vulnerable or persistent callers. This is submitted following the creation of a police incident log which has a question set

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- reduce demand on service
- improve public trust and confidence by ensuring an appropriate response is received

Description

The purpose of setting up a persistent, regular, or vulnerable callers referral mechanism is to allow call handlers to record the details of the caller which have not been captured elsewhere.

There are occasions where callers change sim cards, swap phones, or use phone boxes to contact the police, usually to 999. The calls from each of the different numbers are often singular or in low numbers, which prevents police systems from identifying these calls as repeated or linked to the same caller.

However, call handlers often take a call from the same individual despite the number changing and will sometimes know their name or enough information to identify them through previous interactions. The referral mechanism allows call takers to make a manual referral on these

occasions.

Introducing caller referral mechanism

To introduce the persistent, regular, or vulnerable caller referral mechanism, West Yorkshire Police (WYP) needed to identify whether their telecoms systems were suitable for identifying and recording individuals' information. The force then needed to establish how they would manage the callers identified.

It was decided by the contact duty manager, that individuals who met the threshold would have their details passed onto the relevant neighbourhood team, who would review and take the most appropriate action. Possible actions include problem solving, working with partners, and in some cases having a credible evidence pack.

The information is sent through by the WYP force crime registrar, who compile the data from logged calls and recorded crimes or incidents.

Details of these regular callers are documented on Sergei (an information repository for contact officers and staff). Sergei provides call handlers with access to a list of actions bespoke to the individual caller. Sergei was set up a number of years ago and was not instigated solely for regular callers.

The referral mechanism process:

1. Establish a working group and include representation from the contact centre and force crime registrar.
2. Set up a Microsoft Form to record any personal details known, number used, modus operandi and district.
3. Send communications to staff by email and in team briefings, outlining the instructions of the process.
4. Send referrals to the Force Crime Registrar every four to six weeks for review.
5. Input the information onto Sergei.
6. Repeat communications to staff.

Overall impact

77 referrals have been made through this mechanism between 2022 and 2024. This was either due to the caller giving these details, the call taker recognising the caller, or their number already being held on the system.

The majority of the persistent, regular, or vulnerable callers were identified by the quantity of calls they were making from data collected by the force crime registrar. There was some duplication in referrals, however this did add to the intelligence picture of the individual if they were using a different number as part of their modus operandi.

West Yorkshire Police have received anecdotal feedback from staff members that the tool has been useful and allows the details of vulnerable repeat callers that make contact using different methods to be captured and individuals referred appropriately.

Learning

- General consultation with several call handlers was used to support the design process of the form. Feedback from this was to make it as simple and quick as possible to complete, therefore only personal details, area/district (if known), telephone number, modus operandi and reason for referral were required.
- There were lower numbers of referrals than expected. This could be due to several factors including that Sergei was already identifying repeat callers using the same method of contact.

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Tags

Neighbourhood policing Vulnerable people