

Operation Farmington – reducing demand from repeat callers

Operation Farmington is a multi-agency project to reduce demand from repeat callers, who have called three times in 30 days from the same address.

First published

20 February 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Public Protection, Safeguarding & Vulnerability Contact management Productivity
Organisation	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Contact	Karl Secker
Email address	karl.secker@cambs.police.uk
Region	Eastern
Partners	Police Health services Local authority

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	June 2017
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people Offenders

Aim

The purpose is to provide appropriate multi-agency information sharing to aid police decision making when responding to calls for service from those who are high demand, either by repeated calls to the demand hub, custody or for police attendance in the community.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- reduce calls for service
- reduce demand placed on call takers
- divert the need of the person to the appropriate agency

There is no set outcome such as a drop by 80%, as this depends on the person and situation.

Description

Operation Farmington commenced in June 2017 as a project which works in partnership to support the needs of Cambridgeshire high demand persons who are frequent callers to the police.

Involved partners include:

- acute hospitals
- mental health units
- S136 Suite
- ambulance
- personality disorder service
- crisis treatment team
- first response mental health team
- liaising psychiatry service

The first 18 months of the project were spent understanding and improving pathways with services to support the most vulnerable in the community. The cohort includes those experiencing drugs, alcohol and/or mental health issues. Multi-agency working can play a critical role in improving physical and mental health outcomes.

The objective is to provide an improved response to high demand persons and reduce police time spent dealing with incidents by supplying a better assessment of needs and therefore reducing demand on Police time.

It also offers police officers the opportunity to understand the historic and current needs of high demand individuals and to develop an understanding of the challenges faced by each agency involved in the person's care.

The most appropriate response may include:

- information gathering from the mental health team in the force control room
- a vulnerability screening assessment by the liaison and diversion scheme to determine future support required either in custody, in the person's own home or community
- attendance at multi-agency meetings with the aim of producing joint management care plans
- a warning letter regarding non-emergency contacts that may be followed by police enforcement if deemed necessary

Weekly review meetings take place between the three Operation Farmington staff members who triage new referrals from front line officers and external agencies. A further monthly high demand caller meeting takes place to support the departments affected and to reduce demand.

Safe and effective care, support and treatment will be at the heart of all decisions made regarding any follow up care that may be required.

Overall impact

- Over a six-month period with the top 16 callers, £56k was saved in costs, and over 60 hours of call taker's time.
- High demand users have been diverted to more appropriate agencies to deal with their issues, the force has issued Community Protection Warning (CPWs) and Community Protection Notice (CPNs) to those who continue.
- 999 calls from high demand users have dropped from 0.14% to 0.06% of calls on average. Although the gain is small, the hours that these calls take up can be large.
- The intervention has reduced demand on call takers, dispatchers, and response overall, with improved development of partnership working in the community.

Learning

- Implementing an effective triage and governance process is key.
- Implementing trigger plans on SharePoint is paramount to ensure that organisational memory is not lost.
- One issue encountered was having a single point of failure, for example having one subject matter expert (SME) managing the intervention. Once this was realised, a triage system of three people was put in place, which allowed for annual leave (AL), business continuity of the workstream, and ensuring the retention of learning and knowledge if the SME leaves.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.

Tags

Vulnerable people