

Routine demand

An OPCC scrutiny report to understand how routine (operational) police logs are received, triaged, allocated and managed by Devon and Cornwall Police across the force area.

Draft report

July 2026

Final report

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1. Introduction

Routine logs are the operational police records of incidents and crimes that have been reported to the police, having been assessed as needing a police response, but not emergency or priority attendance. In addition to containing details of the reported incident or crime, the log is also used by the police for command, control and update purposes, and for the allocation of police resources.

This report details the findings of scrutiny activity undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The scrutiny inquiry set out to:

Understand how routine (operational) police logs are received, triaged, allocated and managed by Devon and Cornwall Police across the force area¹.

2. Executive summary

The scrutiny team have found that:

- The force has considerable gaps in the availability and quality of key routine demand data, meaning that the force is currently unable to accurately assess to what extent it is complying with its own internal performance standard of attending routine incidents within 48 hours.
- The transfer of the management of routine demand to Basic Command Units (BCU) in 2022 has likely had a significant adverse and unintended impact on the force's performance in this area, and on the service the public receive.
- Earlier this year the force introduced a revised operating model for routine demand management (see paragraph 6. b). There are some differences in exactly how this operating model is delivered locally, however anecdotal evidence indicates greater accountability and ownership of routine demand and, to some degree, improvements to both performance and the experience of victims and reporting persons.
- The force also continues to roll out additional improvement work within the Contact and Resolution Command (CRC) to support routine log management.
- Despite some improvements, the majority view of officers and staff spoken with was that the service being experienced by victims and reporting persons remains inconsistent.
- Whilst it should be noted that this scrutiny programme covers a specific moment in time, the perception of many frontline staff interviewed was that the impact of Operation Resolve (the force's plan to improve frontline resilience by restoring patrol design numbers) has not yet been realised.

¹ Whilst the scrutiny inquiry was force wide, evidence and experiences of Patrol teams in Exmouth and Camborne were particularly drawn upon

- Vacancies in patrol teams, conflicting priorities and tasking, and a lack of a high-level operational overview is likely to be creating inefficiencies in the force's management of, and response to routine demand.
- No formal evaluation plan for routine demand improvement activity has been established to date. However, the force has recently established an Incident Attendance Board with the purpose of aligning leadership, executive direction, strategic oversight, performance and management of incident attendance.
- The force is considering, and in some cases piloting, a number of additional and alternative ways of working to improve the management of routine demand including moving the management of routine demand back to the CRC, and the expansion of video appointments. The force needs to ensure that it understands the distinct benefits and disbenefits of all options, and put any necessary mitigations in place, before implementing further changes.
- The force's focus on improving performance in the area of routine demand is positive, and the passion and drive of officers on the frontline to provide a better service to the public is clear. However, there may be some cultural issues, particularly around the role and autonomy of the CRC, that will need to be addressed as the force continues its improvement work.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. As soon as practicable, the force should resolve the outstanding data availability and quality issues which will allow them to:
 - accurately report on and monitor routine attendance in line with the force's internal performance standards of 48 hours;
 - develop and report on performance metrics for force wide video response activity.
2. The force should develop an evaluation plan which sets out how the success of routine demand improvement activity will be understood and evaluated.
3. The force should develop an options appraisal which fully explores the feasibility, benefits and risks of transferring the management of routine demand back into the CRC, and/or how sufficient oversight of incidents held by the BCUs in the CRC can be achieved.
4. The force should maximise the potential for expanding its video response capability beyond domestic abuse cases. This should include exploring whether this capability would be best hosted in the CRC.
5. The OPCC should continue its oversight of the force's routine demand improvement activity. This should include considering the effectiveness of the operating model introduced in January 2026 over the summer period, and the force's evaluation of its improvement activity.

4. Methodology

This programme of scrutiny was undertaken between January and June 2026 and was conducted primarily via interviews with key strategic and operational staff and officers including:

- Lucy Ballie (Police Staff Commander, CRC)
- Superintendent Vicky Howell (Head of Command and Control)
- Chief Superintendent Scott Bradley (Cornwall BCU Commander and strategic lead for attendance)
- Superintendent Ben Asprey (South Devon Local Policing Superintendent and tactical lead for attendance)
- Chief Inspector James Honeywill (Local Policing, West Cornwall)
- Patrol Sergeant (Camborne)
- Patrol Constable (Camborne)
- Chief Inspector Chris Conway (Local Policing, Exeter, East & Mid Devon)
- Patrol Sergeant (East & Mid Devon)
- Patrol Constable (East & Mid Devon)
- Chief Inspector Vicky Richards (Learning and Development, previously Local Policing, Exeter, East & Mid)

Additional contributions to this report were provided by:

- Chief Superintendent Antony Hart (BCU Commander for North, East & West Devon)
- Natalie Rowley (Senior Performance Analyst)

Other work undertaken or considered includes:

- Scrutiny of routine demand management through the Commissioner's Accountability Board
- Analysis of routine demand data
- Examination of relevant policies, processes and reports

Whilst the inquiry aimed to take a force wide view of the management of routine demand, the towns of Exmouth and Camborne were considered in particular detail, and officers working in those areas were interviewed.

To inform this report and aid decision-making, the scrutiny team have made a number of assessments regarding their confidence in how routine logs are received, triaged, allocated and managed. However, it should be noted that these assessments are informed by interview and commentary, and as such have had a degree of professional judgment applied. Unless specifically attributed to one person or source, comments and evidence have been triangulated wherever practicable.

5. Background

Routine logs are generated following contact from victims or other members of the public via the completion of a web form, the 101 telephone service or a report at a police enquiry office. Over a third of routine logs are crime related reports, with the

remainder being made up of reports relating to public safety, antisocial behaviour and transport/traffic incidents.

The CRC acts as the first point of receipt for all contacts and undertakes initial assessment in line with force guidance, including the completion of a THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) assessment. STORM (IT system for tasking and operational resource management) is used to create and manage reported incidents, and to manage the deployment of operational resources.

Where it is deemed appropriate under the risk assessment that attendance is necessary but there is no requirement for an emergency or priority attendance, this can be achieved by either an appointment with a police officer (at a police station or at the reporting person's home, or for some crime types via video appointment) or by adding it to the routine log list.

Prior to December 2022, routine logs were managed by the CRC. Resource Incident Management Officers (RIMOs) were responsible for dispatching police officers to attend incidents and crimes on the routine log list, alongside managing the dispatch of officers to emergency and priority calls for service.

Towards the end of 2022, the force took the decision to move the management of routine logs into local policing teams in BCUs. This decision was made in order to prioritise improvements in the management of emergency and non-emergency calls, which was one of the three key reasons that the force was placed in the 'Engage' phase of monitoring by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (often more colloquially referred to as 'special measures').

Alongside the removal of routine log management from the CRC, a range of improvement activity has taken place within the CRC including the introduction of a switchboard and a call back system, changes in shift patterns and changes to the performance management of staff. As a result, the force has seen a significant improvement in its management of emergency and non-emergency calls, including significantly reduced wait times and non-emergency call abandonment rates. These improvements led HMICFRS to close their 'cause for concern' around non-emergency call answer times in September 2024, and the force was moved out of Engage entirely in July 2025.

Since December 2022, the management of routine logs by local policing teams in BCUs means the majority of routine logs are allocated to local patrol teams, with the responsibility for allocation and progression sitting with the patrol sergeant. A smaller number of routine logs are allocated to neighbourhood teams, moonstone (domestic abuse) teams and CMIT (crime management investigations team).

The force's internal performance standards requires that routine logs should be attended by an officer within 48 hours. THRIVE reviews should be completed every 24 hours while the log is outstanding.

6. Findings

a. Impact of changes to management of routine demand

Since the reallocation of routine log management to the BCUs, without any dedicated resources being allocated, some significant issues with this operating model have been identified both by the force and by HMICFRS.

Until recently (January 2026), patrol sergeants were responsible for reviewing the routine log list for their area and prioritising and allocating routine logs to their team of patrol PCs based on the outcome of THRIVE assessments. This often resulted in delays in allocation and as a result, in some areas of the force in particular, the volume of logs sitting in the routine queue was significant. This was causing delays for victims and reporting persons, creating unaddressed risk and causing damage to public confidence.

It was also identified that THRIVE reviews of logs sitting in the routine queue were often not being undertaken every 24 hours (as required by force policy), meaning that the ongoing risk may not be properly understood.

b. Improvement work

A range of work has been undertaken within the CRC to support the management of routine logs in the BCU. This includes a focus on ensuring that routine logs are only created when appropriate, and that other options (such as directly recording a crime on Niche, the force's crime recording system, or making an appointment for the reporting person) are considered first. Where resources allow, RIMO capacity is also being used to proactively support routine demand including addressing and finalising logs, and undertaking THRIVE reviews.

The force is currently offering video response (video appointments) to victims of domestic abuse at the first point of contact. This enables victims to speak to a police officer more quickly than if they had to wait for a face-to-face appointment, or for an officer to attend following the creation of a routine log. The force recognises that video response has the potential to be used in a wider range of crime and incident types and is exploring expanding this function.

Following positive feedback from a number of trials in BCUs, in January 2026 the force rolled out a revised operating model for routine log management force wide. Rather than routine logs sitting in a queue waiting to be allocated by patrol sergeants, logs are now assigned directly to patrol sergeants, who allocate logs to individual PCs. PCs are expected to resolve their allocated routine logs over their next six shifts, and if they have been unable to do this the routine log is converted to an occurrence on Niche and remains to the officer's workload until it is resolved. This revised operating model aims to create greater accountability and ownership of routine log work and therefore improve performance and the experience of victims and reporting persons.

Whilst all BCUs are now operating this revised model, there are some local differences including the use of routine demand triage teams in South Devon and NEW (North, East and West) Devon. Where triage teams are used, they make early contact with the

reporting person, and identify the most appropriate team for allocation, coordinating with the relevant sergeant.

c. Victim / reporting person's experience

The quality of the service provided to the public, including victims of crime, is the single most important part of any process or procedure put in place by the police. For this scrutiny inquiry, every officer and staff member spoken with or interviewed were asked *"how would victims / those reporting 'routine incidents' describe their experience with Devon and Cornwall Police?"*. Responses to this question ranged from 'very poor' to 'inconsistent' to 'better than it was'. However, no one described the experience of victims or reporting persons as good, or even as satisfactory. Key concerns raised included:

- Victims are still waiting too long to see a police officer; the public are being let down;
- Risks associated with the management of domestic abuse incidents as routine demand, including concerns with risk assessment criteria and the length of time that domestic abuse victims may wait to see an officer as a result;
- A 'postcode lottery' for victims and reporting persons as the service differs across sectors;
- The need to better manage victims' expectations in terms of the timeliness of response;
- Questioning the ability / capacity of patrol teams to maintain service levels over the summer months.

Many officers we spoke to considered that the revised operating model introduced in January was having a positive impact for victims. Senior leaders within BCUs reported that routine demand queues had reduced in their areas and that attendance within 48 hours had improved. Those working in patrol teams largely reflected this viewpoint, recognising that the experience for many victims is somewhat better. However, whilst there was an acknowledgement that the experience for victims may be better than it used to be, most officers felt that the level and timeliness of the service most victims receive is still 'not good enough'.

d. Demand and patrol officer workload

The majority of staff and officers we spoke to raised concerns about the amount of routine demand work being managed by patrol teams, and the workload resting with patrol PCs in particular. Key concerns raised included:

- That many patrol teams are currently resourced significantly below the patrol design, and that teams are carrying a number of vacancies;
- That many patrol teams are regularly working under their minimum / critical thresholds;
- That a significant amount of routine demand could be dealt with at the first point of contact in the CRC. Call handlers need to be more robust in deciding that a policing response is not required; otherwise, this can set unrealistic expectations for the reporting person, meaning delays for others who do need a policing response;
- The challenges for patrol teams in managing routine demand work alongside responding to emergency and priority calls and appointments, with the additional

pressure of ensuring crime recording standards are met and paperwork complete;

- That appointments can be very time consuming (including travel time), and often mean that patrol PCs are unable to pick up any routine logs in between appointments, which is inefficient;
- The high number of vulnerable victims held within routine log work, and the needs of and risks associated with these victims;
- That frontline policing has not yet seen the impact of Op Resolve;
- That officers have been raising concerns about the management of routine demand for a long time, but that the force has only seriously started to address this since being highlighted by HMICFRS;
- That whilst many patrol teams have good leadership and positive team spirit, individual officer moral is often low.

Whilst demand and workload were recognised by all officers we spoke with, one senior leader felt that if the patrol design was fulfilled, the current operating model (introduced in January) would likely be sustainable throughout the summer period and beyond.

Some officers we spoke to were sceptical about the impact that Op Resolve would have on the resourcing of patrol teams, however senior leaders tended to be more hopeful that the force's focus on returning officers to the front line would provide more resource and resilience for patrol and other frontline policing teams.

e. Conflicting priorities and lack of high-level operational overview

The local management of routine logs means that patrol PCs are being dispatched to routine calls for service by patrol sergeants, impacting the availability of patrol PCs to respond to emergencies and priorities when required by the CRC. HMICFRS have previously described this as 'mini control rooms' operating from within the BCU. The force has recognised that this is at times affecting emergency and priority response times.

Conversely, the scrutiny team has also heard that during times of peak emergency and priority demand, patrol teams are unable to dispatch to routine log work, and therefore routine logs can sit unattended for a number of days.

In Devon and Cornwall, the geographic areas covered by patrol teams are extensive, particularly in rural areas, with officers frequently needing to travel several miles to attend an incident or appointment. Concerns were raised with the scrutiny team that the separate tasking by the CRC and BCU is resulting in routine and emergency / priority incidents being managed and resourced in silos. This was described to the scrutiny team as the force lacking a 'helicopter view' of calls for service, and concerns were raised about the impact on the efficiency of the force's response function.

HMICFRS have recently published their [police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy inspection report 2025-27 for Devon and Cornwall Police](#) in which they identified a high number of incidents held in the BCUs which hadn't been dealt with. The inspectorate recognised the pressure this puts on policing teams, as well as the lack of proper management of ongoing risk. The report states that the force needs to ensure that it assesses ongoing risk when incidents are allocated from the CRC to other departments

and ensure that the CRC has sufficient oversight of incidents that are held in other areas of the force.

f. Performance monitoring and governance

Across the force a variety of improvement work is being undertaken around the management of routine demand, however there are significant issues with the collation of accurate, meaningful data in this area.

The force's internal performance standards requires that routine logs should be attended by an officer within 48 hours. The force's incident management and tasking system STORM, does not fully capture the multiple ways of responding to a routine incident (i.e. via video response or appointment), and at the time of reporting, the force has not yet developed a consistent way to identify when a routine incident has been first attended, the timeliness of attendance, or by which resource.

This means that the force is currently unable to accurately assess to what extent it is complying with its own internal performance standard of attending routine incidents within 48 hours. The force has however recently allocated an analyst to work on a solution to this problem and hopes to be able to begin reporting against this performance standard over the summer.

The force is able to collect and analyse video response data for activity undertaken by the video response team, but it is not able to collate all video response activity from across the BCUs due to complexities with recording. Work is ongoing to refine and improve the accuracy of this data.

The force has recently assessed its own compliance with THRIVE reviews for routine logs. An assessment which took place on 30th January 2026 found that 24 hour THRIVE review compliance was graded as 'Good' across three patrol teams, 'Fair' across four teams, and 'Poor' across three teams. The force acknowledges that whilst there has been some recent improvement in THRIVE review compliance, further work is still required. THRIVE review compliance continues to be reviewed and managed via daily management meetings.

The force has recently (April 2026) established an Incident Attendance Board, which aims to drive and monitor improvements in emergency, priority and routine attendance. Given the clear interdependencies, there is an intention to focus on routine attendance improvements initially. While the force does not currently have a formal evaluation plan for routine demand improvement activity, there is a potential for this to be developed through the new governance board.

g. Culture and leadership

The scrutiny inquiry has identified that the management of routine demand is currently a significant focus for the force, and it is clear that a range of strategic improvement activity is being delivered, led at Commander level. However, feedback from governance forums (including the Commissioner's Accountability Board) has not provided the scrutiny team with confidence that the force's Executive leads are fully sighted on the detail of current challenges, improvement plans or any improvement evaluation activity.

The scrutiny team also received feedback from one officer whose view was that there were some cultural and leadership issues within the force which were preventing the radical and necessary changes needed to make any real improvements to the management of routine demand.

Also, it was reported to the scrutiny team that the CRC does not have the autonomy or the authority over patrol teams that is generally seen in other police forces, and that this is impacting officer responsiveness, attendance times and the service the public receive.

h. Alternative operating models and ways of working

A range of alternative operating models and different ways of working were outlined to the scrutiny team throughout this inquiry.

CRC management of routine demand: A case could be made to transfer the management of routine demand back into the CRC. Potential benefits of this model include addressing the siloed resourcing and management of routine, emergency and priority incidents. This work also sits well within the training and skills set of RIMOs who are experienced in THRIVE assessments and customer service.

However, there are potential disbenefits to this model which would need to be considered, including the impact on staffing, resourcing and shift patterns within the CRC. If this option was to be pursued, careful consideration would need to be given to ensure that this change was effectively resourced and staffed, to safeguard the performance of emergency and non-emergency calls.

Additionally, for this model to be successful, the CRC would need full autonomy and authority to 'task not ask' patrol officers. The force would need to understand and address any internal culture-based barriers to enable this.

Expanding video response: Currently the force offers video response appointments to victims of domestic abuse at the first point of contact, however the force is also planning to bring in a video response capability for victims of non-domestic abuse related crime. This should have the potential to reduce the number of routine logs and provide a quicker and better service for victims and reporting persons.

Video response is currently operating from within the BCUs. Whilst feedback from those we spoke to is that this is generally working well for victims, it is not yet being used to its full potential and does not have fully developed performance metrics to enable the force to understand how well it is working. Many forces base their video response function within their CRCs, and the force will need to consider whether a more centralised approach would be appropriate in Devon and Cornwall.

Use of appointments: Call handlers in the CRC can offer appointments (either at a police station or at a reporting person's home) for calls for service assessed as 'routine'. Currently, these appointments are added directly into the appointment schedule of patrol teams (usually three appointment slots per day). This avoids a routine log being created and means that the reporting person has a set date and time to meet with a police officer.

The force is currently considering different operating models for appointments. One option is to increase the use of appointments and reduce the number of routine logs created. This provides more certainty and can therefore be beneficial for many reporting people and victims, and if officers are able to see more people in this way, it could be more efficient. However, inefficiencies can arise if reporting people do not turn up to appointments.

During the evidence gathering stage of this scrutiny inquiry, the force announced that it would pilot moving the appointment system to the CMIT from June 2026 (initially in Plymouth and Cornwall), with the aim of freeing up more resource in patrol teams to respond to emergency, priority and other calls for service.

Specialist teams: Different options for managing routine demand have been trialled across the geography in recent years. Previously in Camborne, a routine demand team was created to focus specifically on routine calls for service. It was resourced using officers who were not required to meet the patrol teams operational threshold and serviced routine demand across West Cornwall.

Another option which could be explored is the wider use of routine demand triage teams (already being used in two BCUs). Triage teams should mean that victims are contacted quickly and expectations set. Where appropriate, appointments can be made by the triage team, and non-policing issues addressed and redirected at an earlier stage.

Specialist teams such as these can provide real benefits through building expertise and freeing up patrol resource to respond to emergencies and priorities. However, inefficiencies can arise if specialist teams lose flexibility to support other areas in times of peak demand.

7. Conclusion

It is clear that improving both the management of routine demand and the performance of routine incident attendance are areas of focus for Devon and Cornwall Police. While there are some minor differences in the way that the revised operating model (introduced force wide in January 2026) is delivered locally, early anecdotal evidence indicates that largely consistent delivery of this model is creating greater accountability and ownership of routine log work and potentially improving performance and the experience of victims and reporting persons. Work also continues within the CRC to increase efficiency at the first point of contact.

However, it is not yet clear if recent performance improvements are significant enough to deliver a good service to the public over a sustained period. There are a number of additional and alternative ways of working that the force is considering, which all have distinct benefits and disbenefits. Some of these (such as the relocation of routine log management to the CRC) are complex and have considerable resource implications.

The force has recently established an Incident Attendance Board, which has the potential to bring a greater focus and clearer governance for routine attendance. However, the force does not currently have access to accurate and meaningful data for significant areas of routine demand performance, and as yet, has not developed a clear evaluation plan to monitor improvement activity. Without this, the force will continue to

struggle to assess its own performance in this area and to demonstrate any improvements to HMICFRS, the Police and Crime Commissioner, or the public.

The movement of the management of routine demand from the CRC into BCUs in 2022 appeared to lack full planning and rigour, resulting in a number of unintended consequences which the force is still trying to rectify.

In particular, the siloing of the management of routine demand away from emergency and priority calls for service has contributed to what is a regularly suboptimal service being provided to the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Looking to the future, to help provide a better, more consistent service to its communities, Devon and Cornwall Police must ensure that any further changes to the operating model for routine demand are properly analysed, understood and risk mitigated, ahead of operational implementation.

Report end