



Force Call Grading, Deployment and Demand Management Policy (785/2024)

Abstract

This policy details the Sussex Police call grade criteria and the deployment of resources.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) is responsible for the deployment of resources to reported incidents. This policy applies to all police officers and police staff that receive and respond to calls from the public and sets in place guidance for the correct grading of an incident and for the deployment of appropriate resources. Adherence to this policy and subsequent procedures ensures the correct grading and appropriate response to incidents reported to police. This policy compliments The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Response Policing portfolio which refers to the National Call Handling Standards definitions.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy details the six levels of grading that can be assigned to contact for assistance received from the public together with the appropriate deployment of resources and the level of service the public should expect from the Force.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Sussex Police will ensure, to the best of its ability, that it will grade calls effectively, in line with the grading process outlined in this policy. Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 This document describes the different grading levels that can be associated with any call for police service and provides a guideline to influence and to assist the contact officer and controller. In the application of this policy, staff are reminded of the need to comply with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) and standards and principles of the Code of Ethics.

1.2 It is important that we record accurate data in the records we hold about protected characteristics. This data is critical to delivering outstanding public service because it deepens our understanding of what our communities request of us, what response we currently give and where we need to improve. Protected characteristics can be defined as age, sex, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant

(or on maternity leave), disability, race (including colour), nationality (ethnic or national origin), religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Mandatory Flags.

Some crime data is flagged by the Home Office. There are Hate Crime, Metal Theft, Domestic Abuse, Online Crime, Child Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Alcohol, Corrosive Based Substances and Honour Based Abuse. There is detail which supports each of these important flags at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>. For more information refer to the Crime and Incident Disposal, Recording and Auditing Policy (757).

1.3 The FCCCD own this policy and are responsible for the grading of calls, the risk management prior to deployment and the initial deployment of resources within call grading Categories A - C.

1.4 Divisional and departmental personnel are responsible for maximising their availability to respond to calls.

1.5 The determination of whether a contact is an emergency (CAT A and B), or non-emergency (CAT C, D, E and F) will be made from the information and intelligence available and not by the way in which police are contacted. In other words, the public's perception of an emergency is subjective, and the police will not assume that the selection of a particular route of contact is determinate of the level of risk posed.

1.6 Any contact will only qualify as an 'emergency' where at least one of the criteria set out in section 6.1 and 6.2 is satisfied.

2. General Principles

2.1 First Contact.

- 999 emergency calls are routed directly through to a national telephone exchange into FCCCD. All other calls are routed through to the Force non-telephony system.
- 101 non-emergency calls are routed through to the Initial Triage Hub (ITH) who shall attempt to resolve the problem of the caller at the first point of contact where at all possible. This may be achieved by determining whether the person they wish to speak to is available, transfer to an appropriate department, providing advice or sign-posting the caller to another agency.
- If the ITH is unable to resolve the call, the call will be routed to contact officers / controllers within FCCCD to manage and risk assess.
- The contact officers / controllers upon receipt of a 999 or 101 call, will conduct a Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) risk assessment (See 3.2) and a decision will be made as to whether a STORM log needs to be created and whether the deployment of resources is required. If a STORM log is required, it will be graded in accordance with call grading definitions alongside a THRIVE risk assessment.

2.2 Non-Voice Contact.

Non-voice contacts are routed directly to FCCCD. Upon receipt of non-voice contact such as Web Forms, Emails or Text Messages, FCCCD will create a STORM log and conduct a THRIVE risk assessment (See 3.2). A decision will then be made on grading and whether deployment is required.

3. Making Grading Decisions

3.1 The NDM will be used in the application of this policy and provides a framework in which decisions can be examined and challenged, both at the time of the decision being made and as the information develops. The aim of the NDM is to assist officers and staff in making operational decisions based upon national and organisation values and professional judgement. For further guidance staff should refer to the NDM.

3.2 Contact officers and controllers will use the THRIVE assessment tool and principles to make informed decisions. This is focused primarily on the gather information and intelligence and assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy phase of the NDM.

The existing THRIVE was reviewed in March 2023 and the following question set introduced.

3.3 THRIVE Question Set.

THRIVE = Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability Engagement.

Taken as a whole, the T H R I V E level (measured as Low, Medium, or High), is determined by considering the Harm and the Risk associated with an incident (which gives you the Threat level).

Then you consider the Vulnerability factors associated with that incident.

THRIVE requires a continuous assessment throughout the lifespan of the incident.

In your rationale you must consider:

Threat:

- Risk assessment of the likelihood of something happening or getting worse – rather than an actual verbal or physical threat towards someone.

Harm:

- Who or what has been harmed? Physical? Emotional? Property? Financial?
- Could it affect the Community, or could it affect the reputation of the Police?

Risk:

- Has it already happened? Could it happen? Could it get worse? Could it happen elsewhere?

Investigation:

- Other than the information obtained from the caller, what further information has the caller provided?

Vulnerability:

- Before you can Grade the incident and assign a T H R I V E level to the record you have created you must establish, through open questioning, considering any Vulnerabilities, Risk and Safeguarding issues.

Engagement:

- First of all, consider the question “Is this a police matter?”
- If ‘NO’ then signpost to the relevant partner agency
- If ‘YES’ then deal accordingly.
- Are there any anticipated problems RE: further contact and engagement with the caller?

3.4 Where a STORM incident is created it will be graded in accordance with the level of Threat, Harm, Risk and/or Vulnerability and prioritised in conjunction response grades (See 5.1).

3.5 A THRIVE is required on all CAT B, C, D, E and F incidents that are reporting Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), a Crime or a Crime Related Incident.

3.6 THRIVE Application.

The THRIVE process should be simple and fast, whilst remaining effective and meaningful. It should not be onerous, time consuming or meaningless in its application and the callscript reflect this.

The THRIVE callscript can be found under the “Callscript” AIB button and the option to select is number 73 – THRIVE template.

THRIVE = add a risk level (Low, Medium, or High)

RATIONALE = add your reasoning behind your decision to grade the CAD. You must always mention Harm, Risk, Safeguarding and Vulnerability in your rationale text. Also add what action you will be taking by where you will be sending the CAD and for what reason.

Vulnerabilities / Repeat Victim = add whether vulnerabilities have been identified, whether an enhanced service is required / not required and/or whether the victim is a repeat victim.

3.7 The call handler will record any contact in accordance with NSIR and the NCRS.

4. Command and Control

4.1 FCCCD will take initial command and control of all incidents, unless, due to the severity, type, or nature of the incident, it is necessary for the Force Incident Manager or other suitably placed unit to take initial command.

4.2 Passing of command to a Divisional specialist or better placed unit will only take place when deemed necessary and in accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Principles of Command.

4.3 Request by another Force or Emergency Service for Sussex Police attendance at an incident.

Where another force or emergency service passes a request for attendance to Sussex Police, the call handler will conduct a THRIVE assessment and make a grading decision based upon the principles contained within this policy. If the THRIVE and/or grading decision differs from that of the initiating force / emergency service, then the FCCCD supervisor / Sergeant will make the overarching grading decision. Decisions must be documented on STORM.

5. Call Grades

5.1 The National Call Handling Standards and definitions are required to support consistency and comparability between forces. If a STORM incident is created, once a THRIVE assessment has been conducted, it will be graded as either an emergency (CAT A and B) or a non-emergency (CAT C, D, E and F) as set out below. Refer to Force Call Grading Overview.

5.2 In line with agreed areas of ownership and responsibility FCCCD will retain command and control of call grades Category A – C and will be responsible for deployment and resourcing of these incidents. This deployment is supported by the Force Demand Surge Plan.

5.3 Responsibility for Category D grades will fall to the various investigation teams on which will be allocated these crime investigations. Responsibility for Category E grades will fall to Divisions whose local teams (Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)) will be servicing this demand.

5.4 There are six types of call grades:

Emergency Contact.

- Category A – Emergency Response. Sent to radio queue for physical attendance via nearest most suitable resource. Target response time within 20 minutes (Service Level Agreement (SLA)).
- Category B – Urgent Response. Sent to radio queue for physical attendance via nearest most suitable resource. Target response time within 60 minutes (SLA).

Non-Emergency Contact.

- Category C – Priority Same Day Response. Sent to radio queue for physical attendance via nearest most suitable resource. Target response time within the 'same day' of the report being received and in any case within 24 hours (SLA).
- Category D – Non-emergency crime only allocation. Sent to initial remote investigation function for progression. Target response time within the 72 hours (SLA).
- Category E – Non-emergency non-crime allocation. Sent direct to local teams for resolution. No defined target time but in a timely manner.
- Category F – Report resolved at source and/or police-generated activity.

6. Emergency Contact

6.1 Category A – Immediate Response

This is where an incident is reported to the police which is taking place, cannot be controlled and there is a likely risk of:

A crime is, or is likely to be, serious and in progress.

Real and immediate threat to life which is 'present and continuing' in line with Article 2 European Convention Human Rights (ECHR).

Where the danger is from themselves, or medical only matter follow the 'Right Care Right Person' policy.

Use or threat of immediate violence.

These threats are likely to be non-conditional.

Risk of serious injury / harm to a person from another and/or serious damage to property.

An offender for a crime has just been disturbed at the scene of the crime.

An offender for a crime has been detained and poses, or is likely to pose, a significant risk to the safety of others.

A Road Traffic Collision (RTC) involves or is likely to involve serious injury / fatality, a significant road is blocked or there is a dangerous or excessive build-up of traffic or situated on a Strategic Road Network.

The circumstances are such that a police call handler, has strong and objective reasons based on professional judgement for believing that the incident can only be classified as requiring an immediate response to ensure a safe and successful outcome.

6.2 Category B – Urgent Response

An urgent physical police attendance is required, but not immediately as it does not meet the Category A criteria. These typically arise in the circumstances where a crime has occurred or there is significant concern for someone's safety, which if not attended within the 1-hour SLA will very likely lead to a Category A response being required.

An urgent response may be appropriate where:

The incident is likely to escalate into a need for an Immediate response and control measures cannot reasonably be put in place to prevent this.

An offender is being detained but poses no risk to others; key evidence will be lost and cannot be obtained by other means.

Significant concern for somebody's safety where they are in extreme distress or vulnerability.

Witnesses are likely to leave the scene and are not able to be re-contacted.

A Road Traffic Collision (RTC) involves minor injury – if there is a need for urgent physical police attendance.

The circumstances are such that a police call handler, has strong and objective reasons based on professional judgement for believing that the incident can only be classified as requiring an urgent response to ensure a safe and successful outcome.

7. Non-Emergency Contact

7.1 Category C – Priority Same Day Response.

A Category C response should be justified from the outset to require physical attendance to achieve an outcome, or safeguarding is required from the outset and a remote response could not achieve this. The justification would account for the need to attend the same day (depending upon the time of reporting) or in any case within 24 hours.

Nb. A same day in-person attendance may also be required in line with any current Force priority crime directive.

The incident requires allocation of a resource via the Control Room as there remains a need for command and control considering:

The likelihood of further harm occurring to a person within 24 hours.

There is a need to respond in-person for physical safeguarding.

A relevant vulnerability* has been identified would make it unsuitable for remote investigation.

Recent, previously reported incidents or continued victimisation.

The ongoing risk from the perpetrator.

The opportunity to secure and preserve evidence that would otherwise be lost if dealt with remotely.

*College of Policing define Vulnerability under APP as: A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.

8. Category D – Non-emergency crime only allocation

8.1 The initial response to this can be appropriately dealt with by remote activities and investigation. The immediate response and initial investigation do not need physical attendance to progress.

The allocation without physical deployment grading may be appropriate where:

The crime cannot be resolved during the initial call phase and requires further investigation.

The crime has already occurred and there is no reasonably known likelihood of escalation or reoccurrence in the near future.

The crime can be initially progressed via telephone or by using technology, and there is no requirement for deployment for a physical resource from the outset to conclude or onward allocate.

Non-crime domestic abuse incident is to be considered within this category.

Officers can be allocated to continue an investigation, as there are no likely time or safety critical factors.

Report to be allocated to the most appropriate initial remote investigation function, see crime allocation policy for pathway options.

Prior to allocating a CAT D consider the following principles to ensure it is appropriate and that a physical response is not required.

Guiding principles to consider prior to allocation.

THRIVE factors considered and the likelihood of harm coming to victim within 24 hours is low.

There is no likelihood that the opportunity to secure and preserve evidence would be lost if the investigation as directly allocated.

No requirement to respond in person for physical safeguarding.

No apparent vulnerabilities which would require physical attendance.

No recent or previously reported incidents or continued victimisation.

Limited ongoing risk from the perpetrator – this should include consideration of whether they are a prolific offender.

If any of the above apply, then consider grading as CAT C.

If crime involves a child as a suspect / victim and report being allocated to Initial Investigation Team, consider BEGAN principles:

B: Best interest of a child (if best interests to see in person).

E: They are subject of potential or actual exploitation (think Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)).

G: Subject aggravated grooming / online offences.

A: Subject of child abuse in home.

N: Subject of potential neglect within home setting. Consider if they are on Child Protection Plan currently.

If any of the BEGAN principles are present re-grade to CAT C for an in-person attendance.

8.2 Category E – Non-emergency non-crime allocation.

The initial response to this non-crime incident can be appropriately progressed by local Divisional activities or allocation in an undefined but timely manner.

The allocation may be appropriate where:

The incident cannot be resolved during the initial call phase and requires further action.

The incident has already occurred and there is no reasonably known likelihood of escalation.

The incident can be progressed locally.

Officers and staff can be locally allocated, as there are no likely time or safety critical factors.

Report to be directly allocated to the most appropriate local function.

8.3 Category F – Report resolved / Filed at source / police-generated Activity.

This response will adequately meet the needs of police-generated activity such as Force-Wide operations, football events, and night-time economy working.

Incidents of any nature where the resolution has occurred at source but still require a CAD.

Incidents generated from within Sussex Police which require command and control and are for administration purposes or to document our activities.

9. Resources

9.1 FCCCD will maintain command and control of incidents. Emphasis is to deploy the nearest, most appropriate unit to an incident. It is recognised that often Divisional Response will be the most appropriate unit to attend, however based on skills required and their availability other operational units are expected to support this requirement including Operation Command and other Divisional units such as NPT.

The Force Demand Surge Plan also provides tactical options for the deployment of other units alongside Response in assisting with supporting resourcing.

The command and control function within FCCCD is the initial deployment of resource to meet calls for service via the main Divisional active radio queues. It is not a channel for tasking ongoing investigations.

9.2 Force Demand Surge Plan.

The Sussex Police Demand Surge Plan will enable Gold, Silver, and Divisional Command Officers to assess our current demand and performance levels against our ability to meet it and invoke tactical options to assist with delivery. They will assess the Force demand and performance against surge levels banded as green, amber, red to inform local / Force tactical options. It also provides escalation points at varying levels of criticality for a wider, Force response. The surge plan has a clear description of each surge level, trigger / tipping points for consideration alongside tactical options to consider. Ultimately Silver commanders will utilise the surge plan and escalate to Gold where appropriate.

The surge plan should be used in conjunction with the 'Force Operational Status Dashboard' (Force Operating Status - Power BI Report Server) which provides Divisional Command with key performance indicators and demand data which enables assessment of current surge level. This will include assessment of;

- Queues by volume and grade.
- Response time compliance.

- Resource availability (number of officers booked on / booked into a call sign / significant resourcing commitments).
- Domestic Abuse incident levels and response time performance by grade.

The surge plan should be used as a guide to help identify current surge level and the 'trigger and tipping points' provide some considerations which should be overlaid with professional judgement of the current risks on each queue. The number of jobs on each queue should not be the sole or main consideration.

The surge plan is not designed to be prescriptive but flexible. There may be both a resourcing and/or demand issue alone which could mean that the surge level increases. Conversely the trigger and tipping points should help capture and identify where there are concerns around rising tide of demand and/or resourcing issues which should also elevate the surge level.

It is imperative that where there is a need to invoke tactical options to help meet demand that this remains agile and under constant review in order to flex resources appropriately. As such once demand / resourcing eases then surge levels should return to lesser states.

With the support of Force Incident Managers (FIMs), Divisional Command Officers and Force Critical Incident Managers (CIMs) / Silvers will be accountable for identifying and escalating criticality in order that resources can be reprofiled on a local, Divisional and Force-Wide level as may be, to respond appropriately to demand.

10. Service Standards – incident downgrade / upgrade

10.1 Incorrectly grading incidents can have serious consequences for the public and responding officers.

Any decision to upgrade / downgrade an incident should have a clearly documented rationale. Incidents will not be downgraded because we are unable to resource effectively in an appropriate time scale. The reason for the failure to resource appropriately, in a timely fashion will be noted on STORM.

To downgrade an incident the following criteria must be met:

1. There is new information or intelligence.
2. Application of the NDM and a THRIVE assessment documented to the incident CAD.
3. The victim MUST be called to advise of the downgrade.
4. That the CAD complies with national crime recording standards.

A downgrade reason must never be because we do not have sufficient units. Any incident being regraded from CAT A - C to a CAT D must have authority from control room Sergeant and/or Team Leader.

To upgrade an incident the following criteria must be met:

1. There is new information or intelligence which changes the risk
2. Application of the NDM and a THRIVE assessment documented to the incident CAD.

11. Driver Behaviour

11.1 Police drivers will be entrusted to drive at the most appropriate speed, using the vehicle equipment (lights and audible warning) at their disposal to ensure an effective deployment based on THRIVE.

Please refer to Force policies for further information.

Police Driving Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (616).

Pursuit Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (617)

Police Vehicles Detected by Enforcement Cameras (Surrey and Sussex) (1076).

12. Performance Monitoring

12.1 The Force will monitor attendance target times in line with Priorities Delivery Plan aspirations in order to deliver the best possible service to the public. This will be monitored through the daily Force Incident Resourcing Meeting by Silver / Gold Commands.

Response times will continue to be measured from once an incident is 'confirmed' on the STORM incident CAD.

Divisions will be responsible for response time performance in terms of time of assign to arrival at scene. FCCCD will be responsible for the time a CAD is confirmed to assign.

12.2 Response and assign time performance will be monitored through FCCCD audit processes and FCCCD Performance Board. Divisions will monitor performance times through their Divisional performance meetings. Force wide review and scrutiny will be through the Force Performance Board, Local Policing Accountability Board (LPAB) and the Response Working Group. Response times will be monitored, and action taken where performance moves outside of the agreed tolerances.

12.3 The Force has set that it aims to attend at least 75% of all CAT A and B calls within the SLA (discounting regraded incidents) and at least 90% of CAT C incidents with the SLA (discounting regraded incidents).

Team: Force Contact, Command and Control Department