

# New league tables show how quickly police forces answer 999 calls

The time it takes each police force in the UK to answer emergency 999 calls has been published for the first time ever, in a bid to further improve the speed of the service provided to the public.

This delivers on a key commitment in the government's Beating Crime Plan to improve transparency and performance, forming part of the government's wider ongoing work to cut crime, improve public services and make our streets safer.

Publishing the 999 league tables will reconnect the police with the public, holding individual forces to account and helping identify previously unknown issues, with the goal of driving up performance.

On average across the UK, police forces receive a 999 call every 3 seconds. Today's data shows 71% of these are answered within the target of under 10 seconds, with an overall average of 16.1 seconds' answer time. This is the first time forces have been able to compare their answering times.

With considerable variation across the country, this information will empower all forces to bring their service up to the public's expectations.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

Calling 999 can literally be a matter of life and death. The public deserve to know that their local police force will be at the end of the phone, ready to leap into action at seconds' notice to protect them from harm.

Fundamentally, publishing this data is about driving up standards in our incredible emergency services even further, so that the public can have every confidence in the police's ability to save lives and keep our streets safe.

We can now see where forces are excelling and where vital improvements need to be made and I thank the police for their commitment to ensuring we maintain the best emergency services in the world.

The first data set covers calls made between 1 November 2021 to 30 April 2022. It shows some forces are consistently responsive, while others require improvement. One such high performing force was Avon and Somerset, who consistently answer over 90% of their 999 calls in under 10 seconds.

Where a large number of calls are answered between 10 to 60 seconds, the public will rightly expect to see improvements where these league tables show

they are required.

There are a range of reasons for disparities and the data is likely to vary each month. Police forces are operationally independent, and each will have its own unique pressures to identify and address. Prank calls, a lag time in connecting and inappropriate use of 999 to call for issues that are not emergencies, can all contribute to delays in answering.

The lag time, between dialling 999 and being connected to a call handler, can be up to 7 seconds in some areas. Some police forces are already reviewing their telephony systems and working with BT to resolve this.

Seasonal periods, such as New Year's Eve, particularly hot or cold weather, concerts and festivals, can also have a significant impact on waiting times in some forces, due to peaks in people travelling to the force area. An overall picture of a force's effectiveness in answering emergency calls, considering these factors, will continue to be refined as the data collection continues.

The data is accessible to the public via [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk), where they can access their local force's data under the 999 performance data tab. Going forward the data will be released at the end of each month for the previous month.

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for Contact Management, Assistant Chief Constable Alan Todd, said:

Today's release of 999 Performance Data shows the high level of demand being placed on call handlers on a daily basis throughout the UK.

We can see between November 2021 to April 2022, policing answered over 3.7 million calls in under 10 seconds and a further 1.2 million in under 60 seconds.

Forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland strive to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds, with Police Scotland aiming to have a mean answering time of 999 calls answered in under 10 seconds.

The 999 Performance Data is helping policing understand the experience of the public from their point of view from the moment they dial 999. We know that there are sometimes lag times in connecting calls to the police and these vary across the country, however this isn't for a member of public to resolve, it is for us within policing to look at our infrastructure and work with our key partners, including BT, to improve the experience of a member of public calling 999.

We want the public to have access to the data as part of policing being open and transparent. This is the first time police forces and the public have been able to see the time it takes to answer 999 calls from the call being made by the public, it being connected to the police by BT and local providers, to it being

answered by police call handlers. We will learn from this data in order to improve the speed at which 999 calls are answered so that the public can expect the fastest possible response when calling 999.

We know that most people will call the police in their time of need, but unfortunately this isn't always the case and I would like to remind people to only call 999 in a genuine emergency.

There is a huge amount of pressure put on call handlers, who work tirelessly to provide the right support and advice in someone's time of need, but we are far too often seeing some from within our society, inappropriately using 999.

We know one of our biggest areas of concern for 999 calls to the police are prank calls. Not only do they waste police time, it can also delay someone who needs genuine help getting it when they need it. When someone dials 999, every second counts, and we can't have those selfish individuals in our society wilfully wasting police time through prank calls.

To them, my appeal is to be considerate that their actions may be putting someone's life at risk. People will be calling 999 when they are in need of emergency help, together we must ensure that the lines are not being put under pressure through things like prank calls aimed at wasting police time.

I also understand that some people may be concerned about whether they should be dialling 999 or not and in what circumstances. We know when a member of public calls 999 for something which is policing related, it may not be an emergency and they have to be directed to other services such as 101, which results in inadvertently taking up 999 emergency call handlers time.

The message to the public is that you should absolutely call 999, but do so if a serious offence is in progress or has just been committed; if there is a threat to someone's life, or they are in immediate danger or harm; if property is in danger of being damaged; or if a serious disruption to the public is likely.

If your call to the police does not fit within these areas but is still policing related and not an emergency, you should contact your local force via the police non-emergency number 101 or use online reporting via your local force website.

APCC Local Policing Leads, Alison Hernandez and Jeff Cuthbert, said:

This performance data demonstrates the demand for policing and the volume of calls forces are dealing with across the country.

The public quite rightly expect the police to respond to 999 calls

in good time, so Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be using this data to get a grip on performance across our local forces, hold our chief constables to account and ensure members of the public are receiving an efficient and effective response when they report to 999.

As the public's voice in policing, PCCs are very keen to better understand the experiences of the public when contacting their local forces, which is why the APCC issued a [national survey on contact management](#) earlier this month to help identify any challenges around where the public report crime through both 101 and 999 services.

PCCs are committed to supporting excellence in policing and will use this data to continually drive forward improvements and hold the police to account on behalf of the public.

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## [£265 million missile upgrade for UK submarines](#)

- UK to make upgrades to current stock of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles
- Enhanced long-range strike capability of up to 1,000 miles

The UK's stock of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM) will be upgraded on Royal Navy submarines to ensure the weapon is even more effective against future threats.

In a £265 million contract with the US Government, with maintenance and technical support at the UK sites of BAE Systems, Babcock International and Lockheed Martin, the Royal Navy's Astute-Class submarines will be armed with an enhanced Block V standard missile, capable of striking severe threats at a range of up to 1,000 miles.

The upgraded missile will be able to travel further than the previous Block IV iteration, maintaining a precision-strike capability that is unmatched in range and accuracy. The upgrade will also make the weapon less vulnerable to external threats, with modernised in-flight communication and target selection.

At approximately 5.6m long and weighing 2200kg – a similar weight to a 4x4 car – the high sub-sonic Tomahawk was first introduced into UK service in 1998 and can hit in-land targets from the sea within minutes. A weapon of choice since then, it has been successfully deployed during operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq.

## **Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said:**

This upgrade will equip our Astute-Class attack submarines with the one of the most lethal and precise long-range strike weapons.

Enhancing this cutting-edge missile system will ensure the UK can strike severe threats up to 1,000 miles away.

The Tomahawk missiles will be upgraded as part of a Foreign Military Sale with the US Government, which was negotiated by the MOD's procurement arm, Defence Equipment and Support and will be active from July.

Making use of existing US research and expertise on the upgraded missile, the contract will mean the UK continues to receive full access to the US Tomahawk programme, support package and upgrades.

## **DE&S Director Weapons, Ed Cutts, said:**

Not only will this FMS sustain and improve a proven, crucial operational capability for any future conflicts, it will continue to ensure interoperability with our US allies and the follow-on support arrangements will sustain jobs for UK industry.

As Block IV is upgraded to Block V from 2024, it will modernise and improve in-flight communications and navigation, making the missile more effective against future threats around the globe.

The Foreign Military Sale also includes missile maintenance, recertification of existing missiles, spares, operational flight testing, software, hardware and training provisions.

## **Director Submarines, Rear Admiral Simon Asquith said:**

The Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missile is a cutting-edge system which provides the UK with real strategic and operational choice. Able to be fired from a stealthy UK nuclear attack submarine, the system's exceptional range, accuracy and survivability provides the UK, alongside our US Allies, with a world beating precision strike capability.

The announcement builds on commitments made in the [Defence Command Paper](#) and [Integrated Review](#), in addition to Royal Navy mission planning and weapon control system upgrades that will improve the performance of legacy Block IV missiles.

Due to be operational in the mid-2020s, the upgraded Tomahawk will align with the delivery of the latest Astute submarines.

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## Skanska awarded contract to deliver modern British Army vehicle storage facility

Contracted via the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), Skanska together with the Technical Services Provider, MACE, will provide modern, sustainable and effective storage and maintenance solutions for the British Army's land equipment fleet.

Belinda Lunn, Senior Responsible Owner for VSSP said:

We are very excited to be working with Skanska to deliver this project which will bring the Ashchurch site back up to full operating capability.

Whilst the majority of the Army's vehicle fleet is either on, or training for operations, a sizeable fleet is centrally stored to ensure that they are ready to deploy when required. VSSP will redevelop this centralised facility and deliver a modern, sustainable storage solution that ensures operational readiness of the Army's vehicles by minimising the need for maintenance.

Warren Webster, DIO's Programme Director for Army Major Projects and Programmes, said:

It's great to see this project take a major step forward as we award the contract. This important work will future-proof the Army's vehicle storage and maintenance facilities at Ashchurch for years to come and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners in the Army, Skanska and Mace to support this significant capability improvement.

Demolitions will begin this September enabling regeneration of the site by providing brand new infrastructure and updates to existing buildings. Once complete the Ashchurch site will provide Controlled Humidity Environment (CHE) storage for 4100 vehicles.

Katy Dowding, Executive Vice President, Skanska UK, said:

We're delighted to continue supporting modernisation of the Defence

estate following completion of Worthy Down in 2021, so we're excited to help transform this site to protect and maintain this vital asset for the Army.

Steve Holbrook, Managing Director for Skanska UK's construction arm, added:

We're also proud to continue to help drive greener solutions as part of this complex project and plan to make significant use of modern methods of construction to drive down carbon emissions.

The project will employ up to 400 people, a number of whom are expected to be employed from the Tewkesbury area. There will be a range of employment opportunities available including demolition, groundworks, structural steelwork and scaffolding. In addition, the project will also support 10 apprenticeships.

All construction activity is expected to complete by 2027.

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## [Tamar salmon tagged to provide vital data on health of fish stocks](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency has completed the mammoth task of tagging more than 4,000 juvenile salmon smolts (juveniles) before they leave the River Tamar and head out to sea.



Salmon are key indicators of climate change

Fisheries experts have also fin clipped nearly 900 sea trout smolts, so they can be identified when they return to the Tamar.

Salmon and sea trout are monitored intensively on the River Tamar to provide information on the biology and status of stocks. The Tamar is one of 3 index rivers in England and Wales, but the only index river reporting on the marine survival rates of salmon and sea trout.

Some 4,093 salmon smolts, heading out to sea as part of their migration to their adult feeding grounds at sea, were trapped using the Environment Agency's rotary smolt trap on the River Tamar.

Fisheries experts then carefully injected a tiny tag (size of an iron filing) into their nose cartilage. This tag can be detected in any adult fish that return to the Tamar and are caught in the fish trap at Gunnislake. The information can then be used to calculate marine survival rates.

A tiny tag is carefully injected into the nose cartilage

Sea trout smolts are tagged or fin-clipped on alternate years to distinguish between the different age classes and calculate marine survival rates. Although it is interesting to get reports of tagged or fin-clipped fish from anglers, only data collected from the adult trap at Gunnislake is used to calculate marine survival rates and it's preferable that any fish caught are returned to the water as soon as possible.

Paul Elsmere, Environmental Monitoring Officer for the Environment Agency, said:

This information is vitally important and provides vital data on the health of our salmon stocks, and is used to inform both national and international salmon management and conservation measures.

Salmon are key indicators of climate change and are considered by many to be the perfect barometer for measuring the health of our oceans and rivers as they have life stages in both environments.

Climate change, including extreme weather events, pollution, increasing sea temperatures, and a range of other man-made problems have all had a major – negative – impact on salmon populations.

Since the Tamar index river programme started in 2004 we have recorded significant changes in run timing, stock structure, body size and condition, juvenile recruitment and the emergence of new diseases and conditions, all of which can be linked to climate change.



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## Greater transparency and value for money for council finance system

- Consultation response published on plans to strengthen local audit framework in response to Redmond Review.
- New regulator, ARGA, will act as system leader for local audit, with shadow arrangements to start at the Financial Reporting Council in September.
- Proposals also include plans to make audit committees compulsory for all local councils, with an independent member required.
- Plans will support councils to level up communities across England.

Plans to ensure councils and local bodies are delivering value for money for taxpayers, strengthening council finances and reducing risk to public funds have been published by the government today (31 May 2022).

The [government consultation response](#) confirms plans to establish a new regulator, the Audit Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA), as the system leader for local audit within a new, simplified local audit framework.

Ahead of ARGA's establishment, a shadow system leader arrangement will start at the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) from September 2022. This will be led by Neil Harris, who joins as the FRC's first Director of Local Audit to start up a dedicated local audit unit.

Local Government Minister Kemi Badenoch MP said:

Over the last two years, councils have acted as a lifeline, providing vital support to businesses and communities.

A robust system of local audit is key to maintaining public confidence in local government through assuring transparency and accountability.

Today's publication sees us take the first steps towards a more coordinated local audit system, as we get on with the job of spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the country.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been acting as interim system leader since July 2021, when it established and took the chair of the [Liaison Committee](#) of senior local audit stakeholders.

Work has already begun to address the challenges facing local audit with the government announcing a series of [measures to improve local audit delays](#) in December 2021.

The consultation response also announces plans to make audit committees compulsory for all councils, with each audit committee required to include at least one independent member. This will create greater transparency and consistency across local bodies.

The announcement comes as government today set out its [wider plans](#) to revamp the UK's corporate reporting and audit regime through a new regulator, greater accountability for big business and by addressing the dominance of the Big Four audit firms.

The government continues to work closely with stakeholders, including local bodies and audit firms, to refine proposals for implementing our commitments around system leadership, as well the range of other commitments we have made in response to the Redmond Review.

- Sir Tony Redmond was commissioned by this department in July 2019 to undertake an independent review into the arrangements in place to support the transparency and quality of local authority financial reporting and external audit.
- This was in response to the mounting delays in the local audit system.
- Local Authority financial Reporting and financial auditing made recommendations relating to the quality, transparency, timeliness and sustainability of local audit. A key recommendation was for clear system leadership to be established across the local audit system.
- The Department's initial response to the Redmond Review was published in December 2020.
- Our spring report published in May 2021 set out our plan to establish ARGAs as system leaders for local audit.
- In July 2021 we published [Local audit framework: a technical consultation](#), to which the government response is published today.
- In July 2021 the department established the Liaison Committee of key stakeholders and started acting as interim system leader.
- In December 2021 we set out a series of measures to support the improved timeliness of local audit and address the delays experienced by many organisations across the sector.
- ARGAs' system leader work will be funded directly by government and DLUHC will retain Accounting Office responsibility for local audit.
- ARGAs will also act as system leaders for health audit.

## **About Neil Harris:**

Neil has over 20 years' experience in local public audit. He is currently a Key Audit Partner for EY with responsibility for a range of local public sector audits across local government, central government, police and the fire sector. Neil contributed to EY's response to a range of consultations on the future of financial reporting and external audit in the public sector. Prior to joining EY, Neil was a District Auditor for the Audit Commission where he spent 14 years. Neil is passionate about securing a sustainable future for high quality financial reporting, governance and audit in the public sector.