



Dear Colleague

I would like to update you on changes that are happening to make it easier for members of the public to contact us. In September, communities across Avon and Somerset will be able to dial 101, a new national non-emergency telephone number; our current non emergency number 0845 456 7000 will be phased out.

While 999 is a well recognised number to report emergencies, the 2010 British Crime Survey found that only 54% of the public knew which telephone number to call if they wanted to speak to their local police about policing, non urgent crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

The introduction of the 101 number will help communities to keep their neighbourhoods safe by giving them one easy way to speak directly with their local police to report and discuss all non urgent police related issues. This new number will not change the way we respond to non-urgent calls and calls will still be received by call handlers in our control rooms.

The number is already in use in Wales, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Sheffield and will be rolled out across the rest of the country by the end of this year. We know from these piloted areas that the 101 number is well received by the public and has led to improvements in public confidence when calling the police.

Calls to 101 will cost 15p per call, irrespective of how long that call may last. This cost applies to landlines and mobile phones. This will be the first time that everyone calling the non-emergency number will know exactly how much the call will cost and will be assured of equal access whether calling from a mobile or landline.

In an emergency the public should still call 999, such as when a crime is in progress, when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened.