

## Overview

This standard is about communicating effectively and professionally with callers contacting the emergency services to divert enquiries towards the best possible help and assistance to deal with the situation they are faced with.

Communication will usually be carried out by telephone using bespoke computerised and telephony systems.

Those handling calls will deal with a varied nature of enquiries and requests for help and assistance. Call handlers should respond to callers with respect and dignity offering callers the most up to date advice or instruction whilst ensuring they are following the appropriate procedures and protocols for their particular service.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. Operate appropriate telephony and computerised systems when taking calls from callers
2. Establish key information from the caller in accordance with organisational requirements
3. Actively listen to the caller to establish the reason for their call in order to decide on appropriate course of action
4. Communicate with callers in ways appropriate to their needs and situation in accordance with organisational procedures
5. Speak with the caller using suitable tone and language and adapt your communication style accordingly in order to meet their needs
6. Use appropriate techniques to enable callers to communicate difficult or complex situations in accordance with organisational procedures
7. Apply appropriate questioning techniques in order to collate the information required from the caller
8. Communicate with callers whilst remaining calm, clear and in control of the call whilst treating them with dignity and respect in accordance with organisational procedures
9. Verify details with the caller when appropriate to do so in accordance with organisational procedures
10. Keep the caller updated at all times whilst reassuring them in ways that meet their needs in accordance with organisational procedures
11. Provide the caller with information on the action being taken in accordance with legal and organisational procedures
12. Record and store interactions with callers and others in accordance with legal, regulatory and organisational procedures

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

1. Legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role, the role of others in your organisation and the activities being carried out
2. The relevant national and local guidelines, policies and procedures available and how and when they should be accessed
3. The duty to report any information that could be detrimental to individuals, yourself, colleagues or your organisation
4. Remit and limits of your role and responsibilities and the limits of your authority
5. Roles and responsibilities of others in order to determine the best course of action required
6. Where to seek support following a particularly difficult or challenging call or situation
7. Why it is important to allow yourself time to reflect on difficult or challenging calls or situations
8. Escalation procedures and when to escalate
9. How to seek support or involve others in calls when you are unable to deal with it yourself
10. How to refer calls or involve others when you are unable to deal with it yourself
11. Organisational policies and procedures for dealing with hoax and nuisance calls
12. How to operate bespoke computerised and telephony systems relevant to your organisation
13. The importance of actively listening to information provided by callers and what key information needs to be collected, recorded and actioned
14. What questions need to be asked to collate information required

15. Types of questions to ask in order to confirm understanding of a situation
16. The importance of keeping callers updated as to what is happening
17. Range of approaches and methods available to use that will support individuals who may be distressed when handling complex or sensitive issues
18. Effective communication techniques to use when dealing with callers including;
  - How to gather accurate information in a time critical situation
  - building rapport and demonstrating empathy
  - how to effectively utilise questioning and listening skills and techniques
  - how to manage challenging calls and situations
19. Different communication styles and methods for dealing with different types of callers with individual needs
20. Incidents relevant to your sector including comprehension of:
  - Complex terminology
  - Identification of the type and potential consequences of each type of incident and the types of responses that could be given
  - Critical advice / instructions to be provided to callers in response to specific incidents
21. The effect your communication style could have on callers dealing with stressful situations
22. The purpose of reflective practice and evaluation and how it informs your practice
23. Sector requirements and good practice guidance for the development and maintenance of knowledge, skills and competence
24. Legal, regulatory and organisational requirements and procedures for recording, storing and retrieving records
25. Where to report any technological incidents in relation to computerised and telephony systems

Communicate effectively with callers to emergency services

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**Developed by** Skills for Justice

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**Version Number** 1

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**Date Approved** 29 May 2021

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**Indicative Review Date** 29 May 2026

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**Validity** Current

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**Status** Original

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**Originating Organisation** Skills for Justice

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**Original URN** SFJ AB101

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**Relevant Occupations** All Occupations across the Justice sector

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**Suite** Emergency Response

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**Keywords** Call; emergency; advice; incidents; communicate; questions; situations; regulatory; confidentiality; rapport; challenging calls; empathy; needs; techniques; telephony; computerised

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