



# Public Counter Service Review

*D Division – Tayside*

*Public Briefing Paper*

Version 1

01/10/2013

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide information on the proposals for Public Counter Service Provision within Divisions across Scotland. The review seeks to provide a consistency of service across Scotland with accessible public counters, focusing police officers in communities while recognising the current financial challenges facing Police Scotland.

## **Overview**

### **Tayside**

Tayside division serves approximately 388,000 people over 2,896 square miles, covering the City of Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross council areas.

The division has four territorial command areas - two for Dundee and one each for Angus and Perth & Kinross. Each area has a dedicated Area Commander who has the responsibility for all day-to-day policing functions in that area.

Each area is served by a number of community policing teams. These teams are built around the needs of local people. They are responsible for responding to calls in the local area, as well as looking for long term solutions to key issues.

## **Statistical Analysis**

### **Method**

A public counter demand survey has been completed recently at police stations and stations. The survey includes every police station within the division where staffed public counter provision currently exists.

A public counter log was created to capture key data relating to visitors attending at the station. A nominated officer within each station was given responsibility for ensuring the logs were accurate and reflected all visits. The nominated officers were required to certify this on a daily basis.

In addition, it should be noted that the ability to draw significant and accurate conclusions is qualified by the accuracy of the returns submitted given the potential for over or under-recording. Entering a demand which is a sub process of another such as a person reporting a crime and then generating an incident on our Contact, Command and Control system would be an example of over recording. However, as the circumstances were the same for all staff, it was deemed to be a reasonable method of data collection.

The resulting demand analysis was designed to provide a snapshot of demand on the public counter and to inform the service of the pattern of timing, frequency and reasons for public visits to the stations and compare this with police officer demand on counter staff.

There are several policing processes that can only be completed with face to face interaction at a police station. The analysis compared, where possible, the frequency and volume of these functions against other enquiry types and the demand on counter staff for back office support for police officers.

### Data Capture

Demand analysis was carried out at 14 of the 16 stations where counter provision exists. There were a total of 2630 submissions from these stations. Due to a variety of opening times the data was captured over differing times and days.

The volume of activity at all stations across the division is shown in figure 1 with the total number of demands made of public counter staff (by the police, the public, or others) contrasted against the number of demands specifically made by the public at the public counter.

In order to define core public demand as referenced throughout the report, the types of demand were broken down and categorised as either ancillary or core public counter demands (see Appendix A). This in turn refined the data to show only the very specific front counter demand which provides a true picture of the necessary public use of a police station.

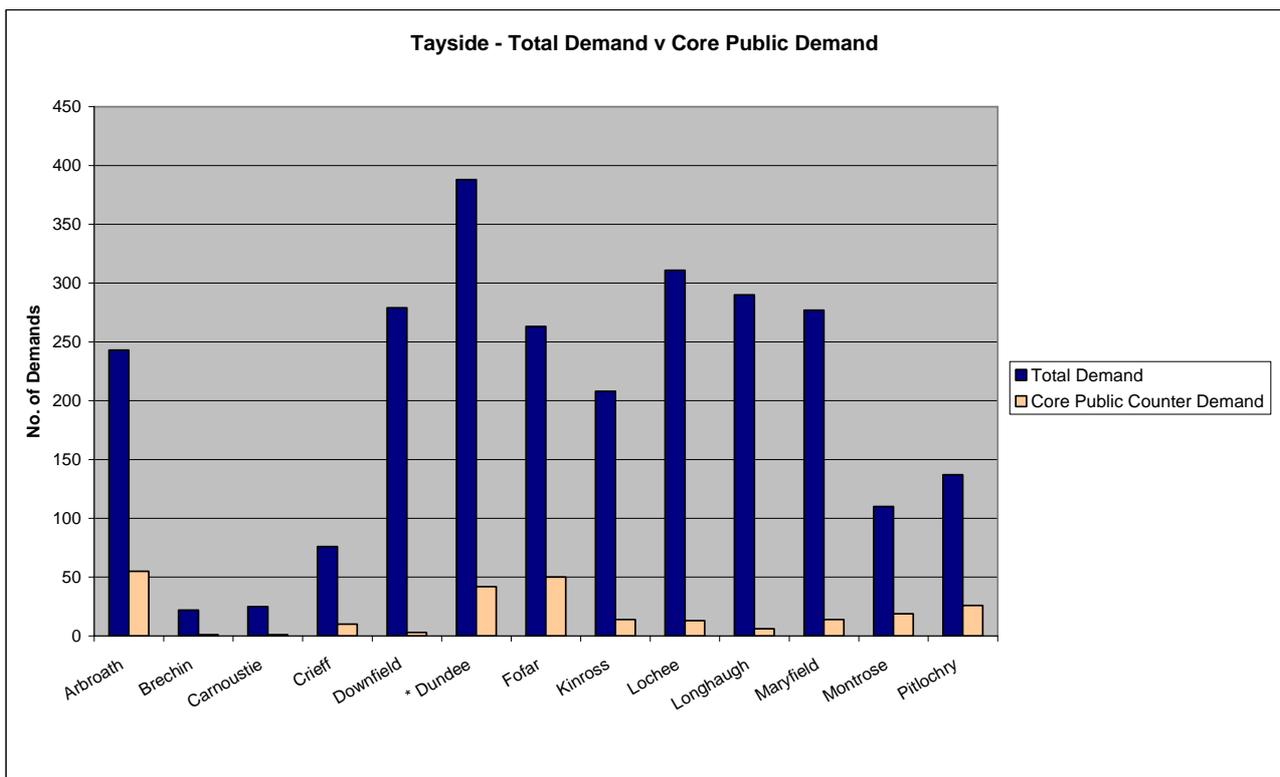


Figure 1: Demand made of public counter staff over a 2 week activity analysis exercise. NB. The number of days/hours for data capture varied between police stations as highlighted in the synopsis for each.

\* Data was requested from Dundee and Perth for one week following the initial two week capture period. This was because these counters are staffed by custody officers/public enquiry staff that perform a dual role and were not initially considered to be part of the counter review process. Perth only recorded 18 demands for the first day with no further activity recorded. Due to this the data has been excluded from analysis.

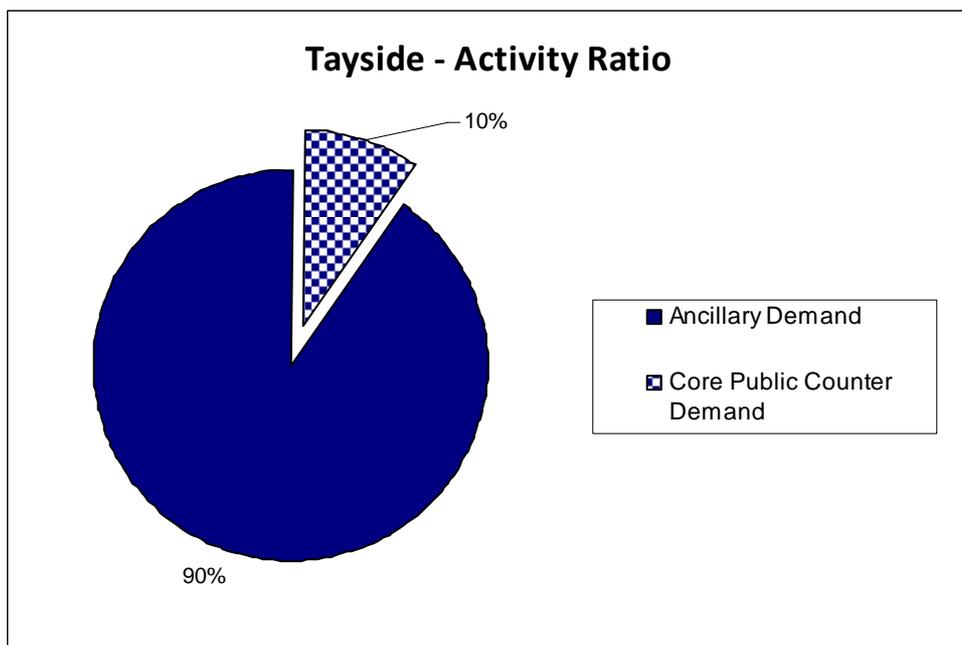


Figure 2: Percentage of public counter demands across D Division stations.

Figure 2 above indicates that on average across all Tayside counters, only one in ten visits related to a core function.

### **Rationale for Proposed Structure**

The following provides some of the key findings in relation to those stations within the Tayside area where it is proposed that the public counter facility is reduced.

Key to the analysis was to establish the purpose of the visit to a police station, and to quantify the demand for services requiring face to face interaction at various times throughout the day.

In each of the stations where demand analysis was carried out, the police demand for admin/clerical services far outweighed the percentage of public demand for the services.

Although certain functions carried out at public counters (e.g. immigration/bail/sex offender requirements, Home Office/Road Traffic matters) require physical interaction with the public, the demand analysis showed that many of the demands made, particularly during the hours where there is a proposed reduction in public counter provision, related to non-policing matters e.g. directions, civil matters etc.

Focusing on the core public counter activity an average of only 1 in 10 demands were made of the station assistant.

To achieve a consistent model across Scotland, defined categories of station opening hours have been developed which are based on work undertaken in the former Strathclyde and Grampian force areas.

Category	A	B	C	D	E
Hours	24/7	0700-0000 hrs 7 days per week	0800-1800hrs 7 days per week	0900-1700hrs Monday to Friday	Shared service or No full time provision

It is recognised that a number of shared services have been developed over recent years. Police Scotland welcome this development and are keen to engage with local authorities, partner organisations in the public sector or third sector to further develop this concept and operational service delivery model. In addition some private enterprises have expressed an interest in developing police drop in or surgery type functions that provide easy access on a regular basis to police facilities within their commercial environment. Police Scotland are keen to explore these opportunities and would welcome contact to local command teams in the relevant divisions or to the Review Team at [publiccounterreview@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:publiccounterreview@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

### **Divisional Proposals**

The following provides a synopsis of the proposed outcomes for each station within the division and a rationale where a change of opening hours is recommended based on both footfall and professional knowledge:

#### **Arbroath**

Arbroath station currently provides a public counter service between 0830 and 1630hrs, Monday to Friday. Over a 9 day period there were a total of 243 demands made of the station assistant of which 55 demands could be classified as essential public counter functions. This represented 23% of the total demand. Within the total of 55 demands, 22 comprised bail/immigration/Registered Sex Offenders sign-ons representing 40% of the essential demands. A total of 180 visitors attended at the counter giving an average footfall of 20 visits per day.

The proposal for Arbroath police station is to adjust the opening times slightly to bring it in line with Category D i.e. 0900-1700 Monday to Friday

#### **Brechin**

Brechin station currently provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1300hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was only captured over three days during week one of the survey. A total of 22 demands were recorded. Of the 12 visitors attending only one enquiry (5%) fell into the essential category. Perhaps by virtue of the fact that the station is only open for 4 hours per day indicates there is a low demand in this area.

The proposal for Brechin station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Carnoustie**

Carnoustie station currently provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1300hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was only captured over five days during the two weeks of the survey. A total of 25 demands were recorded. Of the 13 visitors attending only one enquiry (4%) fell into the essential category. Again, a 4 hour provision reflects on the low requirement by the public for staffed counter services which may be due to the poor location of the station.

The proposal for Carnoustie station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Crieff**

Crieff station currently provides a public counter service between 1000 and 1800hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over twelve days including Saturday and Sunday between week one and two. A total of 76 demands were recorded, 10 of which (13%), fell into the essential category. These were all relating to found property. Only 4 demands were recorded for the weekend (2 per day) none of which were categorised essential.

The proposal for Crieff station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Downfield**

Downfield station currently provides a public counter service between 0800 and 1700hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over the full ten day period of the survey. A total of 279 demands were recorded. The majority of these were admin, general enquiries and deliveries. A total of 56 visits were made to the counter, only 3 of which (1%) fell into the essential category. The fact that Downfield will be an area command base was taken into account when considering the proposed opening times.

The proposal for Downfield police station is to be reclassified as a category D station i.e. 0900-1700hrs, Monday to Friday.

## **Forfar**

Forfar station currently provides a public counter service between 0830 and 1630hrs, Monday to Friday. 263 demands were made of the station assistant over 9 days of which 50 could be classified as essential public counter functions. This represented 19% of the total demand. Within the total of 50 demands, 20 comprised bail/immigration/RSO<sup>1</sup> sign-ons representing 40% of the essential demands. A total of 163 visitors attended at the counter giving an average footfall of 18 visits per day.

The proposal for Forfar police station is to adjust the opening times slightly to bring it in line with Category D i.e. 0900-1700hrs Monday to Friday.

## **Kinross**

Kinross currently provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1700hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over 10 days including Saturday and Sunday due to the "T in the Park" event. 208 demands were made of the station assistant of which 14 (7%) could be classified as essential public counter functions. All but two of these were in relation to found property. Staff were asked to endorse any enquiries that were linked with T-in-the Park. No entries were made to this effect.

The proposal for Kinross station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Lochee**

Lochee station currently provides a public counter service between 0800 and 1700hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over eight and a half days with 1.5 days annual leave making up the remainder. A total of 311 demands, the highest figure of all stations, were recorded. However, only 13 demands (4%) could be classified as essential public counter functions. The majority of demands related to general admin tasks and typing. Lochee will be an area command base which justifies the proposed opening times due to the associated demand.

The proposal for Lochee police station is to be reclassified as a category D station i.e. 0900-1700hrs, Monday to Friday.

## **Longhaugh**

Longhaugh station provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1800hrs, Monday to Friday. Analysis of the data captured over the ten days has shown that of the 290 demands, 2% directly relates to essential public counter service. The majority of the demands were found to be admin tasks. Nearly half of the demands were police officer/internally generated.

The proposal for Longhaugh station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Maryfield**

Maryfield station provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1600hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over the full 10 days of the survey. The counter was closed after 11:30 during week one due to annual leave. A total of 277 demands were recorded, of which 14 (5%) fell into the essential category.

The proposal for Maryfield station is for it to have no public counter provision.

## **Montrose**

Montrose station provides a public counter service between 0900 and 1300hrs, Monday to Friday. Data was captured over the full 10 days of the survey. A total of 110 demands

were recorded, of which 19 (17%) an average of 2 per day, fell into the essential category. A contributing factor to the low demand could be the poor location of the station.

The proposal for Montrose station is for it to have no public counter provision.

### **Local Factors and Considerations**

- There is no change proposed to the opening hours of Dundee, Perth and Pitlochry and as such they are not highlighted within the report.
- No data was captured from Blairgowrie or Auchterarder due to annual leave however this appears to have had little detrimental impact to the service in the respective areas.
- Consideration has been given on how the proposed reduction or removal of counter provision may impact on counter service at other locations or area service centres. Although not specifically quantified, the demand levels involved are generally small and unlikely to impact on the proposed service provision.
- In formulating a proposal for public counters that will be consistent across Scotland, the review has taken into account the appropriate resource levels for staff for the demand from the public in each local area in addition to the variety of alternative contact/reporting methods now available.
- There are a number of stations which are seasonally affected due to the influx of visitors during the holiday period. This has been considered during the activity analysis in conjunction with local professional knowledge.

**Proposed Structure**

<b>Police Station</b>	<b>Current Opening Hours</b>	<b>Proposed Option</b>
<b>Dundee*</b>	24 hours (7 days) PCSO Dual Role	<b>Category A</b> 24 hours 7 days
<b>Perth*</b>	24 hours (7 days) PCSO Dual Role	
		<b>Category B</b> 0700-0000hrs 7 days
		<b>Category C</b> 0800-1800hrs 7 days
<b>Arbroath*</b>	0830-1630hrs (Mon- Fri)	<b>Category D</b> 0900-1700hrs Monday to Friday
<b>Forfar</b>	0830-1630hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Pitlochry</b>	0900-1700hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Lochee</b>	0800-1700hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Downfield</b>	0800-1700hrs (Mon- Fri)	
		<b>Category E</b> (Shared service)
		<b>Category E</b> (No full time provision)
<b>Montrose</b>	0900-1300hrs (Mon- Fri)	<b>No public counter provision</b>
<b>Carnoustie</b>	0900-1300hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Brechin</b>	0900-1300hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Crieff</b>	1000-1800hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Auchterarder</b>	1300-1700hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Kinross</b>	0900-1700hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Blairgowrie</b>	1000-1800hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Maryfield</b>	0800-1600hrs (Mon- Fri)	
<b>Longhaugh</b>	0900-1800hrs (Mon- Fri)	
* - indicates Prescribed Station under The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Prescribed Police Stations) (Scot) Regs 2008		

## Demand Descriptors

The following list of descriptors was used to categorise the main functions carried out by station assistant/front counter staff. These were split into core public counter and ancillary categories and were applied where possible to the data gathered from any demand analysis carried out.

Core public counter demands were defined as those processes in general which require face-to-face interaction or which are subject to legal or procedural requirements that have to be completed at a police station.

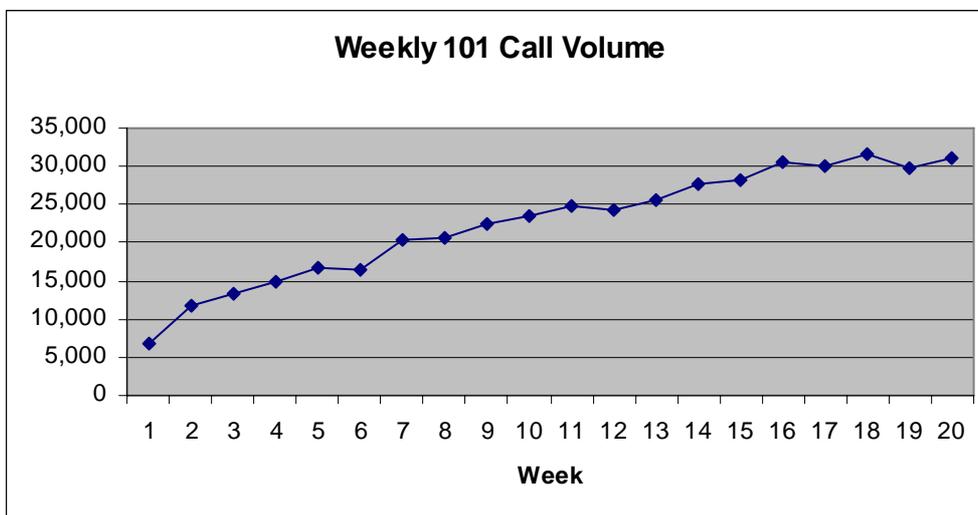
Ancillary demands were defined as all other functions that can be completed by other means or without the need for a visit to a police public counter.

Any custody related activity has been filtered out from public counter demands where possible.

<b>Ancillary Demands</b>	<b>Core Public Counter Demands</b>
Access to premises	
Admin duties	
Appointment	
	Bail (sign in/register)
CHS/PNC check	
Complaint against police	
Court admin	
Custody (property handed in)	
Custody enquiry	
	Data Protection/FOI requests
Delivery/Collection	
	Firearms (licensing/application/surrender)
	Found property (inc. dogs)
General enquiry (non-police matter)	
General enquiry (police matter)	
	HORT (check/record)
	Immigration (register/sign in)
Lost property (inc. dogs)	
	REGSO (register/sign in)
Report crime/vehicle accident	
Request for police officer	
STORM (create/update incident)	
	Vehicle seizure/S165 enquiry
Warrant/fine enquiry	
Warrant (surrender)	

**Key Messages**

1. Policing continues to face unprecedented financial challenges over the coming months and years with a significant reduction in budget and a requirement to find savings and provide best value for public services
2. Police Scotland has maximised resources into frontline policing and specialist policing resources, which has allowed the Force to maintain Police Officer numbers at the highest possible level and continue to provide visible, localised policing services across Scotland focused on keeping people safe.
3. The way in which the public contact the police has changed significantly with the number of people actually using public counters falling dramatically as other methods of contact have become more popular. A number of these alternative methods, which are representative of the needs of a modern society, allow Police Scotland to maximise the number of police officers on the street at any one time and therefore improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland.
4. The implementation of the single non-emergency number (101) will allow for changes to be made to call handling and service delivery across Scotland and will provide a consistency of service. Requests for police service will be provided with an appropriate police response ranging from telephone advice to local officer deployment. As shown by the graph below, the volume of calls to the 101 number has risen consistently since being introduced and for the week ending 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013 the 101 number accounted for 46.3% of non emergency calls made in Scotland.



Weekly increase in volume of 101 calls since it was introduced on 18/02/2013

5. Police Scotland use social media to circulate the latest news, events and information to the public via Twitter (@policescotland) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/policescotland](http://www.facebook.com/policescotland)).
6. Hate crime incidents and domestic abuse incidents can now be reported online via the official Police Scotland website, [www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk). or by visiting a third Party Reporting Centre.

7. In some areas police surgeries and diary appointments can be arranged and we will continue to utilise our mobile police stations, where available, for this purpose.
8. Information regarding crime can be passed to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through an [Anonymous Online Form](#) - both of these routes are completely anonymous and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
9. Changes to front counter services are designed to prioritise stations where there is a larger demand, work more effectively in partnership and potentially on partners' premises and meet community needs in a more cost efficient manner.
10. Any changes to public counter opening hours will be publicised in order to keep the local communities fully informed.
11. Although most police station public counters will be closed overnight, local officers will still be working out of the stations and actively patrolling communities. Members of the public are asked to make routine enquiries during reception open hours. Officers will be available 24/7 if they are required. An analogy is a doctor's surgery – The doctor's surgery may only be open for certain hours, but you can always access medical advice, a doctor or nurse, or emergency care, 24/7, if needed. Well trained and well equipped officers will continue to work closely with local communities and allow the force to maintain current levels of visibility and engagement.
12. Police Scotland remains committed to a community model of policing which understands the needs of its communities across the country and seeks to maintain the highest levels of frontline policing, and give the best possible service within the available funding. Our review is on the basis that officers will not routinely backfill public counter positions.
13. The service remains committed to there being no compulsory redundancies and any reduction in staff numbers will be through voluntary redundancy and early retirement which will be achieved through full consultation with staff and union representatives.
14. While there might be a reduction in the number of public counters this does not mean that police stations will close. Police officers will continue to work within these communities and keep people safe.

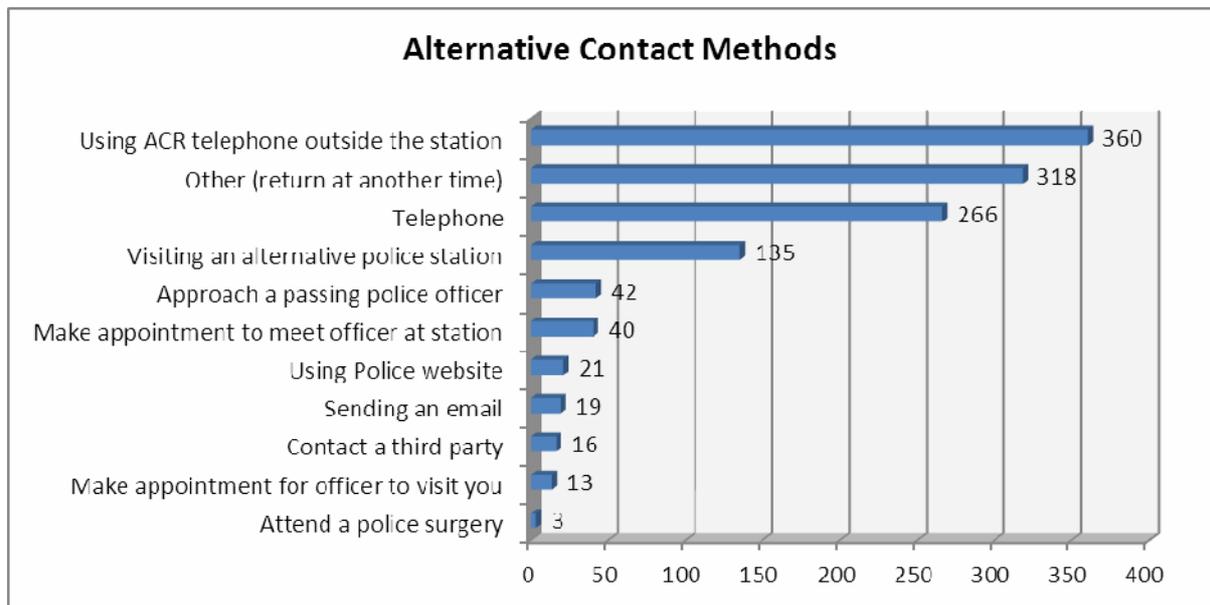
**Alternative Contact Methods**

**Survey Results**

As part of the public counter survey carried out in 2011 by Lothian and Borders Police, a total of 1233 callers to the public counter were asked:

*“If this police station had not been open when you arrived, which of the following would you have considered as an alternative method to contact the police?”*

The table below shows the total figures for the separate surveys carried out at stations in the Lothians and Scottish Borders area (excl Edinburgh).



The majority of those who answered “other” indicated they would make a return visit to the same station at another time.

While this is the second most popular response, an online survey carried out by Lothian and Borders Police around the same time found that of 354 responses, only 8% (25) expressed a preference to report a crime at a police station, 4% (12) would prefer to report a disturbance/nuisance and 3% (11) would prefer to report a road accident at a police station. The results of the survey are reinforced by a separate analysis of crime reporting within the legacy Lothian and Borders area which confirmed the following percentages of crime reported at police stations compared to other methods: (2008/09 – 9.6%, 2009/10 – 8.3%, 2010/11 – 8.9%, 2011/12 – 9.1%).

The counter survey in general, indicated a willingness by the public to use alternative methods of contact with the police when the counter is not available. However, in some instances the results suggested a lack of awareness of the various methods available. Since this survey was undertaken, clear guidance for emergency and non-emergency matters have been developed and published.