

Silent Solution Guide: Produced by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (OPC)

What to do if you need urgent police help through the 999 service, but can't speak

If you're in an emergency situation and need police help, but can't speak, Make Yourself Heard and let the 999 operator know your call is genuine.

When you call 999

All 999 calls are directed to call centres and will be answered by BT operators. They will ask which service you need. If no service is requested but anything suspicious is heard throughout the process, BT operators will connect you to a police call handler.

If you call 999 from a mobile

It is always best to speak to the operator if you can, even by whispering. You may also be asked to cough or tap the keys on your phone in response to questions. If making a sound would put you or someone else in danger and the BT operator cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, your call will be transferred to the Silent Solution system.

The Silent Solution is a police system used to filter out large numbers of accidental or hoax 999 calls. It also exists to help people who are unable to speak, but who genuinely need police assistance. You will hear an automated police message, which lasts for 20 seconds and begins with 'you are through to the police'. It will ask you to press 55 to be put through to police call management. The BT operator will remain on the line and listen. If you **press 55**, they will be notified and transfer the call to the police. If you don't press 55, the call will be terminated. Pressing 55 does not allow police to track your location.

What then?

When transferred to your local police force, the police call handler will attempt to communicate with you by asking simple yes or no questions. If you are not able to speak, listen carefully to the questions and instructions from the call handler so they can assess your call and arrange help if needed.

If you call 999 from a landline

Because it's less likely that 999 calls are made by accident from landlines, the Silent Solution system is not used.

If, when an emergency call on a landline is received:

- There is no request for an emergency
- The caller does not answer questions
- Only background noise can be heard, and BT operators cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, then you will be connected to a police call handler as doubt exists.

If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again.

If you pick up again during the 45 second period and the BT operator is concerned for your safety, the call will be connected to police.

When 999 calls are made from landlines, information about where you're calling from should be automatically available to the call handlers to help provide a response.

#MakeYourselfHeard

#SilentSolution

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