Who ya gonna call?

Not long ago, life was simpler – we contacted the police for almost everything. You rang 999, you chatted to your local bobby, or you popped into the local police station.

Things are harder now. For one thing, borough and county councils deal with many problems that blight our lives, but which are rarely criminal acts. Meanwhile, there are now two numbers for calling the police: 999 and 101. And we even have two types of uniformed officer: the traditional PC, who continues to deal with crime and reacts to emergencies, and the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

The complexity exists for a reason – in the case of PCs and PCSOs, for example, the two-tier approach fits in well with modern policing. But it risks leaving some of us a little confused.

If you want to report anything where time is of the essence, ring 999. This will go to the call centre in Guildford and trained officers there will take all the details and manage your call. It doesn't always have to be about crime; you may be reporting a road traffic incident. Officers will make the decision as to whether they need to react immediately. Please allow them to make that decision based on the resources available and the other problems they are dealing with at that time.

If time is not of the essence, or you have valuable information that could be used to prevent a crime or make an arrest, call 101. And if you are providing intelligence that is better written down or includes photographs, you can make a report via the website *surrey.police.uk* rather than call it in.

Some things you may want to report, such as fly tipping, traveller incursions or abandoned vehicles, are better handled by Woking Borough Council. The council can be contacted on 01483 755 855 if urgent, or via its website *woking.gov.uk* if not. Anything urgent <u>out of business hours</u>, such as traveller incursions, call the Police on 999.

Similarly, Surrey County Council deals with a range of common issues such as drains, roads, lighting and fallen trees, among many others. They can be contacted 24 hours a day on 0300 200 1003 in urgent cases, and via *surreycc.gov.uk* if not.

Whomever you decide to call, make sure you do it. If you ever happen to call the wrong authority, these bodies will generally point you in the right direction. Avoid doing nothing because you are not sure who to contact or you think it's not important. By itself, your information may not be vital – but if you are one of 10 people reporting similar details then it does become vital and important.

Remember, none of us like crime, but doing nothing is just as much a crime.