



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest



## **DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE**

Bedfordshire Police

# “Are the local police delivering for you?”

The ‘Policing Pledge’ sets out ten minimum standards that the police service promised to deliver from 31 December 2008.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has reviewed how well the 43 forces in England and Wales are delivering the standards they promised the public.

This report provides members of the public with information on the performance of their local force.

Each Pledge standard and the three areas relating to how the force is working towards its delivery have been graded. HMIC has combined these assessments to give an overall grade for the force.

The overall grade for  
Bedfordshire Police is:

**FAIR**

## The different grades

**EXCELLENT**

is awarded for exceptional performance which is consistently above and beyond the required standard.

**GOOD**

is defined as meeting the standard, although there may be minor dips in performance.

**FAIR**

is awarded where performance is variable and falls short of the required standard. Remedial action is needed.

**POOR**

is used when performance fails to meet an acceptable level. Immediate remedial action is needed.

## THE POLICING PLEDGE POINTS

## HMIC GRADING

### PLEDGE POINT 1

Always treat you fairly with dignity and respect, ensuring you have fair access to our services at a time that is reasonable and suitable for you.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 2

Provide you with information so you know who your dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team are, where they are based, how to contact them and how to work with them.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 3

Ensure your Neighbourhood Policing Team and other police patrols are visible and on your patch at times when they will be most effective and when you tell us you most need them. We will ensure that your team is not taken away from neighbourhood business more than is absolutely necessary. Officers will spend at least 80% of their time visibly working in your neighbourhood, tackling your priorities. Staff turnover will be minimised.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 4

Respond to every message directed to your Neighbourhood Policing Team within 24 hours and, where necessary, provide a more detailed response as soon as we can.

GOOD

### PLEDGE POINT 5

Aim to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds, deploying to emergencies immediately, giving an estimated time of arrival (ETA), and getting to you safely, and as quickly as possible. In urban areas, we will aim to get to you within 15 minutes and in rural areas within 20 minutes.

GOOD

### PLEDGE POINT 6

Answer all non-emergency calls promptly. If attendance is needed, send a patrol, giving you an ETA, and:

- if you are vulnerable or upset, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes;
- if you are calling about an issue that we have agreed with your community will be a neighbourhood priority and attendance is required, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes;
- alternatively, if appropriate, we will make an appointment to see you at a time that fits in with your life and within 48 hours;
- if agreed that attendance is not necessary, we will give you advice, answer your questions and/or put you in touch with someone who can help.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 7

Arrange regular public meetings to agree your priorities at least once a month, giving you a chance to meet your local team with other members of your community. These will include opportunities such as surgeries, street briefings and mobile police station visits, which will be arranged to meet local needs and requirements.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 8

Provide monthly updates on progress, and on local crime and policing issues. This will include the provision of crime maps, information on specific crimes and what happened to those brought to justice, details of what action we and our partners are taking to make your neighbourhood safer, and information on how your force is performing.

FAIR

### PLEDGE POINT 9

If you have been a victim of crime, agree with you how often you would like to be kept informed of progress in your case and for how long. You have the right to be kept informed at least every month if you wish, and for as long as is reasonable.

GOOD

### PLEDGE POINT 10

Acknowledge any dissatisfaction with the service you have received within 24 hours of reporting it to us. To help us fully resolve the matter, discuss with you how it will be handled, give you an opportunity to talk in person to someone about your concerns and agree with you what will be done about them and how quickly.

FAIR

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### PLEDGE POINT 1

The force had dedicated Customer Service Managers who handled reports of incivility, rudeness and other dissatisfaction issues effectively. Three main police stations had extended opening hours and access provision for people with disabilities. Stations were also on the Nationwide Access Register. **But** only one police station was open all hours including weekends and there had not been public or Independent Advisory Group consultation on opening hours.

### PLEDGE POINT 2

Bedfordshire Police refer to Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) as Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) were well established with details of neighbourhood staff publicised using various methods including the internet and local press articles. **But** the internet site was not always kept up to date to alert the public to community meetings and updates about community problems.

### PLEDGE POINT 3

The SNTs were almost fully staffed and officers remained in post for a minimum of two years. **But** the force needed to improve its recording and monitoring of the time staff were away from their neighbourhoods. The force's definition of what counted as visibly working in a neighbourhood might not reflect the public's understanding.

### PLEDGE POINT 4

Neighbourhood officers' response to messages within 24 hours was good; staff had access to mobile devices to answer emails and calls. The force had begun some random quality checks to test the response to calls. **But** this needed to be expanded and become normal business to ensure consistent responses to the public.

### PLEDGE POINT 5

The force had an effective call management process for 999 calls with over 90% answered within 10 seconds. Emergency calls were attended within the time limits set under the Pledge, and 90% of the time targets were met for attending emergency calls in urban locations. **But** there had been a drop to 85% in some rural areas. This was being monitored by the force and these rates were improving.

### PLEDGE POINT 6

The force had an effective method of grading and monitoring calls requiring a 60 minute response under the Pledge. Appointments could be made to see staff by attending one of three main police stations. **But** the force could not guarantee an appointment within 48 hours and the system did not cater for those without transport or who had limited mobility.

### PLEDGE POINT 7

The community meetings were well run and effective. The force used a “Five a Day” scheme to ensure SNT staff received the opinions of five members of the community each day which fed into an assessment of community issues. **But** details of regular community meetings where priorities could be set were scarce. There was a lack of consistency in the way information about meetings was presented and no formal consultation with communities had taken place about the way the public wanted to receive this information.

### PLEDGE POINT 8

Maps of local crime rates were easily accessible for each neighbourhood on the force internet site. The force used a local press agency to help provide details of convictions of local offenders to the public. **But** the crime mapping system did not allow identification of specific crime locations or any type of crime pattern analysis. There was also no evidence on SNT websites of joint problem-solving plans with other agencies.

### PLEDGE POINT 9

Crime centre recording staff had a clear understanding of the Pledge requirements, and observance of the “Victims’ Code of Practice” had improved. The force had systems in place to identify both vulnerability and the victim’s preferred contact method, as well as record all contacts. **But** auditing of contacts with victims was traditionally the responsibility of supervisors, however, the force had been working to introduce a better, information technology-based, auditing system. The force needed to ensure that all staff, including volunteers, were aware of their responsibilities on crime recording and victim care.

### PLEDGE POINT 10

The force had customer service managers who worked closely with the Professional Standards Department and effectively dealt with public dissatisfaction during normal working hours. **But** the force did not have a system to monitor replies to ensure an acknowledgment was sent within 24 hours. Analysis of dissatisfaction needed to be highlighted effectively at a senior level in the force – across all stations and departments – to ensure everyone understood the lessons to be learnt.

## WHAT THE FORCE WAS DOING TO IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE

As well as reporting on the force’s delivery of each Pledge standard, HMIC has also assessed and graded the efforts it was making to improve performance:

### HMIC GRADING

Surveys and management meetings were being used to improve performance; public satisfaction and confidence data were taken into account.

FAIR

The force had identified deficiencies in its delivery of the Pledge and was taking action in those areas.

FAIR

Implementation was led by the force’s senior team, the Police Authority was involved, staff were being trained and the Pledge was communicated to staff and the public.

FAIR



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