



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Kent 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 Kent Police is:

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

FAIR

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

FAIR

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

Public enquiry offices in the main police stations had been recently refurbished to a high standard, with facilities for people with disabilities. The force had designed Customer Service National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) with West Kent Adult Education College. The force website included key information in 11 languages and made provision for people with impaired sight and hearing. **But** there had been no public consultation in the setting of police station opening hours. Since 2004/05 there had been an increase in the proportion of incivility, impoliteness and intolerance complaints against the force, which was above the national force average.

PLEDGE POINT 2

The force website contained details of all Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) within the county, and was searchable by postcode and geographical area. It included the names and photographs of local officers, telephone and email contact details along with dates and venues of neighbourhood surgeries and community meetings. A variety of methods were used to raise local awareness of the purpose and role of NPTs. The Kent Police Service Standard 2009/10 contained the Pledge promises. **But** the force had only recently produced and distributed local neighbourhood newsletters.

PLEDGE POINT 3

The force had a clear policy in place to control the redeployment of NPT staff onto other duties and this was robustly managed by senior management. The force monitored retention and recruitment of NPT staff and a 2 year tenure of appointment to a ward based NPT had been introduced. Movement to different teams only occurred in exceptional circumstances. Kent Police Authority had approved a budget increase to resource 14 Neighbourhood Tasking Teams (1 per District, and 2 in Medway) by September 2009 to tackle local priorities. In an effort to improve visibility of NPT officers on their respective wards, Kent Police had piloted tracker devices to assess the movements of officers.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Staff had been provided with guidance and instruction about the greetings to be used when answering calls, setting voicemail, and about facilities available to manage calls from the deaf, speech impaired, and people whose first language was not English. The force planned to undertake "mystery shopping" to assess the quality of the service provided. **But** the response to email messages to NPTs was variable. Callers were not explicitly told to expect a response to calls within 24 hours as guaranteeing to deliver this was challenging, especially at weekends.

PLEDGE POINT 5

National Call Handling Standards were applied robustly in the Force Communications Centre, and in 2008 won a national training award. Contact management performance information was available and scrutinised daily. Contact was maintained with 'vulnerable'/'upset' callers to provide assurance until the arrival of an officer. An automated process identified urban and rural locations from postcodes. **But** estimated times of arrival were not provided to callers, and the force was not yet meeting its 90% attendance target within 15/20 minutes in urban and rural areas respectively.

PLEDGE POINT 6

Quality assurance of call management was achieved through intrusive supervisory oversight. Neighbourhood priorities were identifiable through an automated process on the Command and Control system. Estimated times of arrival were provided to callers and contact was maintained by the officer while on route. **But** staff understanding of 'vulnerable' and 'upset' needed enhancing.

PLEDGE POINT 7

A variety of advertised community engagement events were used to meet the public and agree local priorities at least monthly. Activity against the priorities was recorded on a problem solving database, accessible by local authorities. The force was planning to trial the use of Blackberry® mobile telephones by NPT officers to record the local priorities, thereby providing an opportunity to capture the views of people who were less easily accessible. **But** engagement meetings attended by HMIC were conducted to differing standards.

PLEDGE POINT 8

Crime mapping, progress in tackling local priorities and Policing Pledge performance were published on the force website. The Citizens Panel of almost 800 volunteers provided local views on crime, community safety, and the services provided by the force. Following responses to a crime statistics survey, the force was planning to attach “Frequently Asked Questions” and “Commentaries” to the crime mapping pages in order to provide more explanatory information. **But** the provision of information on individuals brought to justice for offences linked to local priorities was still being developed.

PLEDGE POINT 9

“Project Total Recall” was the force initiative to keep victims of crime updated with progress by agreeing contact methods and frequency. Supervisors were required to review the crime report and set out an investigative action plan. Regular dip sampling of crime investigations was performed by the force inspectorate. **But** an automated process to prompt investigators/supervisors of victim requirements was not in place. An upgrade, followed by an overhaul, of the force crime management system was planned.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The Lessons Learned forum identified improvement opportunities by amending force processes and training. The Staff Conduct Review process used in the force required intervention by a senior manager to assist any staff member who attracts disproportionately high levels of complaints or misconduct allegations. **But** the force had achieved low levels of locally resolved complaints, and there was evidence of Acting Sergeants not having been trained in complaint resolution. The force’s Professional Standards Department did not have a facility for responding to complaints reported directly to them during weekends and public holidays.

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD



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The report is available in alternative languages and formats on request.

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