



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

North Wales 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
North Wales 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.

FAIR

PLEDGE POINT 6

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

GOOD

- 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.

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.

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

Access to all stations had been improved and tested by community volunteers, including some with disabilities. Many stations had power-assisted doors, hearing loops, lower counter areas and, in one, a lift where the entrance was above ground level. "Mystery shopping" was used to test the quality of service. A Welsh and English version of the Pledge was displayed in each station, including in Braille and the Pledge was available from the website in seven different languages. **But** the public had not been consulted about when they thought police stations should be open.

PLEDGE POINT 2

Up to date contact details of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), including photographs, were available on the website and on posters in police stations. Ways for the public to get involved with their teams also appeared on the internet, and some teams did "letter drops" to every household. **But** public information about NPTs was of a varying standard and did not reach the community in an organised way. The force had appointed a new Media and Marketing Manager to try and improve this. Posters with team details were not widely displayed outside police stations.

PLEDGE POINT 3

All NPT staff agreed to remain in post for two years when appointed. Mobile workstations had been introduced to boost time spent 'on the street'. Improving NPT visibility was part of the Policing Plan and a target was set in line with the Pledge. Local monitoring showed that in June 2009, staff were in their local areas some 87% of their time. **But** the force did not suitably record how staff spent time on other duties and so the accuracy of the suggested 87% spent in the community was questionable. NPTs were regularly given other duties such as policing football matches which cut into their time for dealing with local priorities. Enquiry desks were often staffed by Police Community Support Officers, thereby limiting visibility in NPT areas.

PLEDGE POINT 4

All NPTs had Blackberries® which diverted to the force control room if not answered within a short time. Messages for off-duty staff could then be responded to by another officer in the NPT. The inspection team sent 15 test emails to NPTs; all were responded to within the target of 24 hours. **But** letters received by post were not responded to within the target of 24 hours and the force was looking at ways to manage postal correspondence.

PLEDGE POINT 5

The force exceeded its target of 92% of all 999 calls answered within ten seconds; in June 2009 performance achieved was 94.4%. Immediate deployment of officers responding to emergency calls exceeded the target of 90% and was recorded as 93.4% in June 2009. Arriving safely to incidents was a primary consideration for staff. **But** callers were not routinely given estimated times of arrival (ETAs). The Pledge commitment to respond in 15 minutes to urban areas was not adopted as the force considered the entire area to be rural in nature, and so applied the 20 minute target time to all emergency calls.

PLEDGE POINT 6

All control room staff had been trained to ensure that calls involving a neighbourhood priority, or calls from a 'vulnerable' or 'upset' person were identified and properly handled. ETAs were provided and a system generated call-backs if delays were likely. NPT priorities were accessible to call handlers by a web-link. An "All Wales" Non Emergency Number (101) helped to make frontline staff more accessible; and an appointment system to see members of the public at times suitable for them was recently introduced. This helped to speed up service and improve satisfaction.

PLEDGE POINT 7

The force website advertised details of forthcoming public meetings up to three months in advance. Updates of local priorities were recorded on a database, which was closely monitored by supervisors. **But** little advertising or consultation took place to increase attendance at public events, despite a very low turnout at some community meetings. Priorities for NPT work were not selected and signed off in a consistent way. Other than the internet and NPT meetings, very few ways of assessing community views were considered.

PLEDGE POINT 8

Interactive crime maps on the force website gave the latest local crime information. NPTs had a good relationship with the force's media department, which helped to publish information about crime outcomes and arrests that interested the public. The "Y Glas" website covered news and features of NPT activity. **But** although information about what had happened to local offenders, and updates of crime were shared with the public through the media department/press office, this lacked coordination, and no formal guidance had been set out. A Geographical Information System Manager was being recruited to improve the use of crime mapping. This will also help to improve standards of communication. There was little advertising to partners informing them of meetings, very limited participation from partners at public meetings and little thought around how they might contribute to problem solving.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Officers showed good awareness of the requirement for victim care arrangements and how these were reached. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) sometimes visited victims of crime within 72 hours to provide reassurance and updates. Victims contacted during the inspection were very satisfied with the service provided. **But** recording of victim care arrangements was not carried out systematically.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force business and service improvement team collected all reported incidents where dissatisfaction was reported and remedial action required. Processes were developing to record and learn lessons whenever dissatisfaction occurred. **But** dissatisfaction was generally not replied to within 24 hours. Contacting the Professional Standards Department was the main way to report shortfalls in service, which was routinely open from Monday to Friday. No meaningful analysis of reported dissatisfaction was conducted.

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.

GOOD

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

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