



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Sussex 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
Sussex 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.

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.

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.

POOR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PLEDGE POINT 1

The force was trying hard to work with everyone in the community, especially with younger people. It had won an award for introducing an emergency text facility and incorporating sign language clips on the force website. **But** the opening times for police stations were not set in consultation with the public. The force had not carried out any assessment of the accessibility of all public facing departments, such as firearms licensing.

PLEDGE POINT 2

The details of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) were generally well publicised, especially on the force website. It was easy to find out who local teams were and where they were based. **But** there was a lack of leaflets or other publicity material on the Policing Pledge and on Neighbourhood Policing in some police stations. Staff from the police call centre could not easily identify neighbourhood priorities from the force computerised systems.

PLEDGE POINT 3

The people that HMIC spoke to said that their local NPTs were approachable and were seen out and about more. **But** the force was not able to identify whether it was meeting the 80% level. Although NPT staff are required to remain in post for at least two years, so communities get to know their local officers and PCSOs, the force does not monitor this to make sure it is happening.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Staff in the police call centre taking calls from the public knew how to contact NPT staff, find out if they were on duty and how to leave a message if they were not available. Responses from NPTs to callers was adequate. **But** not all messages to NPTs were replied to within 24 hours. Voicemail was not well used with some details incorrect and in some cases NPTs were not using it at all.

PLEDGE POINT 5

The force was good at answering 999 calls with over 96% answered within 10 seconds. The force has a response time of 15 minutes for attending to emergency calls anywhere in Sussex. The force responded to 84.7% of these calls (target 80%) in 2008/9 within 15 minutes. Officers travelling to emergencies knew they should get there as quickly and as safely as possible. **But** staff answering the 999 calls do not give the public an estimated time of arrival (ETA).

PLEDGE POINT 6

Staff in the police call centre knew how to tell if a caller was 'upset' or 'vulnerable'. They tried to make sure police attended and dealt with the problem within 60 minutes. The force was trialling a 48 hour appointment system at Brighton and Hove. They were also introducing a means to ensure neighbourhood priorities could be readily identified and responded to within 60 minutes. **But** the number of non emergency calls answered promptly (within 60 seconds) was 72% against a target of 75% (in 2008/9)

PLEDGE POINT 7

Public meetings were held regularly and those who attended felt they had been listened to and that their problems were generally being solved. People also had the opportunity to meet their local police at surgeries held in a variety of locations and during street briefings. Local priorities were discussed and agreed during those methods of engagement. **But** more could be done by NPTs to publicise meetings so that even more people attended and had their say about what was happening in their area.

PLEDGE POINT 8

All NPTs used the force website to provide local communities with information and how problems were being solved. This included action with partner agencies and with communities on tackling anti social behaviour. Some were also using newsletters. **But** crime maps on the force website lacked detail so the public could not tell the streets where crimes had been committed. Although some NPT staff did make mention of individual offenders this information was not published as a matter of routine.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Many victims were being updated regularly with information on what the police were doing to solve the crime they had reported. Victims were offered a choice of ways in which to be kept informed, this included text and email. The force is one of only a few that used a system to send electronic reminders to officers when updates to victims were due. This information was also used by the force to ensure officers updated victims when they should. **But** not every police officer and member of staff realised how important it was to let people know what was happening with their case.

PLEDGE POINT 10

Members of the public were able to express dissatisfaction through a number of different channels including speaking to staff at front offices in police stations, by telephone or through personal reports to police officers and staff. **But** the force was not able to tell if all complaints were replied to within 24 hours. Complaints of dissatisfaction were not collected in one place. Patterns were not analysed and lessons learnt from them.

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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