



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Thames Valley 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
Thames Valley 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.

GOOD

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.

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.

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

The “Serving with Pride and Confidence” programme led by the Chief Constable focused on professional values, customer service and leadership. There was force-wide consistency for front-counter service at police stations. Complaints of incivility are actively collected and assessed. The force achieved the national standard for promoting equality and diversity. **But** the public were not consulted about when they wanted police stations to be open.

PLEDGE POINT 2

All 263 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) had dedicated web pages and most team pages had photos of officers and listed their contact details. Most police station front offices displayed posters of the teams. The teams had used various ways of raising awareness of who they were and how to work with them, such as newspaper wraparounds and local newsletters. **But** there was no clear guidance about responding to messages left for the NPTs and the quality of website entries was not consistent across the force.

PLEDGE POINT 3

Many neighbourhood teams had bases closer to local communities such as in supermarkets. All NPT staff used mobile technology which helped them stay out on patrol for longer. **But** the time that the NPT spent away from their core responsibilities was not monitored and recorded sufficiently, and some key staff were regularly taken away for other roles. The number of vacant NPT posts was low. There was large variation in the roles that NPT staff had, depending on where they worked.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Mobile technology was used by NPTs which helped officers respond more promptly to public emails and voicemail messages, particularly when on patrol. **But** staff responses to voicemail were poor. Contacting and leaving messages for NPT staff using the 0845 number provided a very varied experience when checked by the HMIC. NPTs did not have a way to ensure there were responses to messages that had been left within 24 hours.

PLEDGE POINT 5

Performance for answering 999 calls within 10 seconds was good and staff were sent out within 5 minutes in most cases. Good results were recorded for answering 999 calls in urban and rural areas. The force did not practically differentiate between urban and rural 999 response times. Overall very good results were achieved safely. **But** although estimated times of arrival (ETAs) were given, they were not consistently recorded or checked up on.

PLEDGE POINT 6

Answering non-emergency calls within 40 seconds had improved considerably from last year. Anti-social behaviour in progress was also graded as urgent. Overall there were satisfactory appointment systems in place. Good staff training was provided and staff were aware of Policing Pledge priorities. **But** there was not consistent prioritisation of ‘vulnerable’ and ‘upset’ calls and ETAs were not always monitored.

PLEDGE POINT 7

Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) were established in most areas and other agencies were invited to attend. Other methods of community engagement were used, such as street surgeries. **But** only half of NAG meetings were open to the public, and many were not monthly. Overall the way the force engaged with the public was irregular and not influenced by public consultation. Neighbourhood priorities were too general and included concerns, but no local context or detail was provided.

PLEDGE POINT 8

Crime maps were available online and were relatively easy to use, but didn't routinely include local context. Many neighbourhoods had monthly updates on the websites. These included feedback received on priorities tackled, local offenders and how they were dealt with. Crime figures were also explained with some local commentary. **But** updates on local issues were inconsistent across police areas. There were limited updates on action partners had taken.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Most victims who had gone to court received updates every 28 days. There was evidence of random checking of all crime cases by most supervisors. **But** all victims of crime should have been updated, not just victims who were going to court. There was no evidence of personalised victim care contracts and the number of quality checks by supervisors between policing areas varied greatly.

PLEDGE POINT 10

There was a good system in place for tracking dissatisfaction complaints, and this was used to good effect. Staff even looked for dissatisfaction in the local press. **But** staff across the organisation were not aware of the need to log and acknowledge dissatisfaction within 24 hours. Random checks showed that there was some poor recording of customer details and updating of action taken. More personalised methods were required.

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 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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