HMIC

Inspecting policing
in the **public interest**

DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Cumbria Constabulary

“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 Cumbria Constabulary is:

POOR

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 ten 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, give 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.

POOR

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.

POOR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PLEDGE POINT 1

The force recognised the diverse nature of its communities in its policing plan, which was available in several languages. This ensured the plan could be understood by a wider range of people. The force understood the needs of its communities. It provided a dedicated officer to make sure travelling communities were accepted by the established community. The force helped organise a successful multi-agency community football tournament for young people. There was a significant reduction of complaints from the public about poor behaviour from police staff. **But** the force did not make sure that all of its information leaflets were available in all of its communities' languages. Some police stations were not open at their advertised times and notice of closure was not always given.

PLEDGE POINT 2

Information about the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) was displayed in the enquiry areas of some police stations, although it was not always easy to see. The force's "Feet on the Street" plan saw officers talking to the public about their concerns. The force also made a presentation at a community crime fighters forum outlining its commitment to the Policing Pledge. **But** some areas did not give up to date information about when public meetings would take place. Information leaflets about NPTs were not always accurate, up-to-date and readily available at stations and in other public places.

PLEDGE POINT 3

NPT staff remained in post for enough time to develop close relationships with their communities. The force was making changes to the roles of staff to better deal with the needs of Cumbria's communities. In some neighbourhoods, officers were on duty at the right place and time to tackle local priorities, meeting their 80% target. **But** in other areas, the force did not meet this target and staff were regularly removed from their neighbourhoods to deal with other duties.

PLEDGE POINT 4

The force had guidelines to respond to telephone and email enquiries within 24 hours. It also provided a single contact number for all non-emergency calls, and a single team email address. Neighbourhood officers had mobile phones, allowing immediate contact with the public. This was helpful to vulnerable people and repeat victims. **But** the force did not ensure that all enquiries were answered within 24 hours, including those messages left for officers who were not on duty.

PLEDGE POINT 5

The force attended 98.1% of emergency incidents within 15 minutes in urban areas, and attended 91.9% of emergency incidents within 20 minutes in rural areas. Communications staff provided callers with advice and reassurance, while patrol officers were en route. **But** in busy times, it was not always possible for call handlers to find staff to dispatch without checking computer systems. This takes too long. The force did not ensure that officers attending emergencies in remote areas could safely arrive within 20 minutes – particularly when it was dark and weather was bad.

PLEDGE POINT 6

Call handlers had access to local priorities and identified repeat and vulnerable callers. All staff were trained to identify vulnerable and upset callers and were closely supervised to ensure a quality service. The force introduced a 24-hour appointment system which suited victims' needs. **But** information about local priorities was not detailed enough. This meant that when call handlers dispatched officers, they could not be sure about the type of response needed.

PLEDGE POINT 7

The force identified local priorities in a variety of ways, including street meetings, consultation with key community members and community meetings. **But** the way community priorities were decided was inconsistent across the force. The force website was not user friendly, and information about public meetings could not be easily found. The website also displayed out of date information about meetings. This information should have been removed. Public meetings had low attendance and the public were not asked why they were not attending. The force also advertised meetings that it did not attend.

PLEDGE POINT 8

Information leaflets from NPTs included crime trends, community activities and updates about offenders. The force website provided a link to crime maps. **But** not all areas used crime maps. The community was not always asked about what they wanted from their local police. Not enough effort was being made to understand community expectations. Neighbourhood newsletters did not say whether the force was meeting its Policing Pledge commitments.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Victims of crime could report incidents in locations other than police stations. This meant that those victims unable to get to a police station could receive care at the earliest opportunity. An electronic reminder system ensured that police remembered to update victims within required times. Vulnerable victims were supported by specialist agencies and schemes, such as the "City South Domestic Violence Victim Support Programme". **But** the force's victim care guidelines were poor. The guidelines were not understood by staff, as victims were not asked when and how often they wished to be contacted.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force monitored dissatisfaction and learnt lessons from these cases to improve its service. **But** the force had no guidelines for dealing with dissatisfaction. The force did not respond to dissatisfaction within 24 hours.

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.	POOR
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

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

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ

This report is also available from the HMIC website
http://inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmic

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