



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Dorset 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
Dorset 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.

FAIR

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.

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

The ethos of good customer service was strong and embedded in the force's values of "Integrity, Professionalism, Fairness and Respect". The website was specifically designed for the diverse needs of the public. Police stations visited were open as advertised or had clear contact instructions displayed. **But** police station front offices needed better management with more consistent standards of services and information for the public. More detailed collection and analysis of incivility issues were also required.

PLEDGE POINT 2

The force website provided details of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), with photos and several methods of contacting them including email and mobile phone numbers. SNT details and how to work with them had been publicised locally. **But** not all SNT websites contained local information that was up to date, and the web pages were not consistently structured.

PLEDGE POINT 3

Nearly all frontline patrol and neighbourhood teams reported that they were at, or very near, full staffing levels, and that minimum staffing levels were consistently maintained. Where data was available, this indicated that the 80% level was being achieved. **But** improved recording and performance monitoring were required in order to determine whether the 80% level was being achieved force-wide.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Call Centre staff provided an efficient initial response and personalised explanation for most customer queries. **But** responses to HMIC test messages within 24 hours were poor, particularly for emails. Staff were not clear about the standard and timescales expected for replies. SNT responses to mobile phone messages were not checked against the 24 hour standard and the format of recorded answerphone messages was not standardised.

PLEDGE POINT 5

Performance against the force's target to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds was good. The force had set a more challenging response target of 10 minutes in urban areas and was achieving this on most occasions. Performance in 2008-2009 for both of the 10 and 20 minute response times was good. **But** staff were not routinely giving estimated times of arrival to callers and the force was not formally recording or monitoring this performance.

PLEDGE POINT 6

Non-emergency call handling performance had improved. There were good links to refer customers to other agencies. **But** there was limited understanding and prioritisation of 'vulnerable' and 'upset' callers. Formal estimated times of arrival for neighbourhood priorities and 'vulnerable' and 'upset' callers were rarely given or monitored, so it was not clear if the 60 minute targets were being achieved. Formal force-wide appointment systems were not in place.

PLEDGE POINT 7

SNTs generally employed a broad range of monthly opportunities to meet with the public and identify their priorities. **But** many team priorities were still very general and did not specify exact locations. Meeting advertisements were not always issued sufficiently in advance and they were not reaching all communities. There was no systematic approach to meeting with diverse communities.

PLEDGE POINT 8

Crime maps were available from the force website. There was a force-wide response to speeding which had been identified as a priority in several areas. Crown court results were published on the force website in partnership with the CPS. But feedback on the action taken to tackle community priorities, particularly partnership action, was out of date and lacked detail.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Crime victims were generally being updated monthly and customer contact cards were routinely used by frontline staff to professionalise the initial customer contact and secure ownership. **But** there were no formal, personalised, victim arrangements recorded, particularly customer preferences for contact methods and frequency. Crime victims who HMIC contacted reported inconsistent customer service levels.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force had noted a rise in formal complaints about staff incivility two years ago and produced an action plan monitored by the Police Authority. **But** there were limited customer-friendly opportunities to formally report dissatisfaction. Follow-up calls to some customers revealed over promising and under delivering by staff and managers. Complaint performance monitoring, particularly around 24 hour replies was poor, and organisational learning from wider service failures was rudimentary. A force-wide process for the collation and analysis of service dissatisfaction was needed.

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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