



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Merseyside 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 Merseyside Police is:

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

GOOD

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.

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.

FAIR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PLEDGE POINT 1

Police station enquiry counters were accessible, provision had been made for people with disabilities and a range of information was available in varying languages. Staff were courteous, had received training in customer service and were knowledgeable. When enquiry counters were closed, visitors could still speak to a member of staff using a free telephone. Local public survey data had informed a force-wide review resulting in changes to some opening times. **But** the force had yet to implement all of the improvements identified and develop an estates strategy that reflected current needs.

PLEDGE POINT 2

Comprehensive information about Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) was available through a website, newsletters, local information packs and posters. The posters were displayed in key locations in a range of languages. Information on meeting points and contact arrangements was readily available. Minutes of meetings indicated the local priorities that mattered to the public were being prioritised and dealt with quickly.

PLEDGE POINT 3

Staff were committed to delivering positive results in their area and worked with partners effectively. The force had controlled the amount of time that NPT members were deployed away from their neighbourhood. The force's approach to visibility was not limited to just neighbourhood teams but extended to other staff. Deployment was determined by intelligence and demand, often resulting in force-wide operations or themed approaches to seasonal problems. The force was highly visible and communicated well with the public on what it was doing.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Each NPT had dedicated telephone lines, email addresses and support from call handling and enquiry desks. There were systems in place to manage responses to telephone calls, voicemail and email within 24 hours. Effective force and local audit systems ensured a high level of compliance. **But** HMIC found that the force lacked an effective monitoring system for letters although the force was addressing this.

PLEDGE POINT 5

94.45% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds which was above the target level. Officers attended calls inside 10 minutes 94.7% of the time. Operators were able to provide estimated times of arrival (ETAs) and also negotiate a mutually agreeable response with the caller. Service recovery systems were in place where a response failed to meet an agreed time. The force had effective resource levels to meet demand.

PLEDGE POINT 6

94.4% of non-emergency calls were answered within 10 seconds which was above the target level. Officers attended calls inside 60 minutes 92.2% of the time. Staff had been trained to identify caller vulnerability and the command and control system provided information on local problems and priorities. Call handling staff were well placed to agree a response with the caller or to discuss issues over the telephone. Appointments within 48 hours were managed locally by the Customer Service Desks. Call handling staff were able to provide callers with information about services offered by other providers.

PLEDGE POINT 7

There were numerous publicised opportunities across the force for the public to meet NPTs. Venues and meeting times had been agreed with local communities. Working with other bodies, the force was supplementing its understanding of how to extend the reach and effectiveness of its contacts with different communities.

PLEDGE POINT 8

A broad range of information was provided on websites and in printed form including actions taken on locally agreed priorities and concerns that had arisen between meetings. Crime maps were available on the website and provided in hard copy at key locations on a monthly basis. The force was working with other agencies to determine the public's information preferences. HMIC found that the high profile media and marketing of what took place around the force, its successes and its improvements in performance were well received by members of the public.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Processes for staff to look after all victims, including 'vulnerable' and 'intimidated' victims, were in place, robustly monitored and managed. Specialist victim support and the use of dedicated units were provided in necessary cases. Victims were asked for feedback which was used to improve service delivery. HMIC found, from a small sample of victims, good levels of satisfaction with aspects of the service. The force provided all victims with regular updates for the first three months.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force had systems in place for handling complaints and responses were issued within 24 hours. The force operated a "Your Voice Counts" system that provided prompt responses to dissatisfaction with the service. The force was reviewing whether it captured all reports of dissatisfaction to ensure it could continue to improve its policies and practices. The internal systems were responsive and well managed. **But** HMIC reality checks found that the use of formal letters and the lack of personal contact left a small number of complainants dissatisfied with the process and/or the outcome of their complaint.

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.

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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