



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Northumbria 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
Northumbria 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Customers with physical difficulties were helped in a number of ways e.g. low counter heights. Police station enquiry office opening times were in line with public demand. The force also used premises such as schools to provide local access to services. The Pledge was translated into a number of languages other than English to reach a wider audience. A public survey with people who had contact with the force found that 83% felt they were treated with respect, whilst 73% agreed that they were treated fairly.

PLEDGE POINT 2

We found Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) details, including contact details, on display in all police stations and on the force website. Information was also provided in key locations within the community, such as libraries and community centres and through the use of Bluetooth and local radio. Police stations displayed opening hours and gave information on how to contact the police in case of an emergency/non-emergency and the nearest 24 hour station. Information was also provided in Braille. **But** work is on going to ensure issues identified by the community and the actions taken to resolve them are recorded.

PLEDGE POINT 3

NPT staff worked within their neighbourhoods and were visible on a day to day basis. Patrol plans directed NPT staff to focus on issues that had been identified as priorities by the community. Information about local communities was provided to staff, such as vulnerable areas and useful contacts. NPT officers were expected to remain in post for a minimum of two years. **But** the force did not know how often staff were removed from their local neighbourhoods to do other tasks. A number of NPT officers stated this happened regularly.

PLEDGE POINT 4

Detailed telephone, voicemail and email guidance ensured a response to messages from the NPTs within 24 hours. **But** the force did not track receipt of letters by post.

PLEDGE POINT 5

Performance was good and calls made to the force were checked for quality assurance. Callers could grade their calls as emergency or non-emergency, and were given an estimated time of arrival. **But** a significant number of call handlers were inexperienced and the force did not train and develop call handlers sufficiently.

PLEDGE POINT 6

Performance in this area was good. Staff were trained to recognise 'vulnerable' or 'upset' callers' needs and were given guidance on how to respond to these needs. Local priorities were clearly and easily accessible for call handlers. An appointments system was in place to suit the schedule of the caller. **But** the way incidents over 48 hours old were dealt with needed improvement.

PLEDGE POINT 7

A range of opportunities were set up for local communities to meet their NPT regularly. These included “Police and Communities Together” (PACT) meetings, surgeries, and “Cuppa with a Copper” events. Mobile police stations were set up in rural areas. Police action was linked to public priorities and the challenges that the local community faced. **But** the force could have used PACT meetings to ask the public about other ways to keep them informed. Areas to consider could have included the advertising, time and location of meetings and ways to keep in touch other than formal meetings.

PLEDGE POINT 8

The force asked communities what information they wanted and how the public wanted to receive this information. Crime maps were available on the force website. **But** the force needed to find ways of informing the public of what had happened to local offenders and the progress of work with partner agencies.

PLEDGE POINT 9

The force was committed to victim care and guidance set out how victims should be kept informed of progress regularly, according to their individual wishes. Guidance was provided for how to deal with ‘vulnerable’ or ‘intimidated’ victims. A small sample group of victims were interviewed during the inspection, and the majority were positive about the quality of service that the force had provided. **But** the force was still developing victim/customer contracts of care.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force had set a standard all members of staff should deliver. The force tried to deal with all dissatisfaction at the time of notification. **But** although dissatisfaction was responded to, the information was not captured and analysed so that lessons could be learned. Low level dissatisfaction was not recorded consistently.

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.

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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