



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Devon and Cornwall 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 Devon and Cornwall Constabulary 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 fair treatment and the Pledge in general was established in the force. Implementation of all ten Pledge points throughout the force was led by the Chief Constable and managed by a high level board. The Chief Constable also leads the police service in England and Wales on issues of race and diversity. **But** there was no force-wide approach to station opening times and accessibility or arrangements for people with disabilities.

PLEDGE POINT 2

Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) web pages were well constructed, informative, and invited comment and involvement. The use of techniques such as surgeries, meetings and feedback cards to engage the public was widespread. **But** dated technology meant that websites were not always up to date and they did not always show photographs of NPT members.

PLEDGE POINT 3

The force's policy was to ensure that NPT staff were not taken away from NPT duties for any more than 10% of their working time. There was a three year tenure for staff to ensure continuity of local knowledge. The force's "Policing Plan" articulated the desire to achieve a low abstraction rate. **But**, with the exception of one Basic Command Unit, the force did not measure performance against its 10% policy and was not able to identify accurately whether it was meeting the 80% level.

PLEDGE POINT 4

The force had a policy for answering phones, responding to messages, allocating responsibility for calls and responding within 24 hours. There was a single telephone number, group emails and contact forms making it easy for the public to contact NPTs. **But** there was no set standard for dealing with written correspondence and the force did not check that this Pledge point was being achieved.

PLEDGE POINT 5

Performance in answering emergency and non-emergency calls was high and the force had set itself improvement milestones. Supervisors and managers within the Call Management and Communication Unit (CMCU) had access to comprehensive live time performance data. **But** there was some lack of clarity among staff regarding priorities in relation to performance management and CMCU targets. CMCU staff at senior and junior levels needed to have a greater knowledge of the Policing Pledge.

PLEDGE POINT 6

The force's call handling performance met these requirements. The force had a policy of attending neighbourhood priority calls within 60 minutes and had increased the number of calls dealt with at the first point of contact. **But** call answering times and abandonment rates during peak periods meant service levels varied considerably and were reduced at certain times. Staff lacked an understanding of how to respond to vulnerable or upset victims.

PLEDGE POINT 7

There was widespread use of public meetings and local surgeries. Staff had been trained to solve problems and guidance had been provided to senior officers on how best to engage with the public. **But** the quality, depth, relevance and frequency of public meetings varied widely and some meetings had little direct public contribution.

PLEDGE POINT 8

There was high level monitoring of activity in this area, with senior officers taking an interest. NPT web pages reflected policing activity and how community needs were being responded to by the police and their partners. The force has implemented a helpful and informative crime mapping tool. **But** the force did not publicise the details of convicted offenders and the standard of NPT web pages was inconsistent.

PLEDGE POINT 9

The force kept victims regularly informed of progress. The force was due to roll out an initiative that was expected to further improve the service to victims. **But** the force did not systematically check that Pledge point 9 was being implemented. There was little evidence that they were agreeing with victims their preferred method and frequency for being updated.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The force routinely collates and analyses complaints of incivility and rudeness. A mapping tool was used to assist with the analysis. Customer facing staff had a good understanding of complaints procedures and the need for early resolution. **But** the force did not collate or manage details of dissatisfaction effectively. It could not quantify the extent of dissatisfaction. The force did not respond to public feedback (complaints or 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.

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.

GOOD



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This publication is printed
on 50% recycled paper

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

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