



Inspecting policing
in the public interest



DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE

Metropolitan Police Service

“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
Metropolitan Police Service 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) conducted a wide range of consultation to plan how they would communicate key Pledge messages. When we visited police stations the front counters were open when advertised and provided relevant and useful information about available services. There are teams to improve customer service both during initial contact and after a complaint has been made. Staff members who display a lack of respect to the public are identified and action is taken by their managers. Extensive research is being conducted to find out why Black Minority Ethnic (BME) service users are less satisfied with their experience than those who are white, which has led to targeted action aimed to correct the situation. **But** when we tried to contact Safer Neighbourhood Team officers through the switchboard most of the calls did not reach the right team. When we spoke to Neighbourhood Teams we found that their knowledge of their local communities and plans to engage with the public were of variable quality and some teams could be doing more to ask the public about their views.

PLEDGE POINT 2

The MPS refers to Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) as Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). Each SNT has a dedicated page on the MPS website listing the team members along with their address and telephone numbers (mobile and landline). The website has the facility to send an e-mail to each team. The MPS and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) have a joint community engagement strategy and there is evidence that the MPS are experimenting with new ways to engage with the community by targeting efforts at discrete communities. **But** at a local level the quality of plans to engage with the public is patchy. Most police stations visited by us had no information displayed about local SNTs and staff expressed concerns about their individual photographs being published.

PLEDGE POINT 3

The MPS targets SNT activity at the busiest areas during peak periods (both daytime and evening) to ensure that there is a credible police presence. Policies are in place to ensure that SNT officers are not used unnecessarily for other police work so that they can concentrate on local priorities. A "Presence" action plan has been created to look for new ways of working to improve public confidence (including a system to electronically monitor the location of officers to ensure appropriate geographical coverage). **But** boroughs have different policies in place to manage how long SNT officers stay in an area before changing roles which impacts upon consistency. The measure of how visible SNT officers are is based upon the length of time they spend at work, as opposed to the time spent patrolling on the street. Reducing paperwork is not seen as a key issue to getting more officers engaged in visible police work.

PLEDGE POINT 4

We found that there are various local systems to monitor timeliness of SNT response to email and voicemail and ensure a response is received within 24 hours. **But** our reality testing revealed that only 63% of email and 78% of telephone responses from SNTs were received within 24 hours. There is no corporate message tracking system or any automated system in place to reduce the amount of individual work needed to ensure that meaningful responses are sent on time.

PLEDGE POINT 5

The MPS has strong and visible leadership in this area which ensures that the quality of response to emergency calls is improving and that operators both gather and supply relevant information in a timely manner. Performance is monitored using the National Call Handling Standards. **But** the separation between the Central Communications Command (managing demand) and boroughs (managing resources) creates artificially extended lines of communication between the police and the public. Current systems do not adequately allow for the provision of reliable Estimated Times of Arrival (ETA). 999 calls are answered within 10 seconds 87.1% of the time against a target of 90% and police only arrive within 12 minutes 70.5% of the time (June 2009) against a target of 75%.

PLEDGE POINT 6

We found the introduction of Confidence and Satisfaction Teams at call centres has improved early contact between police and public and reduced the number of 'police not yet arrived' calls. **But** systems are unable to identify or classify 'upset' callers and there was a lack of guidance in the assessment of 'vulnerability' of a caller which is left to personal interpretation by call operators. Calls were generally not identified as linked to local priorities at the time of receipt. There was no corporate appointments system or policy on how non-emergency calls will be responded to, leading to inconsistent response times across the force.

PLEDGE POINT 7

We found SNT staff taking ownership of local priorities, acting on them and personally reporting results of their action back to ward panels. Innovative methods have also been tried to increase attendance at a range of public meetings. **But** panel meetings were generally held only for invited representatives of community groups, are not publicly displayed at meeting locations and those present at ward meetings were not representative of the demographic of the local community.

PLEDGE POINT 8

The MPS have created a publicly accessible crime mapping system, which now includes anti-social behaviour, accessible through their website. **But** panel meetings were found to have set their own preference on frequency and content of meetings without reference to Policing Pledge commitments. Generally, monthly meetings had not been adopted by choice. Meetings are not used to communicate wider policing messages and showed a wide variation in the quality of SNT input.

PLEDGE POINT 9

Systems are in place to support compliance with the "Victims' Code of Practice", which is monitored by first line supervisors and locally quality assured. There was a wide availability of 'victim support packs'. A survey is conducted with families of murder victims to ensure the highest level of service and allow Family Liaison Officers to learn and develop and better understand the needs of families. Victims of residential burglary also receive a premium service with initial attendance and investigation by a police officer supported by crime scene examination within four hours and a follow up visit by SNT staff, which has impacted upon satisfaction locally. **But** local practice varies with regard to reassurance visits by SNT staff and with the response to non-emergency calls and only certain crime categories were receiving a premium service.

PLEDGE POINT 10

The MPS has a Customer Service Unit (CSU) which deals with general queries from the public received through a variety of routes, including the MPS website. Local procedures are in place to speak to victims and assess their level of satisfaction. A similar service is provided at the Central Communications Command which deals with people who are dissatisfied with the initial response to their call. **But** areas that commonly lead to dissatisfaction are not routinely identified, missing the opportunity to improve service in these areas. There was little evidence of a service-wide approach to addressing dissatisfaction and ensuring that a culture exists to improve the service provided to those who are dissatisfied. Staff members were confused between the formal complaint response and those simply expressing their dissatisfaction at the service provided. There is no corporate model for local management of service dissatisfaction.

WHAT THE MPS IS DOING TO IMPROVE ITS PLEDGE STANDARDS:

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:

Surveys and management meetings were being used to improve performance; public satisfaction and confidence data were taken into account.

The force had identified deficiencies in its delivery of the Pledge and was taking action in those areas.

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.

HMIC GRADING

FAIR

GOOD

GOOD



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

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

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