



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest



## **DELIVERING THE POLICING PLEDGE**

Cambridgeshire 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  
Cambridgeshire 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.

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.

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

1,100 residents had been interviewed to determine police station access requirements. Assistance was provided to customers with physical disabilities, hearing difficulties and those whose first language was not English. For example, automatic opening doors, portable amplifiers and a telephone-based interpreting service. Pledge posters were produced in the ten most commonly spoken languages and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who speak a second language are actively recruited. **But** front counters were not adequately resourced, with some police stations not open as advertised. Opening times do not reflect customer needs. It is unclear what level of engagement has been achieved with the hearing impaired community.

### PLEDGE POINT 2

Photographs of all Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) members were displayed on the internet with email contact addresses. Each team published a local Policing Pledge which included the National Pledge in full, a team photograph, contact numbers and web addresses. **But** there was limited evidence of NPT posters displayed in public places in the community such as shops and doctors' surgeries. Key force plans on community engagement were in draft only and had not been agreed.

### PLEDGE POINT 3

Some officers had been in post for 12 months or longer and PCSOs must complete a minimum 12 months before being eligible to apply to be a constable, to ensure continuity of relationships with the neighbourhood. **But** some NPTs expressed concerns about high levels of staff turnover, particularly among sergeants. A new policy to monitor the time NPTs spend in their neighbourhoods only records when staff are removed for a whole duty. This does not reflect how often NPTs are taken away for other duties and many do not complete monitoring records which makes the data unreliable.

### PLEDGE POINT 4

All phone calls to NPTs were either answered immediately or voicemail messages were returned within 4 hours. **But** of 17 letters sent to NPTs only 4 responses were received within 24 hours (23%) and of 20 emails sent to NPTs only 2 were responded to the same day. 8 were acknowledged immediately by an automated message but did not indicate when further contact would be made by the NPT or refer to the Pledge commitment to respond in 24 hours.

### PLEDGE POINT 5

Local monitoring shows 91% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds with a force target to answer 90% within 10 seconds. When compared to other similar forces on public satisfaction for ease of contact in 2008, the force was best, which may be attributed to the "Putting People First" programme and the police service call centre. In April 2009, 78% of emergency urban calls were attended within the 15 minute target and 77% of rural calls were attended within the 20 minute target. **But** there is room to improve the percentage of emergency calls attended within the target times.

### PLEDGE POINT 6

Clear guidance had been provided to control room staff on what was meant by 'vulnerable' and 'upset' and there were instructions that estimated time of arrival must be given to callers. Instruction was also provided on how to handle calls that feature neighbourhood priorities. An appointments system was in place with dedicated staff ensuring commitments were kept. **But** local monitoring showed that just over half of those incidents relating to neighbourhood priorities or where callers were 'vulnerable' or 'upset', were attended to within 60 minutes and estimated time of arrival was not routinely given to callers.

### PLEDGE POINT 7

Monthly public meetings are published on the force website, posters and in the local newspaper or through “e-Cops”, which is an on-line system for the public whereby 15,000 people have registered to receive neighbourhood updates. PCSOs also give postcards to members of the community explaining how they are able to ‘have their say’, with a space to record their top three neighbourhood concerns. **But** the quality of neighbourhood meetings is inconsistent; one meeting visited was very good while another was poor. Meetings are held on weekday evenings which do not meet the needs of all the community, and in some areas there are problems holding full neighbourhood meetings monthly.

### PLEDGE POINT 8

The force website has the national crime mapping which although current does not provide information on how offenders are dealt with, however the “Safer Peterborough Partnership” is developing this area of work under the “Community Pay Back” scheme. **But** a facility to download local crime information from the website with names and addresses removed can unintentionally identify some victims, particularly those in isolated locations where there are fewer houses or businesses. Of 30 crimes examined only one victim had been told information would appear on the internet.

### PLEDGE POINT 9

NPTs understood the importance of keeping victims informed and asking how often and by what method they wanted to be kept updated. The Criminal Investigation Department also had a member of staff to manage all victim contact which helped promote consistency. **But** details of how often victims wish to be updated, and how the update should be given, were not routinely recorded and victims’ wishes were shown in general terms rather than specific needs. Victim care arrangements were recorded in different places on the crime recording system.

### PLEDGE POINT 10

Complaints made via the force website and voicemail were monitored outside office hours. Language experts worked with the Roads Policing Unit and other operational units to improve customer service and this, combined with other measures, has helped reduce complaints of incivility by 25% over the last 12 months. **But** reports of dissatisfaction were not routinely responded to within 24 hours. Dissatisfaction and low level complaints were not monitored and analysed for trends about individual officers, victims or hotspots and learning was not co-ordinated or communicated to the rest of the force.

## 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.

FAIR



**50% recycled**  
This publication is printed  
on 50% recycled paper

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

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary  
Ashley House  
2 Monck Street  
London SW1P 2BQ

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

Published in October 2009.

Printed by the Central Office of Information.

© Crown copyright 2009

ISBN: 978-1-84987-027-6

Ref: 297705