

# Quality of service

Our commitment to you



BRITISH  
TRANSPORT  
POLICE



# The quality of service commitment

## Background

The Quality of Service Commitment sets the standards that the public can expect when interacting with the police. The commitment was developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office, in agreement with the Association of Police Authorities.

All police forces in England and Wales were expected to be compliant by November 2006. Police forces in Scotland are not covered by this Home Office initiative, however, to best reflect the national operation of British Transport Police (BTP) we have extended our service commitment to integrate details of the legal system and support services available in Scotland.

## Quality of service: Our commitment to you

This publication outlines our commitment to provide excellent customer service to you.

There are 47 specific commitments and, wherever possible, we have provided details of outside sources for additional information and help.

We will continually revisit this publication to include new developments and to ensure it is an accurate reflection of who we are and what we do.

You can obtain a copy of Quality of Service: Our Commitment to You or any other publication we mention by visiting our website [www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk) or contacting us at the details below:

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# Quality of service

We deal with a wide range of enquiries; some are straightforward and can be resolved immediately over the telephone, at a police station or through other contact points. Others, however, may need further investigation or the benefit of specialist knowledge or expertise before they can be resolved.

We take pride in providing the highest possible quality of service to you regardless of why or how you have made contact with us. We are committed to providing a service that responds professionally and appropriately to your particular needs.

## So what level of service can you expect when you have contact with British Transport Police?

We strive to provide the best possible service to you by:

- A. Making it easy to contact us:** Providing accessible and responsive services
- B. Providing a professional and high quality service:** Providing appropriate help and advice
- C. Dealing with your initial enquiry:** Taking appropriate steps to deal with your enquiry
- D. Keeping you informed:** Providing contact details and updates
- E. Ensuring your voice counts:** You can have a say in how your local area is policed
- F. Dealing effectively with victims of crime:** Providing support for victims
- G. Listening and responding to your concerns and complaints:** Working to improve our services
- H. Dealing with Freedom of Information requests:** Responding appropriately to requests for information.

# A. Making it easy to contact us

We are committed to ensuring that our services are accessible and responsive to both your individual needs and the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

## 1. We provide equality of access to services and information:

- we ensure that our crime advice leaflets are clear and easy to understand. Documents which relate to Wales are also available in Welsh
- a summary of our Race Equality Scheme is available in 12 languages
- our Disability Equality Scheme is available upon request in various formats including Braille and large print
- we provide a range of support services to assist witnesses and victims when required to attend court
- we have installed mini-com machines in our incident control rooms for members of the deaf community and people with hearing impairments
- we are working towards our website being compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Please note Language Line services offer translations for any interaction you have with public services, for a fee. The website can be accessed at [www.languageline.co.uk](http://www.languageline.co.uk).

## 2. We provide a range of ways to access our services that address the needs of our users:

- in an emergency contact is via the 999 system
- we provide a single non-emergency telephone number: 0800 40 50 40
- we provide a mini-com service for the deaf community and people with hearing impairments
- we offer an online reporting facility for non-urgent minor crimes via our website
- we reply to all letters and provide contact details of a named person.

## 3. We consult with those who use our services and the local community to find out what is important to them:

- we conduct consultation exercises such as the Victims of Crime Survey, online consultation and citizens' panels. We also include questions in Passenger Focus' National Passenger Survey
- we engage with the community through local consultative groups, public meetings and through Neighbourhood Policing Schemes
- we participate in other local forums, where a direct benefit to policing the railways is identified
- we hold forums on the use of Section 44 Terrorism Act Stop and Search powers, attended by representatives from a wide range of faith, disability and other community groups. The purpose of these forums is to improve understanding of the use of these powers and to elicit feedback for improvements.

You will find information about our current community activities on our webpage 'BTP in the Community' [www.btp.police.uk/community](http://www.btp.police.uk/community).

**4. We provide a range of information dedicated to areas of services that you have told us are important to you:**

- we publish annual performance plans including the Strategic Plan, the Policing Plan and the Annual Report. Copies of these documents are available on our website [www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk) or by writing to our Headquarters at the address stated at the beginning of this document
- we publish annual Area Policing Plans, containing local targets and performance figures
- we publish detailed management information monthly on our website
- we are developing a secure extranet site, to allow Train Operating Companies access to real-time crime figures and other relevant information.

**5. We publicise details of how you can access British Transport Police services:**

- we provide information about how to contact us on our website
- we provide the addresses and contact telephone numbers of all our police stations on our website
- we provide details of how to contact us in all of the documents we produce, such as our Annual Report
- we publicise when to use the 999 system and the non-emergency number 0800 40 50 40.

## B. Providing a professional and high quality service

We aim to be professional in all that we do, and are continually striving to provide the best possible service to our railway community and the travelling public.

We are committed to responding to your needs by providing you with appropriate help and advice. We will take all your concerns seriously and explain what will be done to address them.

### 6. We act with integrity and treat everyone we deal with fairly:

- we deal with all complaints fairly and transparently
- to reflect their seriousness, we record and investigate all hate crime incidents
- our police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are trained to use Stop & Search powers fairly and with integrity
- we seek critical advice from our Independent Advisory Network which helps us to challenge issues of inequality affecting the diverse communities of Greater London. We also have a national Independent Advisory Group.

### 7. We treat everyone politely and with respect:

- we ensure that our customers are treated politely and with respect. We monitor satisfaction levels through monthly analysis of the Victims of Crime Survey
- all our officers are equipped with the skills and awareness to interact effectively with the diverse communities we serve
- we treat everyone fairly and have a Diversity Strategy that promotes equal opportunities in all that we do
- we respect and protect your human rights.

### 8. We take your concerns seriously and explain what we are doing to address them, including whether or not we are taking action, and why:

- at all times we will strive to resolve your concerns at the first point of contact
- we acknowledge your concerns through local consultative groups and surveys
- we always respond to your letters and emails
- we refer complaints to our Professional Standards Department and, if required, to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

### 9. We provide you with the help you need:

- we provide a police response for the railway community and the travelling public and work closely with Home Office police forces
- we provide a highly visible policing service on the railway network to detect and deter crime; our police officers are supported by PCSOs
- we provide crime prevention, crime reduction and community safety advice to the railway industry and the travelling public.

# C. Dealing with your initial enquiry

We always give priority to emergencies, however, whatever the reason for making contact with us, we will ensure that we take the appropriate steps to deal with your enquiry as soon as possible. For example, we will explain how we are going to deal with your query and provide you with a reference number or details of a single point of contact.

## 10. We ensure that we properly understand your request:

- we aim to understand and deal with your request for assistance at your first point of contact with us; whether through our Incident Control Rooms or officers on patrol
- we have access to professional interpreters to help us communicate with all members of the public
- we have specialist trained staff available to help vulnerable people.

## 11. We explain how we are going to deal with your enquiry:

- in response to a letter of enquiry or complaint, we will reply with details of how we intend to deal with the matter
- when you report a crime, our correspondence will explain each stage of an enquiry
- if you are going to be a witness in court we will provide a nationally distributed court service booklet which explains the court process.

## 12. Whenever possible, we provide you with a reference number:

- when you report a crime to us we will give you a unique crime reference number
- when you report an incident to us we will allocate a unique incident reference number to you

- if you make a complaint against the police we will give you a unique complaint reference number
- if you report a crime, our Crime Recording Centre will send you an initial letter with the contact address and telephone number of the Crime Management Unit in the area the crime was committed.

## 13. Where your enquiry requires specialist knowledge or expertise, we transfer you to the appropriate person or department for your enquiry:

- our Incident Control Rooms try to ensure that you are directed to the appropriate person or department at first point of contact.

## 14. If the appropriate person is not on duty, a message is taken and you will be made aware of the likely length of time before you are contacted:

- whenever possible, our contact staff will take a message and will ask the person you need to speak with to contact you at the earliest opportunity.

## 15. If it is necessary for a police officer or member of staff to visit you but the arranged appointment cannot be kept, we will inform you at the earliest opportunity:

- our aim is to keep the need to cancel or rearrange appointments to a minimum, but unforeseen incidents of a higher priority will take precedence. We will explain to you what has led us to need to change the appointment.

## 16. If your enquiry does not fall within our jurisdiction, we will direct you to an organisation that can assist you:

- if your enquiry relates to issues that fall under the responsibility of the local Home Office police force, a train operating company or the local authority, we will provide you with a telephone number so you can contact them.

## D. Keeping you informed

We recognise the importance of being kept up to date on the progress of your enquiry. We will provide you with the relevant contact details for the individuals who are leading on your case as well as update you on the status of your case at a mutually convenient time.

We will contact you monthly to let you know whether we are still investigating your case. If we are no longer investigating the matter we will explain the reason for that decision.

Information on your right to be kept informed under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime is available at:

[www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim/coming\\_forward/your\\_rights/](http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim/coming_forward/your_rights/)

### **17. We provide you with the details necessary to be able to talk to someone about your enquiry:**

- in most cases this is a reference number and the name and contact details of the person dealing with your enquiry.

### **18. We update you about your enquiry at a mutually convenient time:**

- we take note of your preferred means of contact
- whenever possible, telephone contact with you will be made at a prearranged or appropriate time of the day, normally between 9am and 5pm.

### **19. We take your concerns about confidentiality seriously:**

- we comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts
- we have Data Protection Act information sharing protocols in place to share relevant details with other Criminal Justice Agencies, which are compliant with the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act
- if you make a statement of evidence we will fully explain the Victim Personal Statement Scheme, including disclosure issues.

### **20. We contact you monthly to let you know whether we are still investigating your case:**

- we advise you monthly on the status of your case. If we are no longer investigating your case we will explain the reasons for that decision.

## E. Ensuring your voice counts

There are a number of ways you can have a say in how your local rail network is policed. We want your help in tackling crime and disorder on the railways. We are committed to listening to what you have to say to help us improve our service to you. We seek feedback in a range of ways and we also publish regular updates about what is being done to improve services.

We have successfully trialled a citizens' panel in our North Western Area and we intend to run additional panels in 2007/08.

### **21. We consult with the public through a wide variety of ways and we publicise these locally:**

- British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) meetings are open to the public
- membership of the BTPA includes representatives with knowledge and experience of passenger interests, through whom members of the public can raise issues if they do not wish to approach us directly; rail staff and train operators can also raise issues via the rail industry representatives on the BTPA
- we have an email facility on our website where you can contact us with any general enquiry you may have.

### **22. We respond to letters and emails from you within a given timescale:**

- we aim to respond to letters within 10 working days; if we are unable to respond within 10 working days we will endeavour to write acknowledging the correspondence and provide you with a deadline as to when we expect to be able to provide a full response.

### **23. We publish regular updates about what we are doing to improve our services as a result of feedback received:**

- we regularly publish improvements to our services via our website
- we provide details of service updates to the public at BTPA meetings
- we provide information about service improvements through media articles
- we publish an annual Policing Plan and the Chief Constable's Annual Report.

## F. Dealing effectively with victims of crime

We understand that becoming a victim of crime can be a very distressing experience which can affect you in a variety of ways. To assist, we put you in contact with Victim Support (unless requested otherwise) when you report your crime to us. We also provide you with regular updates during our investigation into your case. We inform you when a suspect has been arrested, charged, or bailed, notifying you of their bail conditions and details of our decision regarding the case. We also assign a family liaison officer to the families of murder or manslaughter victims and other cases where we feel this is appropriate.

We will comply with the specific commitments under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. To access the Code of Practice go to:

[www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim/coming\\_forward/your\\_rights/](http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk/victim/coming_forward/your_rights/)

The following additional resources may also be useful:

### **Victim Support**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

### **Criminal Cases Review Commission**

[www.ccrcc.gov.uk](http://www.ccrcc.gov.uk)

### **Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority**

[www.cica.gov.uk](http://www.cica.gov.uk)

### **Crown Prosecution Service**

[www.cps.gov.uk](http://www.cps.gov.uk)

### **Her Majesty's Courts Service**

[www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk](http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk)

We take all reasonable steps to identify vulnerable or intimidated victims and offer them an enhanced service in order to meet their individual needs.

### **24. After reporting a crime to us, we provide you with a 'Victim of Crime' leaflet. Other crime prevention leaflets relating to car crime, cycle theft and personal safety are also available:**

- when you report a crime you will receive a letter confirming the crime reference number and crime information leaflet
- when you give a statement of evidence you will be given a leaflet entitled 'Giving a witness statement to the police – what happens next?' This explains what happens to the statement and provides details of who to contact if you would like to know more about the case or the criminal justice system in general. You will also be given a leaflet outlining the Victim Personal Statement Scheme; if you wish, you can provide a Victim Personal Statement.

### **25. We refer your details to Victim Support within two days, unless requested otherwise:**

- all callers reporting crime to our Crime Recording Centre will have the Victim Support Scheme and the circumstances of automatic referral explained to them. If the caller does not want to be referred to the Victim Support Scheme, the crime report is updated accordingly.

**26. We keep you informed of the progress of the investigation including: the arrest, caution, reprimand, warning, charge, release on bail and court proceedings:**

- the officer dealing with your case will notify you if anyone is charged, cautioned, warned or reprimanded. If bail conditions are imposed, you will also be made aware
- the Witness Care Officers will contact you after court if there are any changes to custody status or if bail conditions are imposed
- if you are required to attend court you will be notified of the court date and venue; the Witness Service will provide support when you attend court
- if you were a victim of crime we will notify you of the result of the case.

**27. We ask the court for special measures to be granted where appropriate to assist you in giving evidence in court:**

- we will apply to the Crown Prosecution Service (Procurator Fiscal, in Scotland), who will apply to the Court for any special measures that a young, vulnerable or intimidated witness may need to attend court.

**28. When relevant, we give you the opportunity to make a Victim's Personal Statement:**

- the Victim's Personal Statement gives you the chance to tell the criminal justice agencies dealing with your case how the crime has affected you – physically, emotionally, psychologically, financially, or in any other way.

**29. We identify and support vulnerable victims and children:**

- upon request from a vulnerable victim, or in the case of a child by a parent, guardian or caregiver, our Witness Care Units will refer to outside agencies to assist the witness through the experience of appearing in court.

## G. Listening and responding to your concerns and complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service you receive from us, we are committed to listening to your concerns and complaints so that we can improve on this in future.

Details of our complaints procedure including an online complaint form are available on our website at [www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk).

There are two broad types of complaint that you can make:

- a complaint regarding how BTP is directed and controlled – a quality of service or operational policing issue
- a complaint against the conduct of a BTP officer (or officers), a PCSO or a member of police staff.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is the organisation in England and Wales that has overall responsibility for the system of complaints made against the police in cases of misconduct. The IPCC website can be accessed at [www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk).

If you feel that as a victim of crime, we have not delivered an appropriate level of service in relation to our obligations under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, you should ask for a leaflet explaining how to make a complaint. Once you have made your complaint, you will receive a response by letter within 10 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may refer the issue to the IPCC or, through a Member of Parliament, to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for consideration. Information on how to make a complaint via the Parliamentary Ombudsman is available at [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).

In Scotland, all complaints against the police that infer criminality are reported to the Area Procurator Fiscal, part of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. Their website can be accessed at [www.crownoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crownoffice.gov.uk).

The Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland (PCCS) is responsible for overseeing all non-criminal allegations against police officers and police staff, both on and off duty, including complaints about quality of service. The PCCS website can be accessed at [www.pcc-scotland.org/home.aspx](http://www.pcc-scotland.org/home.aspx).

## Complaints Policy:

### **30. We record complaints, investigate and respond to you as appropriate:**

- we will acknowledge your complaint made by the online complaint form within 5 working days and by letter within 10 days
- we will record all direction and control matters in a register maintained by the Professional Standards Department
- we will notify you of our findings in detail by letter.

### **31. With your agreement, we attempt local resolution whenever possible:**

- our senior officers are authorised and encouraged to resolve issues whenever possible at a local level.

### **32. We are as open and transparent as the maintenance of effective policing allows:**

- we provide an accessible complaint system
- we comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- our response letter will notify you of our finding and provide as much detail as possible.

### **33. We provide you with the opportunity to seek further information if you are not content with the initial response:**

- if you are not content with our initial response we will advise you of a member of the organisation that can assist you further.

### **34. We investigate complaints appropriately:**

- the Head of our Professional Standards Department maintains an overview of all complaints, monitors the investigations and provides direction and guidance to ensure consistency across BTP.

### **35. We use the information gathered from your concerns and complaints to develop future policy and increase our understanding of the communities we serve:**

- our Professional Standards Department provides our chief officers with regular feedback using the results of complaints to improve quality and good practice.

### **36. We use this process to increase our understanding of how you wish to be treated:**

- we distribute the management information gained from our understanding of your complaints to each of our policing areas; this helps to better target area resources to citizen focused policing
- our Professional Standards Department maintains an overview of all complaints and their resolution and directs changes to force policy where appropriate.

### **37. We adhere to the values and guidance of the IPCC and the PCCS:**

- we follow the guidance set by the IPCC (PCSS in Scotland) on dealing with complaints
- if you are not satisfied with the result of your complaint there is an appeals process set by both the IPCC and PCCS which you can follow.

## Handling your Complaint:

### 38. We demonstrate police accountability:

- we provide an open and accessible complaint system under the guardianship of the IPCC and PCCS
- the IPCC and PCCS provide an appeals process for all complaints
- BTPA's Professional Standards sub-committee has the function of monitoring the work of our Professional Standards Department.

### 39. We work to improve our standards:

- the Professional Standards Department routinely feeds back lessons learned as a result of their investigations to managers and staff to help improve standards and service delivery
- any officer or member of our police staff whose performance as a result of a complaint investigation is identified as being below standard will be referred to their Area Commander to decide upon the appropriate action to be taken.

### 40. We are responsive to the needs of the complainant:

- our Professional Standards Department will provide the complainant with regular updates on the progress of the investigation
- at the end of the investigation, we will provide the complainant with a detailed account of the investigating officer's findings.

### 41. At all times our investigations are just and proportionate:

- our investigations are always proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint
- we approach investigations with an open mind and investigate impartially.

### 42. We are timely and effective in completing investigations:

- we will work towards a national standard of completing all investigations within 120 days from the date a complaint is made
- complicated investigations may take longer, but the majority of all our investigations are concluded within 120 days.

### 43. Investigated cases will be open to public scrutiny:

- we will explain to every complainant their right of appeal to the IPCC and PCCS for every complaint
- in serious cases of misconduct where criminal acts have been alleged, the matter will be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service or the Area Procurator Fiscal in Scotland
- the IPCC and PCCS review investigated cases when required
- the BTPA Professional Standards Sub-Committee acts on behalf of the public to monitor complaints.

### 44. We aim to increase public confidence in our ability to deal effectively with your concerns:

- we continually examine our lessons learned from complaints to identify further training needs and improvements
- we share the IPCC's commitment to tackling discrimination in the police service
- the IPCC reports annually on our effectiveness in dealing with your complaints.

# H. Freedom of information

We are committed to complying with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, we:

- respond to any appropriate request for personal information within 40 calendar days
- respond to requests for any other information within 20 working days
- ensure that any information on our website is accurate and kept under review.

For further details about the right to access our information, please go to our website at [www.btp.police.uk](http://www.btp.police.uk).

## **45. We respond in a timely matter to initial requests:**

- in line with the Data Protection Act, we will deal with your requests within 40 calendar days.

## **46. We respond to any request for further information:**

- in line with the Freedom of Information Act, requests for further information will be dealt with within 20 working days.

## **47. We ensure our website is kept up to date and accurate:**

- our website is regularly reviewed for accuracy
- we publish regular news items and media releases.

