



Quality of Service Commitment - Thames Valley Police Contact with the Public

Thames Valley Police deal with a wide range of enquiries from the public. Some are straightforward and can be resolved immediately over the telephone, at a police station or through other contact points. Others need further investigation or the benefit of specialist knowledge or expertise before they can be resolved.

This document tells you what our commitments to you are when you make contact to report a crime or incident and tells you how to get in touch if you want to provide us with feedback about our service or are not satisfied with our response to you.

Our Service Commitments to You

We aim to meet service commitments in the following areas:

- ❖ Making it easy to contact us
- ❖ Providing a professional and high quality service
- ❖ Dealing with your initial contact
- ❖ Keeping you informed
- ❖ Ensuring your voice counts
- ❖ Victims of Crime

These are explained in more detail below.

Making it easy to contact us

We are committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to the public and responsive to individual, community and business needs.

We will:

- ❖ provide equality of access to services and information
- ❖ provide a range of ways to access our services that address the needs of users
- ❖ consult with those who use our services and the local community about what is important to them and publish specific local commitments
- ❖ provide a range of information that focuses on areas of service that you have told us are important to you, ensuring the information is easy to understand
- ❖ widely publicise the details of how you can access police services in your local area

This will include:

- ❖ The location and opening times of police stations and other contact points
- ❖ Other ways that you can contact us or obtain advice and information, such as web sites, surgeries or public meetings
- ❖ The name of the officer who is responsible for policing in your area
- ❖ When you should call 999 for emergencies
- ❖ The arrangements for contacting the police for non-emergencies
- ❖ The arrangements for how to report a crime or incident

Providing a professional and high quality service

Our staff aim to provide a thorough and professional service, whatever the reason for your contact with us.

We will:

- ❖ act with integrity and treat everyone we deal with fairly and openly
- ❖ treat you politely and with respect



- ❖ take your concerns seriously and explain what we are doing to address them, including whether or not we are taking action, and why
- ❖ provide you the help and advice you need

Dealing with your initial enquiry

We will always give priority to emergencies; however we recognise that you may wish to contact us for many different reasons.

Whenever you contact us we will:

- ❖ ensure that we properly understand what you are telling us
- ❖ explain how we are going to deal with your enquiry
- ❖ wherever possible provide you with a reference number
- ❖ where your enquiry requires specialist knowledge or expertise, transfer you to the appropriate named person or department for your enquiry.
- ❖ where the appropriate person is not on duty and we cannot connect you, tell you of the delay and give you the opportunity to leave a message. You will be made aware of the likely length of time it will be before someone will respond to your message.
- ❖ if your enquiry is not an emergency but does require a police officer or other member of staff to visit you, arrange a suitable time with you. If something changes and we cannot keep to the arrangement we have made we will inform you at the earliest opportunity.
- ❖ If your enquiry is about something that the police cannot deal with, tell you if there is another organisation that can help you and if so, how to get in touch with them.

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 details necessary for you to be able to talk to someone about your enquiry. In most cases this will be a reference number and the name and contact details of the person dealing with your enquiry
- ❖ update you at a mutually convenient time and in an agreed way
- ❖ take into account any concerns you may have about confidentiality
- ❖ If we have not already been in touch with you, contact you monthly (consistent with the requirement of the Victims' Code of practice) to let you know whether we are still actively investigating your case and when we will review that decision. If we are not investigating we will explain the reasons for that decision.

Your voice counts

We are committed to listening to what you have to say and in order to help us improve the service we provide we want to know your views.

We will:

- ❖ provide a range of ways in which you can let us know your views and widely publicise these locally
- ❖ respond to you within 10 working days when requested
- ❖ publish regular updates about what we are doing to improve our services as a result of views received



Victims of Crime

If you are in contact with us because you have been a victim of crime we will comply with the specific commitments under the Victims' Code of Practice.

We will:

- ❖ identify and support vulnerable victims and children
- ❖ provide you with a Victims of Crime leaflet (and other relevant leaflets depending on the nature of your case)
- ❖ Unless you ask us not to do so, pass your details to Victim Support within 2 days¹
- ❖ keep you informed of the progress of the investigation, including arrest, caution reprimand, warning, charge, release on bail and court proceedings
- ❖ with your consent pass your details on to other organisations which are involved in your case

Other service commitments

In addition to the commitments outlined above, a range of other formal mechanisms also governs how we interact with you and the level of service that we must provide.

These include the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act.

Freedom of Information

We are committed to complying with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

- ❖ In respect of issues relating to these Acts we will:
- ❖ respond to any appropriate request for personal information within 40 calendar days
- ❖ respond to any request for any other information within 20 working days
- ❖ ensure that any information on our websites is accurate and kept under review

Complaints

We are committed to listening and responding to your concerns and complaints.

If you are dissatisfied with the service you receive, your dissatisfaction may be about:-

- ❖ The **direction and control** of a police force, e.g. policies, allocation of resources across geographic areas, etc. or
- ❖ The **inappropriate conduct** of any individual serving with the police or
- ❖ A failure to deliver services in accordance with the **Victims' Code**

If your complaint concerns the **Direction and Control** of Thames Valley Police it can be reported to the Quality of Service Dept. Thames Valley Police, your local Police Commander or the Police Authority and

We will:-

Record, investigate and respond to you as appropriate;

- ❖ be as open and transparent as the maintenance of effective policing will allow;

¹ The police should only pass Victim Support the details of victims of sexual offences or domestic violence or the details of the relatives of homicide victims if the victims or relatives have given their explicit consent. The police will not routinely pass on details of victims of theft of/from a motor vehicle, minor criminal damage or tampering with motor vehicles, however aggravating factors such as repeat victimisation, victim request for contact, vulnerable victims or hate crime victims will ensure referral to victim Support.



- ❖ set local standards for the timeliness of our response, the information to be supplied to you and the opportunity available to you to seek further information if you are not content with the initial response.²
- ❖ use this information to inform the development of future local policy and practice.
- ❖ use this information to increase our understanding of how you wish to be treated

If your complaint concerns **the inappropriate conduct of any individual serving with the police** it can be reported to the Professional Standards Dept. Thames Valley Police, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) or through the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The IPCC is the organisation which oversees the system for dealing with a complaint about inappropriate conduct. The role of the IPCC is to ensure that complaints are handled in an open, efficient and fair way.

In relation to a complaint about inappropriate conduct,

We will:-

- ❖ whenever possible and with your agreement, attempt local resolution
- ❖ investigate the complaint appropriately
- ❖ adhere to the values and guidance of the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

If your complaint is about failure to deliver services in the **Victims' Code**, it should be reported to Thames Valley Police. If you are not satisfied with the response we give you, you have a right of further complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration whose job is to enforce the Code

In the case of any complaint made to us

We will:

- ❖ demonstrate police accountability
- ❖ operate to improve standards
- ❖ be responsive to the needs of the complainant
- ❖ be just and proportionate
- ❖ be timely and effective
- ❖ be open to public scrutiny and sensitive to the public interest
- ❖ increase public confidence in our ability to deal effectively with your concerns and complaints

We will keep these commitments under review and in laying out our commitments to provide quality services to you, we hope you will be reassured enough to have complete confidence in Thames Valley Police.

² Guidance on the Registering, Handling and Monitoring of Complaints which relate to Direction and Control Issued under Section 14(2) Police Reform Act 2002 by Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers, endorsed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Home Office.