

POLICE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS 2006/07: A Short Guide

Which police forces have been assessed?

All regular police forces in England and Wales (43 in total). Special police forces such as the British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police have not been assessed.

Who has carried out the assessment?

The Home Office (Police and Crime Standards Directorate) jointly with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) with advice and support from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

What period has been assessed?

Assessments are based on a combination of data for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 and HMIC assessments based on inspections undertaken in 2006 and 2007.

Why have forces been assessed?

Assessment is a core component of performance management. Improving performance management helps improve performance by highlighting strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that a better service is delivered to the public.

What are the benefits of assessment?

Public services should meet the needs of users. The assessments reflect this aim by focusing on the 'end results' delivered by police forces (with partners) so that:

- local people and communities have information about the quality of local policing;
- police forces can manage and improve their own performance;
- police authorities can monitor local delivery and improvement;
- good practice can be identified and shared;
- problems can be addressed.

What has been assessed?

For each force, twenty-seven 'performance indicators' have been assessed, along with six inspection areas from HMIC and a selection of indicators reflecting priorities selected by each force. A small number of inspection results from 2006 have also been included. Assessments of these components are then aggregated to form an assessment of seven key performance areas: Tackling Crime; Serious Crime and Public Protection; Protecting Vulnerable People; Satisfaction and Fairness; Implementation of Neighbourhood Policing; Local Priorities; and Resources and Efficiency.

(continued)

What assessments are made?

Two types of assessment are made. The first assessment concerns the performance delivered by a force over the last year (2006/07). Typically, this judgement is made by comparing the performance achieved by a force to that achieved by a group of similar forces (peers) in the first year of assessment (2004/05). Police forces are not identical but this 'like-for-like' comparison helps identify any forces which are performing better or worse relative to their peers. HMIC inspections are conducted against set national standards.

For each performance area, four 'delivery' grades are possible:

- *excellent* - if a force performs significantly better than its peers;
- *good* - if a force performs better than its peers;
- *fair* - if force performance is similar to its peers; and
- *poor* - if a force performs much worse than its peers.

A second assessment is made on direction by comparing the performance of a force in one year to that achieved by the same force in the previous year (in this case 2006/07 compared to 2005/06).

Three 'direction' grades are possible:

- *improved* - if performance is much better than previously;
- *stable* - if performance is much the same; and
- *deteriorated* - if performance is much worse than previously.

Direction of travel assessments are only available for three headline areas this year, reflecting the new inspection regime by HMIC and the inclusion of locally selected indicators.

How are issues like data quality reflected in assessment?

The assessment method takes account of:

- the general quality of crime data provided by forces; and
- any instances where forces have not provided data or where the data provided is inaccurate in some significant way.

Where can I find more information?

The Home Office website¹ below sets out all force assessments and underpinning data (including national overviews and peer comparisons) as well as technical explanations, frequently asked questions plus links to other related websites and publications. Previous years' assessments are also available.

<http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/performance>

More information on HMIC's inspection programme is available at:

<http://inspectrates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic>

¹The latest assessments will **not** be accessible at this website until the publication embargo is lifted (10.00am 9 October 2007).