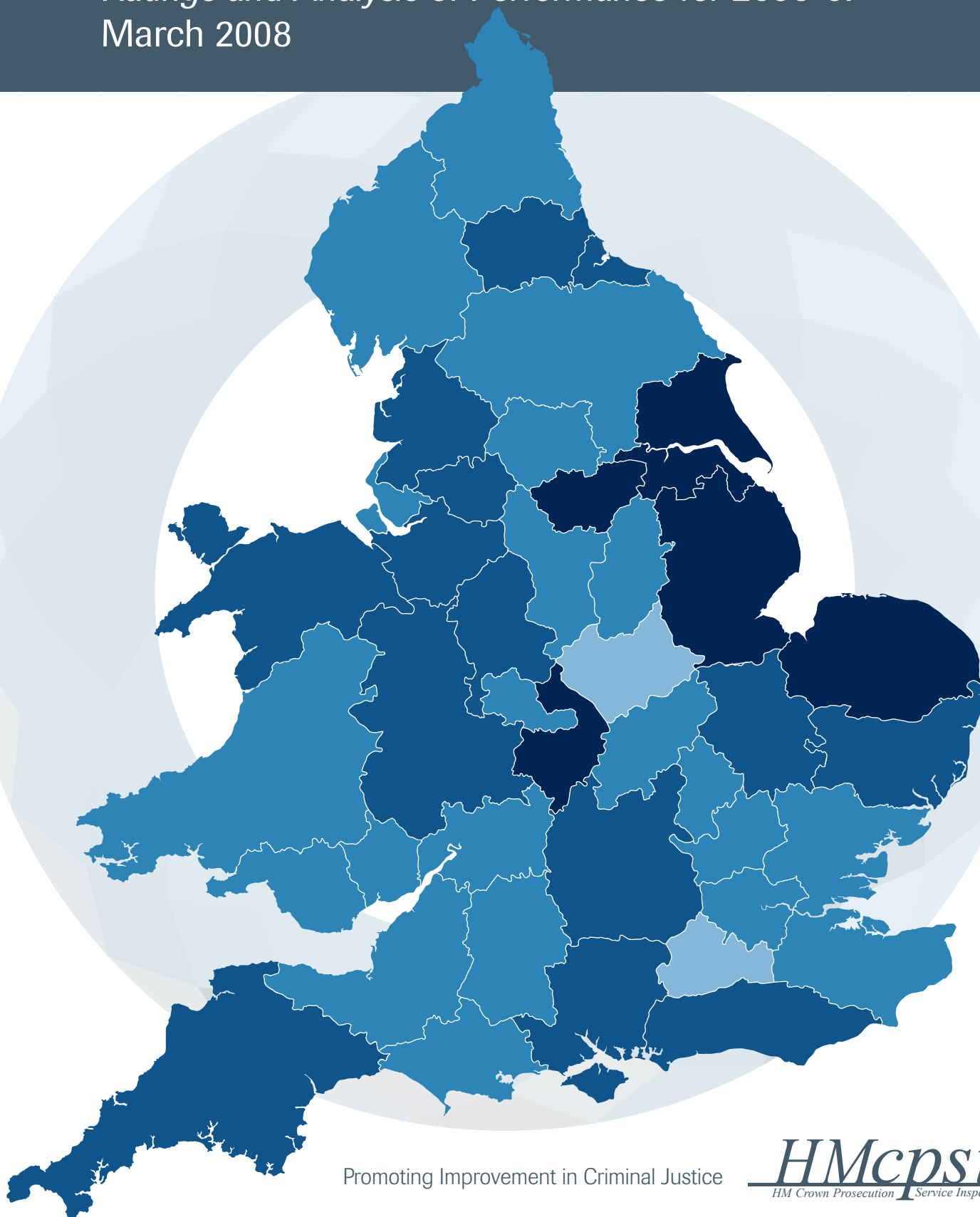


Overall Performance Assessment of Crown Prosecution Service Areas

Ratings and Analysis of Performance for 2006-07

March 2008



Promoting Improvement in Criminal Justice

*HMcp*si**
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common abbreviations used in this report are set out below.

ABM	Area Business Manager	HMCPSP	Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
ABP	Area Business Plan		
AEI	Area Effectiveness Inspection	JDA	Judge Directed Acquittal
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order	JOA	Judge Ordered Acquittal
BCU	Basic Command Unit or Borough Command Unit	JPM	Joint Performance Monitoring
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
CCP	Chief Crown Prosecutor	MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
CJA	Criminal Justice Area	MG3	Form on which a record of the charging decision is made
CJS	Criminal Justice System	NCTA	No Case to Answer
CJSSS	Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary	NRFAC	Non Ring-Fenced Administrative Costs
CJU	Criminal Justice Unit	NWNJ	No Witness No Justice
CMS	Case Management System	OBTJ	Offences Brought to Justice
CPIA	Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act	OPA	Overall Performance Assessment
CPO	Case Progression Officer	PCD	Pre-Charge Decision
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	PCMH	Plea and Case Management Hearing
CPSD	CPS Direct	POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
CQA	Casework Quality Assurance	PTPM	Prosecution Team Performance Management
CTL	Custody Time Limit	PYO	Persistent Young Offender
DCP	District Crown Prosecutor	SMT/G	Senior Management Team or Group
DCV	Direct Communication with Victims	TU	Trial Unit
DCW	Designated Caseworker	UBM	Unit Business Manager
DP	Duty Prosecutor	UH	Unit Head
ECU	Economic Crime Unit	VPS	Victim Personal Statement
ETMP	Effective Trial Management Programme	WCU	Witness Care Unit
HCA	Higher Court Advocate		

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FOREWORD BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

When my predecessor wrote a Foreword to the 2005 summative report he started by saying: “The work of the prosecutor is at the heart of the criminal justice system”. That continues to be the case. The criminal justice system benefits from having robust and effective prosecutors at its heart; and conversely can be damaged if prosecutors are not working effectively.

This report marks the completion of the second series of overall performance assessments of CPS Areas. I am pleased to note that the results show a gradual improvement against a background of rising expectations and increasing pressures.

There remains a challenge for managers in the Crown Prosecution Service to achieve greater national consistency. But I am delighted to see that a number of CPS Areas have achieved Excellent status. This achievement is being marked at a ceremony which I am hosting and at which I will be presenting the first Attorney General’s Awards for Excellence.

I am sure that Areas within the Crown Prosecution Service will use the OPA reports to guide their future actions and to seek yet further improvements in the service that is delivered to the public.



The Right Honourable Baroness Scotland of Asthal, QC
HM Attorney General

INTRODUCTION BY HM CHIEF INSPECTOR

The increased expectations which undoubtedly now exist in relation to our public services manifest themselves in two main ways. First, the demands made of those in operational positions who actually deliver are constantly growing; secondly, the requirement for greater transparency and for individuals as well as organisations to be held robustly to account has never been stronger. These can be in tension because any form of scrutiny creates demands. The exercise which Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) has just completed seeks to balance those requirements.

Society is entitled to expect a highly professional prosecution service which combines prosecution with integrity and industry. It is also vital that prosecuting authorities, and indeed all criminal justice agencies, are responsive to changes in the social environment and patterns of criminal behaviour. Inspection and assessment is an essential part of ensuring that those expectations are met. In 2005 HMCPIS began to develop the concept of overall performance assessments (OPAs), already well established in the local government and health sectors, for application to prosecutors.

The process differs from, and is intended to be less resource intensive (both for HMCPIS and those inspected) than, conventional inspections. The assessment is a "one point in time" exercise using performance data relating to each prosecution Area for the same given period – in this instance 2006-07. Performance is then rated as 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Fair' or 'Poor' on each of the 13 aspects of activity covered by the assessment framework. Presenting our findings in this fashion ensures that the public and others can easily appreciate the level and quality of service being delivered in their locality.

HMCPIS undertook its first series of OPAs in 2005 and this second series between June-December 2007. As well as leading to individual reports in relation to each of the 42 Areas, it makes it possible to compare current performance against the 2005 position identifying both improvements and fall-off. This overarching report brings together our findings in relation to all Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Areas based on a combination of self-assessment, management data and professional judgment.

Drawing together the strands and identifying themes provides food for thought for both the CPS itself and HMCPIS. Notable features in relation to the CPS include:

- the variations in performance across the Service in relation to most of the aspects mentioned is significantly greater than one would expect in a national service;
- the strengthening of management capacity indicated by some of the assessments has not been fully translated into improved casework performance;
- there is a pattern in relation to national initiatives involving the CPS and criminal justice system (CJS) more widely of initial success, often based on the availability of additional time limited funding, which is not sustained so as to become business as usual once the funding ceases;
- tensions between the enhanced role and greater deployment of prosecutors to court with the requirement for careful and thorough case preparation, notably in relation to magistrates' courts work.

I am pleased to report that the issues identified above have not, in fact, prevented the CPS from strengthening its performance overall, as reflected in the number of Excellent Areas rising from three in 2005 to five on this occasion. Only two (plus one London Sector) have been rated Poor compared with four in 2005. This improvement has been during a period when extensive change and reform within both the CPS and the CJS has undoubtedly stretched resources.

For HMCPSI, the exercise has been a valuable renewal of its risk baseline. However, there are important issues to be addressed. We need to consider the role of OPAs in relation to other forms of assessments. Despite some significant advantages there are some aspects of performance, notably compliance with the obligation of disclosure and case preparation, which can only be covered in limited depth; the range of evidence gathered is also more restricted. It is questionable whether the two year cycle is the most appropriate because it provides relatively little time between the end of a series of assessments and the commencement of the business year on which the next round is likely to be based. Finally, we have not yet succeeded in limiting the scope of the documentary evidence supporting the self-assessments to the extent which we would wish.

We shall be evaluating this work carefully in consultation with the CPS and other stakeholders to build on it for the future. HMCPSI believes that this process and the presentation of our assessments in this way makes them more accessible and thereby promotes greater accountability and responsiveness. It allows CPS managers to identify and act upon strengths and weaknesses. For our part, it will underpin a shift of resource from inspection focused on the CPS and other individual agencies to more joint and more cross-cutting work within the CJS, focusing available resources where our assessments indicate that the risk is greatest.

I conclude with very real thanks to managers and staff alike within the CPS who have afforded the Inspectorate such full assistance and co-operation in developing the framework and carrying out the assessments. Their approach to an exercise which is at best intrusive has been thoroughly professional. Thanks also to the dedicated staff within HMCPSI for whom the timescales meant quite relentless pressure.

It is wholly appropriate that those who have achieved excellence (Humberside, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, South Yorkshire and Warwickshire) or demonstrated the most extensive progress since 2005 (Cumbria and Devon and Cornwall) should have their achievements marked by the Excellence Awards that Baroness Scotland has initiated this year. Many thanks go to her also.



Stephen Wooler CB
HM Chief Inspector

HMCPSI
11 March 2008

BACKGROUND TO OVERALL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Background

- 1.1 In 2005 HMCPSI undertook overall performance assessments, with the objective to secure a snap-shot of performance against clearly defined and consistent standards across the 42 Areas as close to simultaneously as our resources permitted. This enabled us to create a baseline by which to compare and measure performance. This baseline has been kept up-to-date through gathering of management and other information relevant to performance and enabled us to adopt a more risk-based approach to Area effectiveness inspections (AEIs) during 2006-07. During that time HMCPSI undertook 11 AEIs, visiting those Areas which were assessed as Poor in 2005, as well as those which had Poor aspects of performance within their Fair assessment. HMCPSI has thereby been able to focus its resources where they were more likely to make a real difference and this has freed up staff to undertake more joint and cross-cutting work.
- 1.2 We have now undertaken a second round of OPAs which has enabled us to measure current performance and improvement against the previous baseline assessment.
- 1.3 The four commonly understood descriptors used were: Excellent – 4; Good – 3; Fair – 2; Poor – 1.
- 1.4 Within the assessments 13 key performance aspects have been identified. These are divided into five **critical** aspects, which provide the basis of a combined assessment for these aspects, together with the eight other **defining** aspects of performance.

Critical aspects of performance	Other defining aspects
Pre-charge decision-making	Progressing cases at court
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Sensitive cases and hate crimes
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Disclosure
The service to victims and witnesses	Custody time limits
Leadership	Delivering change
	Managing resources
	Managing performance to improve
	Securing community confidence

(See Annex 1 for further details of these aspects of performance)

The framework has been refined and so it is not possible to make an absolute comparison between performance in 2005 and 2007. Firstly, the number of aspects has been reduced from 14 to 13. Whereas ensuring successful outcomes was an aspect in its own right in 2005, this has now been made an integral part of the assessments of handling magistrates' courts and Crown Court cases. Secondly, two of the five critical aspects have been changed; those dealing with ensuring successful outcomes in the courts are now included, and the separate aspect of ensuring successful outcomes has been removed; managing resources has moved to the other defining aspects. Within individual aspects changes have been made to take account of developments in the CPS and the wider CJS, as well as to make cosmetic changes to simplify the framework. The data used, either as an indicator of performance or in some cases a limiter to the level of performance, was for the year 2006-07. This means that an Area's performance and progress was assessed and measured against that of the Service nationally, as well as against its own performance in 2004-05.

- 1.5 Each aspect is rated separately so that Areas can immediately identify their strengths and weaknesses. Thus while Areas needed to maintain their overall level of performance after the assessment in 2005 they could, following the assessment, take action to address weaker points. This enabled them to try and raise the standard of service to the public in key aspects. This assessment has measured whether Areas have maintained their overall level of service, as well as identifying any progress made on weaker aspects. Areas now have more information about their performance and this should enable them to prioritise their effort and resources to deal with key issues whether they relate to casework, national initiatives or key targets within the Public Service Agreements shared between several criminal justice agencies.
- 1.6 The individual assessments of each of the 13 aspects also enables strengths and weaknesses across the CPS as a whole to be identified. This will continue to help the CPS Business Development Directorate to target issues and best marshal effort and resources.

Overall performance assessments

Overall performance assessments	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	3	5
Good	16	15
Fair	19	20
Poor	4	2

- 1.7 Five Areas were rated Excellent and two Poor. Two moved up two ratings (Devon and Cornwall and Lincolnshire) and Cumbria improved in eight aspects across both casework and management aspects. Ten Areas improved their overall assessment, while eight declined overall.
- 1.8 This means that just over 47% of CPS Areas are in the top two categories and that 95% were for the most part complying with relevant standards and so were adequate or better. There are 5% more Areas performing at least adequately than at the time of the last OPA. It is pleasing that all those who were assessed as Poor in 2005 improved their position. However, as in 2005, there are wide variations in the level of performance amongst Areas.
- 1.9 Five (an increase of two) were rated as **Excellent**. Two of the five (Humberside and South Yorkshire) were also rated Excellent in 2005, two (Norfolk and Warwickshire) have improved from Good last time, while the fifth (Lincolnshire) has made significant progress and improved from Fair.
- 1.10 Fifteen Areas were assessed as **Good**, compared with 16 in 2005. All had combined ratings for critical aspects of performance that were Good. As in 2005, they varied in terms of size of caseload and in geographical, environmental and demographic makeup, and ranged from one of the smaller Areas (Cambridgeshire) to one of the biggest (Greater Manchester).
- 1.11 Twenty Areas were assessed as **Fair**, compared with 19 in 2005. Three had combined ratings for critical aspects of performance that were Good but were weaker in the other defining aspects. Again the type of Areas varied but included most of the smallest ones.

- 1.12 Only two Areas were assessed as **Poor** (a reduction of two). Leicestershire and Surrey have both declined in performance since their Fair assessment in 2005. Both were the subject of an AEI, although the timing of the inspection in both instances was such that there was limited or no opportunity for any action taken as a result to impact on the outcomes in 2006-07. CPS Surrey, although declining in performance from the time of the last OPA to the AEI, was showing signs of improvement since the publication of the AEI report in February 2007. CPS Leicestershire was inspected in April 2007, with the report being published only that August. The Area had started to address some of the concerns raised during the AEI but it was too early to establish whether the changes were producing improvement.
- 1.13 The improvement in performance has been in conjunction with an increase in the conviction rates in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court and against a background of substantial fluctuations in caseload and a succession of national initiatives aimed at strengthening and improving the CJS as a whole. We deal with this in more detail at paragraph 1.27.

Some context

- 1.14 In 2005 the CPS was undergoing a fundamental change and modernisation programme which was evidenced by three major reform programmes: charging, advocacy, and victim and witness care. These continue to be developed.
- 1.15 The CPS was in the process of implementing statutory charging (under which it assumes responsibility from the police for the initial decision whether to charge in more serious or contested cases) on an incremental basis. Areas initially operated under a shadow scheme and many had either not (or had only just) moved on to the full statutory scheme, and even those who were first in the roll-out plan would only have been operating charging for a matter of months at the time of the 2005 assessments. Post-implementation reviews were completed in all Areas by December 2006 and they have all been operational since April 2006. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that the right charging decision is made at the right time and to build strong cases so that the number of guilty pleas increases and the number of unsuccessful outcomes is reduced.
- 1.16 The advocacy strategy was being taken forward. This entailed increasing in-house court coverage by extending the powers of designated caseworkers (DCWs) in order to increase their deployment in the magistrates' courts; increasing the use of Higher Court Advocates (HCAs) in the Crown Court; and piloting in some Areas the direct recruitment of experienced Crown Court trial advocates. The strategy remains in place and deployment of in-house advocates continues to increase, with targets in place to increase deployment still more. DCWs' powers were extended in January 2006 and they are now able to conduct contested bail matters and pre-trial reviews¹. The number of HCAs has increased and the CPS has also recruited advocates with significant Crown Court trial experience from the independent Bar and solicitor HCAs.
- 1.17 Steps were being taken to implement the No Witness No Justice (NWNJ) initiative jointly with the police. This includes changing processes to improve the information and support provided to witnesses and the creation of Witness Care Units across all the Areas. The aim is to provide an improved service to victims and witnesses through units jointly staffed by police and the CPS. The final post-implementation review visits to all Areas were completed in September 2006 and a report and action plan was delivered to each Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB).

¹ A Bill currently before Parliament contains provisions to extend them further including to conduct some contested cases in the magistrates' courts.

- 1.18 Since then, to the present day, the CPS has continued to work against a constantly changing background. It had planned to reorganise its Area structure to complement the planned rationalisation of police force structures. Following the decision not to proceed with the police reform, the CPS decided to retain the current 42 Area structure but to create 14 Area Groups to oversee some common areas of work, with each group having a Complex Casework Unit and a group Secretariat (CPS London was not included in the reorganisation and retains its existing structure). The new structure has been implemented during 2007-08. The planned changes created a period of uncertainty which meant that in some Areas senior managers held positions on a temporary basis for lengthy periods and internal restructuring plans were postponed. There have also been a number of changes of Chief Crown Prosecutors (CCPs) and Area Business Managers (ABMs). In some Areas the CCP had just taken up post as the assessment started. In others, the change took place afterwards.
- 1.19 The Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary (CJSSS) initiative is a cross-criminal justice agency programme that aims to simplify and speed up the administration of justice for a high volume of magistrates' courts cases and reduce the number of hearings required. The CPS has contributed to the work and has reviewed its internal processes and structures as part of this. The new streamlined processes were tested in three Areas in 2006 and have been rolled-out nationally during 2007-08. In addition, as part of the overall programme, work has been undertaken by the CPS and police to develop a process that enables a less substantial case file to be built for summary cases in the magistrates' courts and the streamlined process is being tested in a number of Areas.
- 1.20 In addition to CJSSS, CPS London is seeking to address weaknesses in conjunction with other criminal justice agencies in London through the joint London Reform Programme. It has adopted integrated prosecution teams, whereby CPS prosecutors and staff work with the police inside police stations where the charging centre is based. It is also piloting a virtual courts initiative. A video link is used between the defendant in the charging centre and the court, with a view to an immediate first hearing and sometimes final disposal.
- 1.21 The CPS is introducing the Optimum Business Model (OBM) in response to criticisms about the handling of casework in the magistrates' courts (by the National Audit Office and reiterated by the Public Accounts Committee and the Capability Review). The CPS is establishing OBM in each of the 14 Area Groupings and CPS London by 31 March 2008 and aim to establish it across all 42 Areas by the end of September 2008. The CPS still has a commitment to the principle of cradle to grave handling of casework for Crown Court casework and for serious or sensitive cases heard in the magistrates' courts. Otherwise, in the magistrates' courts, the CPS approach is for trial preparation to be carried out by a proactive case progression team rather than by an individual named prosecutor. An appropriate advocate will present the case.
- 1.22 Conditional cautions are now used in appropriate cases as a means of diverting from court those whose offending is serious enough to warrant prosecution, but who are prepared to admit their offence and agree to undertake rehabilitative or reparative activities as a condition of being cautioned. The use of conditional cautions was rolled out to seven Areas before being introduced in at least one police Basic Command Unit across all Areas by June 2007. Full coverage is planned by March 2008.

- 1.23 In addition to this background of change the period of this assessment has been one of a substantially increased funding, and in relation to many Areas falling caseloads within either or both magistrates' courts and the Crown Court workload. Whilst we have assessed Areas against objective standards consistently around the country, nevertheless, we have taken appropriate account of performance in the light of what have some times been substantially increasing or falling caseloads. Our assessments in relation to case management in the magistrates' and the Crown Court, and in progressing cases, have been within this context. A notable feature has been the absence of any clear pattern in, or rationale for, these sharp variations.

Commentary

- 1.24 All organisations must constantly strive to improve and we recognise that this necessitates new initiatives and the embracing of change. Whilst initiatives are designed to be complementary, nevertheless, it is easy for there to be perceived and actual tensions. Once integrated the charging initiative should ensure that weak cases do not proceed and that other cases are put in good order at an early stage. This should save resources across the CJS including for the CPS itself and so facilitate greater lawyer resources being focused upon Crown Court work and advocacy. Nevertheless, initially there appears to be immediate pressure upon magistrates' courts work and case preparation when lawyer resources are diverted simultaneously to the front and back ends of the overall process. Furthermore, there is an inevitable tension in seeking at the same time to implement CJSSS (with a need to have cases better prepared before first appearance at the magistrates' courts) whilst avoiding unnecessary case preparation demands upon police until the need arises upon the entry of a plea of not guilty.
- 1.25 All these nationally-driven initiatives have involved implementation programmes at the same time that many Areas have been undertaking their own restructuring exercises. It is difficult not to conclude that the impact of focusing so much effort on change has meant that some aspects of performance have suffered, either through inability to retain focus on initiatives such as ensuring persistent young offenders are dealt with speedily, or a lack of focus upon the service to victims and witnesses. Within many Areas' performance management regimes the lack of impact upon their management teams of unsuccessful case outcomes, whether these are overall conviction rates, high numbers of discharged committals, judge ordered acquittals or jury acquittals, has been striking.
- 1.26 Whilst highlighting the above, it has been very positive that overall conviction rates have improved across the Service. In 2006-07 the conviction rate in the magistrates' courts had improved to 84.3% compared to 80.8% in 2004-05. Similarly the Crown Court conviction rate had improved in 2006-07 to 77.7% compared to 75.8% in 2004-05. This was a particular achievement in the light of a trend of increasing use of cautions, fixed penalty notices, formal warnings and offences taken into consideration, and a consequent reduction in the number of offences been dealt with by prosecution within the criminal courts. Some Areas have contended that the diversion of these cases, of which many entail an acceptance of guilt, has impacted adversely on their conviction rates. In others high levels of defendant non-attendances and delayed or non execution of warrants of arrest have adversely affected conviction rates by what may be several percentage points.

- 1.27 The Capability Review of the Crown Prosecution Service² found that the CPS has contributed to good progress on both its Public Service Agreement targets (shared with other agencies); is on track to meet its efficiency saving targets; and has achieved many significant successes. The challenges identified by the Capability Review for future delivery were in many respects the same as we are reporting upon: the need to work more collaboratively with its CJS partners, greater efficiency and effectiveness in its systems and procedures, and improved focus on public service outcomes. The Capability Review found clear, strong direction and leadership at the strategic level. Whilst this has enthused and raised the ambition of many staff, there has been insufficient leadership focus on driving improvements in the CPS's magistrates' courts business.
- 1.28 There is therefore a symmetry between that review and our findings in both this and the 2005 OPA as regards lack of preparation and grip in magistrates' courts cases. The National Audit Office report "Crown Prosecution Service: effective use of magistrates' courts hearings" (2006) also found ineffective hearings and cracked and ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts cost the tax payer £173 million each year, of which about £24 million attributed to the CPS. The need for prioritisation of programmes and for a co-ordinated strategic approach to engaging with criminal justice partners were identified as necessary.
- 1.29 The review's finding that performance management does not adequately focus on outcomes for customers and citizens or constantly reward good, and tackle poor, performance was reflected in our findings. For instance, the Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) scheme had not been used flexibly or effectively to identify strengths and weakness in individual prosecutors' performance across a range of measures. We have found in some Areas that performance information is not shared, in an easily accessible form, with team members and this chimes with the identified need for action to make performance management of delivery real for everyone.
- 1.30 The Capability Review Team identified an area for action that the CPS clearly needs to define what a "national service, locally delivered" means for the entire organisation, covering Headquarters, Groups, Areas and individuals. Whilst we have accepted the difficulties in having clear national operating practices because of the differences between the individual police forces who are not subject to national organisation, and courts in which the exercise of judicial functions vary, nevertheless we have been critical of Areas in which practices vary between units (and sometimes within units) with little or no attempt to identify best practices.
- 1.31 None of this is to unduly detract from the success of the CPS, but these are important aspects which demand attention.

The relationship between the 2005 OPAs, Area Effectiveness Inspections and performance improvement

- 1.32 Our last OPA provided a baseline for assessing performance improvement and, at the same time, the basis of an ongoing risk assessment of Areas which informed our subsequent programme of inspection. These AElS commenced after providing a significant period to Areas to take action following the finalised assessment in relation to them; generally in excess of one year. The AElS were comprehensive in relation to the Areas that had been assessed as Poor, and were tailored to focus on the poor or weaker aspects of performance in a number that had been assessed as Fair.

² The Capability Reviews Team in the Cabinet Office, with a team of external reviewers, has examined what the forward needs are for each Government Department.

In the majority of those Areas we were pleased that weaknesses in performance were being addressed and we were able to provide both assurance that the right steps were being taken, and further guidance as to what aspects required further work.

- 1.33 It is both pleasing, and supportive of the benefits of an inspection process, that all four Poor Areas have raised their performance, sometimes following changes in management and with support from CPS Headquarters. Whilst the frequency of inspection can be a contentious issue, those Areas which were subject of early AElS, whilst receiving both the burden and benefit of inspection, have managed to secure change and improvement. One Area later in the programme and one at the very end had not been able to respond constructively to address weaker aspects of performance and have in the event been assessed as Poor within this programme. Nevertheless, in each of these cases renewal of energy within changed management teams and additional support from CPS Headquarters has provided reason for optimism as to the future.

Adding value to the criminal justice process

- 1.34 The degree to which CPS Areas add value to the local criminal justice process is largely implicit in the overall rating, and we have not included a separate rating. Additional indication can be found within particular aspects. For example:
- ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court includes reducing the number of cases that are discontinued or which have to be dropped at court, and marshalling evidence so that cases are presented fairly but firmly, giving the best reasonable prospect of conviction;
 - managing resources effectively, such as the deployment of in-house advocates in the courts, so that the CPS's share of public money is used to best possible effect across the country; and
 - serving and caring for victims and witnesses so that witnesses are properly requested to attend court and kept informed of the progress of the case, supported by Witness Care Units, and victims are given a proper written explanation if cases are dropped or charges reduced.

TABLE OF ASSESSMENTS AND CATEGORIES

- 2.1 The table overleaf displays the overall performance assessments and the ratings across the 13 individual aspects of performance for the 42 CPS Areas based largely on performance in the year 2006-07. The assessments were carried out in eight phases between June-December 2007. Quantitative measures were based on statistics and data for 2006-07 in order to ensure consistency; but our judgements also took into account and cited later data where this demonstrated a subsequent trend.
- 2.2 The table lists the Areas in alphabetical order with their overall performance assessment. The five critical aspects of performance are shown next, and then a combined rating of those critical aspects. The eight other defining aspects are then shown. Each Area's overall performance assessment is determined by its combined rating for critical aspects and those for the other defining aspects. (See Annex 2 for the details.)
- 2.3 Performance is rated as:
- 4 = Excellent
 - 3 = Good
 - 2 = Fair
 - 1 = Poor
- 2.4 A Fair rating indicates performance that for the most part complies with relevant standards and is adequate, and may contain some strengths but also weaknesses. Either the weaknesses need to be eliminated, or performance overall needs to be more positive in order to be assessed as Good.
- 2.5 Assessments in all aspects are based on a combination of data and professional judgement, testing Area's self-assessments, scrutiny of management information and documentation, with some reality checks of files and entries on the CPS's electronic case management system.
- 2.6 CPS London is by far the biggest Area in terms of caseload and staff numbers. We have assessed it in the same way as the other 41 Areas. Additionally, we assessed the three geographical Sectors and the Serious Casework Sector (we did not assess the fifth Sector, the Fraud Prosecution Service) and these are included in the individual summary reports.

CRITICAL ASPECTS

Area	Overall assessment		Pre-charge decision-making	Ensuring successful outcomes		Service to victims & witnesses	Leadership	CRITICAL ASPECTS
	2007	2005		mags' court	Crown Court			
Avon & Somerset	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Bedfordshire	Fair	<i>Poor</i>	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Cambridgeshire	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Cheshire	Good	<i>Good</i>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cleveland	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good
Cumbria	Fair	<i>Poor</i>	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
Derbyshire	Good	<i>Fair</i>	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Devon & Cornwall	Good	<i>Poor</i>	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
Dorset	Fair	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Durham	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Dyfed Powys	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Essex	Fair	<i>Poor</i>	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Greater Manchester	Good	<i>Good</i>	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Gloucestershire	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Gwent	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Hampshire & IOW	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Excellent	Good
Hertfordshire	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Poor	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	<i>Poor</i>
Humberside	Excellent	<i>Excellent</i>	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Good
Kent	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Lancashire	Good	<i>Good</i>	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Leicestershire	Poor	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	<i>Poor</i>
Lincolnshire	Excellent	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
London	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
Merseyside	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
Norfolk	Excellent	<i>Good</i>	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
North Wales	Good	<i>Fair</i>	Good	Good	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Good
North Yorkshire	Fair	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
Northamptonshire	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
Northumbria	Fair	<i>Good</i>	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
Nottinghamshire	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
South Wales	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
South Yorkshire	Excellent	<i>Excellent</i>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Staffordshire	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Suffolk	Good	<i>Excellent</i>	Fair	Excellent	Fair	Good	Good	Good
Surrey	Poor	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor	<i>Poor</i>
Sussex	Good	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
Thames Valley	Good	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
Warwickshire	Excellent	<i>Good</i>	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
West Mercia	Good	<i>Fair</i>	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good
West Midlands	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
West Yorkshire	Fair	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>
Wiltshire	Fair	<i>Good</i>	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
London Serious Casework	Good	<i>Good</i>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
London North & East	Poor	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	<i>Poor</i>
London South	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	<i>Fair</i>
London West	Fair	<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good	<i>Fair</i>

OTHER DEFINING ASPECTS

Progressing cases at court	Sensitive cases and hate crimes	Disclosure	Custody time limits	Delivering change	Managing resources	Managing performance to improve	Securing community confidence
Fair	Good	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Fair
Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
Fair	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair
Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair
Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair
Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Excellent
Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair
Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good
Fair	Good	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good
Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent	Good
Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good
Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Excellent
Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good
Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good
Fair	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Fair	Fair	Good
Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good
Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Fair	Good
Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Fair
Fair	Good	Fair	Excellent	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Good	Good	Poor	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Good	Excellent	Fair	Fair	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Good	Excellent	Fair	Good	Excellent	Fair	Good	Excellent
Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Fair
Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
Fair	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	Excellent
Good	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Fair	Good	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair
Good	Excellent	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair
Fair	Fair	Good	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Overall performance assessments

- 3.1 When the first 22 OPA reports were published in 2005 the response of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Chief Executive included four expectations for the CPS. Those expectations have been achieved to a limited extent:
- Excellent Areas will aim to maintain their rating - two of the three Areas rated as Excellent in 2005 have maintained their rating, while the third has been rated as Good.
 - Good Areas will aspire to move to the Excellent category - two out of the 16 Areas rated as Good have progressed to Excellent. Nine have maintained their rating but five have declined to Fair.
 - Fair Areas will aim to move to Good - one of the 19 rated as Fair in 2005 has improved its rating to Excellent, and four have progressed to Good. Twelve have remained at Fair and two have declined to Poor.
 - Poor Areas must move to the Fair category - all four assessed as Poor have improved their rating, one to Good.
- 3.2 The ten largest Areas are: London, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, Northumbria, Lancashire, South Wales, Thames Valley and South Yorkshire. These account for around two thirds of the business of the CPS, and are referred to as their priority Areas for that reason. They obviously have a major impact on the overall performance of the CPS as a whole. As in 2005, none of these are in the Poor category and one (South Yorkshire) achieved an Excellent assessment again, while one (Thames Valley) has improved. Two (Northumbria and West Yorkshire) have declined from Good to Fair, with performance declining in four and five aspects respectively and improving in just one aspect in both Areas.
- 3.3 CPS London is by far the biggest Area, comprising between one quarter and one fifth of the business of the CPS. Its performance had improved significantly during 2004-05 and, with two exceptions, it has maintained its performance assessments. The Serious Casework Sector is rated as Good, two of the geographical Sectors are rated as Fair and the third Poor. The Area's overall performance has been assessed as Fair. Performance improvements are now evident in some aspects in the current year (2007-08), although they have been slow in coming. If the way the criminal justice agencies work together is transformed through the London Reform Programme, which has been approved by Government Ministers and the Treasury and was embarked upon in January 2007, the Area will be better placed to deliver a good standard of performance in the long term.

Analysis of strengths and weaknesses

- 3.4 The table of assessments shows that there is a better than average performance across the Areas in the following aspects:
- sensitive cases and hate crimes (34 Areas assessed as Good or Excellent);
 - leadership (29 assessed as Good or Excellent);
 - ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court (28 assessed as Good or Excellent);
 - delivering change (25 assessed as Good or Excellent); and
 - managing resources (25 assessed as Good).

- 3.5 A number of aspects require more focus on improvement to reach a truly satisfactory standard across the service. These are:
- custody time limits (31 Areas assessed as Fair or Poor);
 - progressing cases at court (27 assessed as Fair or Poor);
 - pre-charge decision-making: management and realising the benefits (27 assessed as Fair or Poor);
 - managing performance to improve (26 assessed as Fair);
 - ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts (24 assessed as Fair or Poor); and
 - the service to victims and witnesses (24 assessed as Fair or Poor).
- 3.6 A number of aspects have improved significantly since the last OPA in 2005. These are:
- managing resources;
 - delivering change;
 - sensitive cases and hate crime; and
 - leadership.
- 3.7 A number of aspects show a marked decline since 2005:
- progressing cases at court;
 - the service to victims and witnesses; and
 - custody time limits.
- 3.8 Additionally, three issues identified in 2005 as being aspects of CPS work where managers may have taken their eye off the ball all require more attention. These are:
- the unacceptably high proportion of cases in some Areas which should be committed to the Crown Court but are discharged because the prosecution is not ready;
 - the Direct Communication with Victims initiative where an unsatisfactory number of letters are being sent; and
 - the failure in 2006 by half the Areas to meet the Government's target of 71 days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders.
- 3.9 In relation to the third, the Government's target was not met in half the Areas in 2006 and it was only following intensive involvement by the Attorney General that this has now improved in 2007-08. In the three month rolling average to November 2007 all but three Areas had met the target.
- 3.10 There also remains the need to address the number of cases where defendants are released on bail because of delay and a failure to seek an extension of the custody time limit.
- 3.11 The current assessments have identified additional trends where managers may have also diverted their attention to other initiatives. These include:
- pre-charge decision-making, where many Areas have not made as much progress as we had anticipated;
 - progressing cases at court where there were large trial backlogs in many Areas, and an inconsistent approach to the deployment of case progression officers; and
 - the NWNJ initiative where there appears to have been a decline in commitment and energy and in a few Areas there is little or no active role by CPS staff in the Witness Care Units.

- 3.12 More is expected of Areas, both by the CPS and HMCPPI, and there has been an increase in the volume of work (though often a reduction in the number of cases) Areas have to undertake to deliver new initiatives, and energies have been directed into the delivery of change where there has frequently been initial success. A common theme, however, has been the difficulty Areas have had in following national initiatives through successfully once they have been implemented. In some there has been a decline in performance once the initiative has become 'business as usual'. There has been insufficient tailoring of national initiatives to suit local conditions and a tendency for initiatives to be signed off prematurely by national implementation/review teams. Post-implementation reviews have been undertaken by the team responsible for implementing the initiative and have been carried out too early, with the result that overly optimistic reports about performance have been produced. Reviews need to be undertaken at a later stage and need to be carried out by a team who are independent of the implementation team.
- 3.13 Linked to the tendency for initiatives to be signed off too early has been an issue over continuity of funding. As new initiatives such as NWNJ and pre-charge decision-making (PCD) have been introduced, additional funding has been available to Areas (often from outside the CPS) to assist in implementation. However, as initiatives have become business as usual and as other initiatives have been introduced, the funding has been withdrawn.
- 3.14 Some weaknesses appear to be the result of the reduction of staff in the office available to prepare cases. This has been caused by an increase of in-house deployment in court, including new work in the Crown Court, lawyers undertaking PCD duties and the extraction of people for delivery/implementation of, or training for, the introduction of national initiatives such as conditional cautioning and CJSSS. There is an unsatisfactory lack of case ownership for serious and/or complex cases, with limited lawyer responsibility for reviewing and preparing and progressing such cases, particularly in the magistrates' courts. The CPS still has a stated commitment to the principle of cradle to grave handling of Crown Court casework and for serious or sensitive cases heard in the magistrates' courts; nevertheless there is a risk that the Optimum Business Model will not provide this. The CPS has established OBM as a new way of working for volume crime. It is capable of delivering a satisfactory standard provided the systems and processes are clear, comprehensive and consistently used. Experience suggests that the CPS in many parts of the country is not well placed to action this. There is a need for the CPS to ensure that there is case ownership in all appropriate cases and that care is taken not to interpret too narrowly the term "serious or sensitive case".
- 3.15 The CPS also needs to ensure that reviews of the operation of OBM are not undertaken too early and that they are realistic, and that Areas are not signed off before they ready to operate OBM effectively without assistance.
- 3.16 There is an inconsistent approach to learning lessons, both across and within Areas, and this has had an impact not only on the assessment for managing performance to improve but also on ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. The analysis of cracked and ineffective trials has improved, with most Areas holding joint meetings with the courts, but insufficient consideration of ineffective hearings and delay in trial dates. There is a need for Areas to look at the progress of cases from charging through to continuing review and trial, and to consider multiple issues. The monitoring of outcomes was variable in quality and extent, with inconsistencies in the depth of analysis for adverse case reports. CQA has not been used as positively as it might and the flexibility of targeting live cases at specific stages has not

been used. It was also difficult to see how lessons were filtered down to staff. Some Areas were undertaking dip sampling of cases but without any evidence of analysis of trends. Where Areas were undertaking their own thematic reviews to tackle issues, there were positive results and they could demonstrate the impact the reviews had had on outcomes and changed/aligned processes to meet needs.

- 3.17 Aligned to the approach Areas take to learning lessons is the way they analyse their results. One indicator of the success or otherwise of statutory charging is the proportion of cases where the CPS has advised no further action, where a rate higher than the national average can show weaknesses in the scheme. It may either indicate too cautious an approach by prosecutors or that the police are presenting too many weak cases. Only careful scrutiny will tell. The apparent rate of cases where no action is advised can be rendered unreliable as an indicator by the numbers of cases finalised administratively. This may occur for many reasons: a defendant bailed by police may not answer bail; police may not action the advice to charge or the further enquiries requested.
- 3.18 Similarly, a failure to analyse vacated trials can mean that the true progress of cases is not known as a high effective trial rate can be the result of a large number of cases being vacated in advance of the hearing, thereby meaning that they do not appear as ineffective trials. The number of committals discharged because they are not ready can also be distorted if cases are discontinued before the date of hearing (reinstating them when they are ready for committal), rather than have an application for an adjournment refused, with the result that the case is discharged. This hides the underlying issue of poor case progression. There is a need for Areas to analyse results in a way which reveals the whole picture, so that any underlying problems can be identified and appropriate action taken.
- 3.19 The introduction and extension of the advocacy strategy has been positive, but not without some difficulties. Some Areas have given priority to deploying HCAs in the Crown Court with the result that less experienced lawyers have undertaken most of the PCDs. The aim of Areas to deploy HCAs and save costs by doing so runs the risk that HCAs might undertake work that does not fully accord with the strategy, in particular, undertaking plea and case management hearings in cases that are likely to be contested but where the HCA is not likely to undertake the trial. There has also been an issue around the use of HCAs – they were accepted at first and seen as a positive move, but their increasing deployment in some Areas has had a knock on affect on Bar and CPS relationships. There needs to be closer management of their use if there is to be confidence that they are not being inappropriately deployed. The CPS nationally and at a local level also needs to look at what work HCAs are undertaking. In particular, it needs to have a structured and effective monitoring scheme so that it can assure itself of the quality of its Crown Court advocates.

Critical elements

<i>Pre-charge decision-making: management and realising the benefits</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	1	1
Good	15	14
Fair	20	25
Poor	6	2

- 3.20 It is not possible to compare exactly the 2005 assessments on PCD with our current findings, as Areas have now been assessed on the effectiveness of the scheme rather than the 2005 assessment of progress made towards implementing it.
- 3.21 All Areas were operating statutory charging by March 2006, which was ahead of the target set by the Government. However, as we have commented earlier in this report, the reviews undertaken by the joint CPS/police team were not always realistic and in our view some Areas were signed off before they were in a position to operate the scheme effectively. It is in this context that our findings have to be viewed.
- 3.22 There has been some change in performance in relation to PCD and only two Areas were assessed as Poor, compared with six in 2005. CPS Humberside was assessed as Excellent, as it was in 2005. In addition to excellent outcomes, it demonstrated very positive joint working, the most obvious example of which was the introduction of effective police gatekeepers to ensure that only appropriate cases are submitted to the duty prosecutor for a charging decision. On a positive note, all of the Areas who had been assessed as Poor in 2005 had made progress, with three now being assessed as Good and the other three as Fair.
- 3.23 There were two Poor Areas. In one, the approach to statutory charging was not integrated, with it being seen as a bolt-on activity rather than as an inherent part of the CPS role. In the other, premature decisions to charge had meant that the benefits of charging were not being realised.
- 3.24 The Prosecution Team Performance Management system (which collects and analyses information about aspects of activity undertaken by the police and the CPS, aimed at securing improvements in performance) produces data that enables more drilling down into the detail of the operation of the scheme. This has given Areas the potential to understand the issues and take action jointly with the police to improve the scheme. The reports also assisted us in our analysis of performance and enabled us to look more critically at statements by Areas in relation to service improvement, whereas such statements were necessarily more likely to be taken at face value in 2005. In general, the Areas' ability to analyse data has improved significantly since 2005. Those where there was an understanding of the data and effective joint meetings with the police were able to demonstrate improvement. Some Areas, however, struggled to understand the data and, although holding meetings with the police, did not use them to analyse and address joint performance as effectively as they could have done.

<i>Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	1	2
Good	19	16
Fair	20	21
Poor	2	3

- 3.25 Performance in handling cases in the magistrates' courts has, on the surface, declined slightly since 2005 with just under half the Areas being assessed as only Fair. However, changes to the framework have put a greater emphasis on outcomes which affected the assessment in relation to some Areas. Two were assessed as being Excellent, an improvement from the one in 2005, but three were assessed as Poor, an increase from two previously. To some degree, the emphasis Areas have put on Crown Court work has detracted from performance in the magistrates' courts.
- 3.26 In addition, there has been considerable volatility in the magistrates' courts caseload. The number of cases finalised in 2006-07 dropped to 998,910 from 1,168,078 in 2004-05. The pattern in the Areas varied between an increase of 21.4% and a drop of 35.5%. There are no clear reasons for this and hence it is not possible to assess how it may have affected performance. There has been an overall rise in the percentage of convictions but this may have been influenced by the taking out of many more straightforward cases likely to have been guilty pleas which were dealt with by alternative means. Whatever the case, the reduction of cases should have enabled the remaining caseload to be handled more effectively.
- 3.27 We flagged up in the last summative report the need for joint action with the police, and to some extent the courts, to address the numbers of committals discharged because they were not ready, yet there continues to be too high a number. Overall, the number in 2006-07 was 2,325, which represents 2.5% of cases intended for the Crown Court. The CPS measure the number of discharged committals as a percentage of all cases finalised in the magistrates' courts, which is 0.2%. This is an artificial measure which has previously been the subject of adverse comment. Although many Areas had fewer discharged committals than the national average, the national average tends to be skewed upwards by a relatively small number of larger urban Areas. Areas had not analysed outcomes to identify why so many cases were not ready when many had been subject to full Code for Crown Prosecutors' test reviews at the charging stage. What is needed is a greater focus on ensuring that cases are ready to proceed, and an in depth analysis of any failures. It is acknowledged that CPS performance in this regard is affected by case preparation by police and a variable approach by the courts, with some being sympathetic to applications for adjournments and others taking a robust approach and discharging cases. However, there is an expectation that the criminal justice agencies will have a joined up approach to the progression of prosecutions.
- 3.28 Performance declined in respect of the Government's target of dealing with persistent young offenders within 71 days from arrest to sentence. Most Areas were achieving the target at the time of the last OPA but only half achieved it in 2006 and the national average was 72 days. Areas appear to have concentrated on magistrates' courts cases (where the bulk of cases are dealt with) and not addressed the impact a few long running Crown Court cases can have. This decline in performance resulted in the chair of the LCJB being summoned to a meeting with the Attorney General each time a criminal justice area failed to meet the target. This intervention appears to have had real effect in improving timeliness and the national average has continued to improve during 2007. The three month rolling average to November 2007 stands at 60 days.

3.29 Overall, the progress made in relation to the national CJSSS initiative is encouraging. Work has been undertaken to reduce the backlogs of trials in the magistrates' courts in some Areas, although this may have a short term consequential increase in discontinuance figures in 2007-08. The initiative has refocused attention on the magistrates' courts and should have a positive effect in the long term. Areas appear to be liaising with their counterparts in the courts more and there are signs of improving working relationships and the solving of long standing problems. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the work required to enable the initiative to succeed continues when the funding provided to assist the courts and the CPS to clear backlogs ceases.

<i>Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	0	3
Good	29	25
Fair	13	12
Poor	0	2

- 3.30 Performance in the Crown Court remains good, with the majority of Areas being assessed as Good or Excellent. Areas have put a greater emphasis on Crown Court casework, even at the charging stage where duty prosecutors now put more effort into case building. The case volumes are lower than those in the magistrates' courts and Areas have found it easier to manage the caseload with more case ownership, and to learn lessons.
- 3.31 There has been an improvement in the proportion of effective trials in the Crown Court, accompanied by a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials, although the lack of data on and analysis of vacated trials (by the courts as well as the CPS) makes determining the true progress of cases through the Crown Court difficult to measure. The proportion of cracked trials also affects the statistics – it has not reduced since 2004-05 but has increased very slightly. Over half were due to the prosecution in 2006-07, with 16.9% being because the prosecution ended the case. Jury acquittals in a few Areas were very high – this is not necessarily due to weaknesses in case review and progression but it is important that Areas analyse such acquittals to look for trends and to assess whether or not any steps can be taken to improve the situation.
- 3.32 Good progress has been made in the relation to the recovery of criminal assets under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). Nationally, both the volume and value targets have been exceeded, although only half the Areas achieved their individual value target in 2006-07. There was more success in relation to the target in respect of numbers of orders made, with 25 Areas meeting their target. Not all amounts ordered to be confiscated are in fact recovered but the CPS is starting to play a role in the enforcement of confiscation orders, with Area champions working with the police to identify what action is needed to enforce outstanding orders and any that are in default.

<i>The service to victims and witnesses</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	0	2
Good	26	16
Fair	16	23
Poor	0	1

- 3.33 Overall the service to victims and witnesses has declined since the last OPA, with the majority of Areas being assessed as Fair rather than the Good achieved in 2005, and it is disappointing that the NWNJ initiative has not made as much progress as anticipated. We have already mentioned this as an example of an initiative set up with specific funding which has become problematic when the funding has expired.
- 3.34 At the time of the last OPA Areas were assessed on their implementation of Witness Care Units (WCUs), and given credit for their plans and handover reports, and it was not feasible to measure performance. As referred to earlier in the report, the project was signed off before the initiative had become embedded in all Areas, and there appears to have been some decline in commitment and energy. In many there is little or no active role by CPS staff in the WCUs, which are staffed mainly by the police, whilst in others the CPS plays an equal part in the units. Many Areas have not resolved performance issues because of a lack of joined up processes and there is some lack of knowledge and understanding of where Areas are in relation to the minimum requirements of NWNJ. This is due in part to the lack of ongoing review requirements, although in the better Areas the LCJB continues to review progress and has an effective sub-group overseeing the progress.
- 3.35 The 2005 OPAs highlighted concerns about the level of compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims scheme (DCV), in which the CPS should write to a victim within five days explaining the reasons for dropping or substantially reducing a charge. As a result HMCPSI undertook a DCV audit and the findings informed the assessment in the 11 Areas included in the audit. The OPA assessments and the audit's conclusion show that whilst generally the quality of letters is now more satisfactory, difficulties remain in relation to identification of cases where letters need to be sent and thus in calculating the proportion of letters actually sent. The audit also highlighted that most Areas have artificial targets for the number of letters which need to be sent, which has made assessment of their true performance difficult. The CPS were aware of the limitations of the proxy targets at the time the audit was published and have taken action to address the issue.

Leadership	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	1	2
Good	25	27
Fair	15	12
Poor	1	1

3.36 We found the trend in relation to leadership to be one of real improvement in 2005 and this trend continues, with an increase in the number of Areas being assessed as either Good or Excellent (29 out of 42). This is a particularly promising result, taking into account that in some Areas there was a period of uncertainty, with some managers working on a temporary basis (in some instances for a considerable time) pending the expected CPS restructuring we referred to in Chapter 1. It also reflects the work put into developing and training managers on a national basis. Differences in the proactivity and cohesiveness of the management team affected the score and there was an emphasis on the views of others in the CJS, who added an insight into how well the CPS is working with its partners.

3.37 Assessments were influenced by the results for communication and promoting Dignity at Work in the last CPS staff survey. In some Areas, there are very good meeting and communication structures, and good feedback systems which can lead to improved performance. In weaker ones there was often no structure or regularity in relation to communications generally, but particularly as regards either internal or external meetings.

Other Defining Elements

<i>Progressing cases at court</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	0	0
Good	29	15
Fair	13	26
Poor	0	1

- 3.38 As in 2005, it was difficult to assess this aspect in the absence of our own observations at court. However, in a change to our methodology we obtained feedback from court users which proved valuable. This may partly have driven the assessment that there has been a decline in performance, with the majority of Areas being rated Fair, rather than Good as was the case in 2005. Data on the number of adjournments in cases and on responsibility for ineffective or cracked trials was not always reliable or comprehensive and we were aware of large trial backlogs in many Areas which had to be regarded as a joint responsibility. Areas themselves tended not to be well informed about the progress of cases at court. A more formal approach to the monitoring of advocates, rather than the ad hoc one adopted in some Areas (which adversely impacted on the assessment for managing performance to improve), would provide managers with the opportunity of observing how cases were progressing through the courts. Where advocates are monitored and feedback is given to individuals it is having an impact on performance in court and so more effort needs to be put into undertaking structured monitoring.
- 3.39 The effectiveness of case progression systems varied between magistrates' courts and Crown Court cases. When case progression officers (CPOs) were introduced, Areas were provided with additional funding but this was subsequently withdrawn, and the reduction in funding was accompanied in some by a withdrawal of the role of CPO with nothing to fill the gap in terms of ensuring cases are ready for court. In some Areas, however, there continues to be an identified CPO who liaises with their police and courts counterpart and attends joint case progression meetings. The progression of cases in the Crown Court attracted some criticism from other criminal justice agencies, where the use of caseworkers as CPOs in relation to their own cases (and with their court commitments) mean that they are absent from the office, so there is no central point to give answers.

<i>Sensitive cases and hate crime</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	5	6
Good	25	28
Fair	12	7
Poor	0	1

- 3.40 The good work being undertaken in relation to sensitive cases and hate crime at the time of the last OPA has continued and performance overall has improved. There has been a concerted drive by the CPS and the other agencies with a particular focus on hate crime, including domestic violence cases, with Specialist Domestic Violence Courts established in many Areas. Sensitive cases are dealt with well at the charging stage, with good advice being given at specialists' surgeries or after files have been sent to the CPS office.
- 3.41 Many Areas have appointed specialists and effective champions: in the better Areas they are volunteers who are keen and interested and undertake proper analysis of outcomes. In some, however, the champions lack proper job descriptions, the selection of specialists is inconsistent and there is limited analysis of case outcomes. The national drive to implement the recommendations of the HMCPSI report on the investigation and prosecution of rape cases has ensured that Areas have appointed specialists to be responsible for handling rape cases, and co-ordinators who are responsible for monitoring their outcomes. This good work needs to be replicated consistently in relation to other sensitive cases and hate crimes, in particular for child abuse cases where there is limited monitoring and minimal inter-agency partnership work undertaken in respect of the Government's safeguarding children initiative.

Disclosure	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	5	1
Good	19	21
Fair	13	17
Poor	5	3

- 3.42 The picture overall is one of a slight decline in performance in respect of the duties of disclosure, with 22 Areas being assessed as Good or Excellent compared with 24 in 2005. There are still inconsistencies across Areas and substantial variations in performance. There was only one Excellent Area (compared with five previously) but there are now only three rated as Poor (an improvement on five in 2005). Since the last OPA, the CPS has undertaken some work designed to improve performance in those Areas that were assessed as Fair and Poor and has undertaken its own visits to them. Eight of those assessed as Fair or Poor were included in our AEI programme. All but one of the Areas that were assessed as Poor in 2005 had improved.
- 3.43 A reality check of a small number of files was undertaken, and where there had been an AEI since the 2005 assessment the results of that file sample were also taken into account. The framework was to some extent weighted towards initial disclosure, as it should have been provided in each file examined, whereas the need to consider material as part of the duty of continuing disclosure arose in a more limited number of the files. Performance issues related to late initial disclosure in the magistrates' courts, and an inconsistent approach to continuing disclosure, with a lack of liaison between the reviewing lawyer and the disclosure officer leading to non-compliance with the duty or the supply of more documents to the defence than the statutory scheme requires. There was some evidence of poor decision-making leading potentially to miscarriages of justice in the weaker performing Areas. There remain problems in relation to the need to endorse schedules of unused material and the recording of disclosure decisions, and the use of the disclosure record sheet was patchy. This lack of an audit trail and the way decisions were recorded influenced the assessment in some Areas.
- 3.44 Our separate thematic review – which will be published shortly – confirms the need for a continuing drive to ensure that informed decisions are made and that there is full compliance with the statutory disclosure regime.
- 3.45 There has been an overall lack of training on disclosure, and a low take up of the advanced training, which may be the result of the training on the refinements to the law and the new Manual of Guidance (issued for the CPS and police) having been delivered around the time of the last OPAs. There has also been only ad hoc work with the police, with very little structured joint training.

<i>Custody time limits</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	1	1
Good	13	10
Fair	25	24
Poor	3	7

- 3.46 Defendants remanded in custody, generally in relation to more serious offences, are subject to time limits regulating the time they may spend in custody pending trial in the magistrates' courts or committal to the Crown Court, and subsequently trial in that court. Very few defendants are released because of delay and failure to seek an extension to a custody time limit - it is vital for public confidence that serious offenders are not released through time limits being breached. There has been a decline in performance in relation to custody time limits (CTLs), with an increase in the number of Areas rated only Fair or Poor from 28 to 31.
- 3.47 The performance may in part be due to high turnover of administrative staff, especially if there is intermittent or inadequate training on CTLs. There is also a need for prosecutors to accept greater responsibility including ensuring that the issues are properly considered at court (for example, where a trial is being fixed outside the time limit) and clearly and accurately recording events at court which affect the time limits.
- 3.48 One can never eliminate the risk of human error in calculating expiry dates or inputting or overriding data totally, but the systems used need to be as tight as possible and checked properly because of the consequences of a serious offender being granted bail - even occasional breaches are unacceptable. Most Areas use the case management system, either as a back up or in conjunction with a diary system. There is a direct correlation between management checks and failures - the better the checks the fewer the breaches. The custody time limit process works well if the court is involved in agreeing the time limit and if lawyers take responsibility and calculate the limit. Good partnership working with the courts leads to better results.
- 3.49 The seriousness of any breach is such that all should be reported to CPS Headquarters. However, we found that this does not always occur and that may in part be attributable to the approach now being adopted by Headquarters to what they refer to as "technical" breaches, that is, where the offender is in custody on other matters and so he or she is not actually released. Their view is that these do not need to be reported, which we think gives the wrong message about the importance of custody time limits and the need to ensure the security of systems. Moreover, the fact that an individual is in custody on other matters is *not* an assurance because the bail or custody status in that case could change.
- 3.50 The system of reporting failures to Headquarters has led to some problems determining which Areas have experienced failures and whether they have been reported, with reports held by Headquarters not always according with the records held by the Areas. In some instances, Areas have reported failures which have not found their way into the Headquarters log, while in other instances Areas have not reported failures: two were found during the OPA. It is also worrying that inspectors found one case where there had been a custody time limit failure that had not been picked up by the Area.

3.51 In some Areas there appears to be limited accountability for CTLs, other than by those members of staff who are specifically tasked with an action under the CTL system. The system appears to work better where there are protocols with the courts so that expiry dates are calculated and agreed during the court hearing, with lawyers responsible for ensuring that the expiry date is correct and for endorsing it on the file jacket. There is, however, a need for a national CTL system that is predicated on the basis of the courts not being involved, albeit Areas should be liaising with the Courts Service with a view to agreeing protocols. Whilst there is a vital need for effective monitoring systems, the culture of the prosecutor in court being alert to the progress of the case and the CTL deadline needs to become ingrained.

<i>Delivering change</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	2	2
Good	19	23
Fair	20	17
Poor	1	0

3.52 There has been a significant improvement in the Areas' ability to deliver change. Well over half have been rated as Good or Excellent and none were considered to be Poor. The CPS nationally has had to become more change focussed because of the number of initiatives it has been implementing. There has been a greater emphasis from Headquarters on planning and risk management, and the development of local business plans and risk registers, and clear expectations have been set. Areas are effective in delivering change initially but some are not so successful in embedding or evaluating it. This has impacted on the assessment in other aspects, such as pre-charge decision-making and the service to victims and witnesses. There is insufficient tailoring of national initiatives to local circumstances and, as we have already commented upon, a tendency for projects to be signed off prematurely and for the focus to be reduced as initiatives move to business as usual.

Managing resources	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	0	0
Good	20	25
Fair	14	11
Poor	8	6

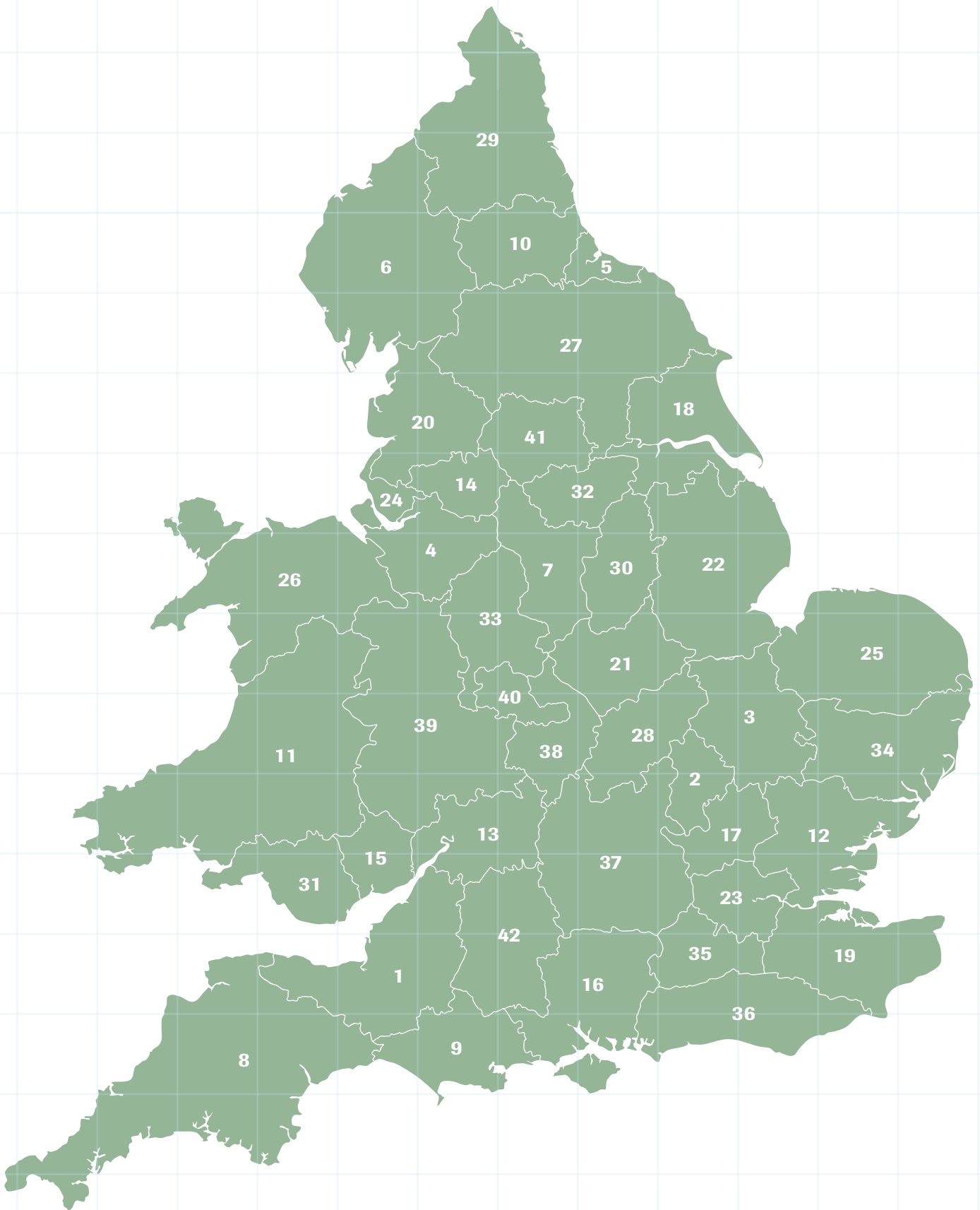
- 3.53 The ability of Areas to manage resources has improved since the last OPA, with an increase in the number rated Good (25) and a decrease of two in the number rated Poor (six). Since the last OPA, the CPS nationally has put more emphasis on the management of resources. Managers have been trained and are now better equipped to deal with their budgets. As a consequence, budgets are now better monitored and managed, and most Areas have regular reporting of the budget, with summaries, to the senior management team. Financial management is now included in the quarterly performance dashboards and Areas are rated for their performance.
- 3.54 As in 2005, the main factor holding back performance on managing performance was the number of Areas which significantly exceeded their main budget. All but one of those rated as Poor had overspent their non ring-fenced administration costs budget in 2006-07. The exception had underspent its budget and, although it had anticipated an underspend, the amount forecast was significantly less than the amount ultimately returned to CPS Headquarters. In 2005 the Areas assessed as Poor were all either medium or smaller in size, and it was thought that this might be attributable to late distribution of funding which an Area with a smaller budget would be less able to handle. This appears not to be the case now as two larger Areas have been rated as Poor this time, including CPS London, which had an overspend of 4.2%.
- 3.55 Making good use of the resources available and securing value for money were important factors. Many Areas struggled to find examples of value for money – good examples are the use of video conferencing to reduce travelling time and expense, and the more effective use and deployment of staff, and overall there has been an increase in the deployment of in-house advocates and an accompanying reduction in the use of agents to prosecute in the magistrates' courts. All but three Areas achieved their target of counsel fees savings in 2006-07, but the target was not set at a high level.

<i>Managing performance to improve</i>	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	1	3
Good	14	13
Fair	26	26
Poor	1	0

- 3.56 As in 2005 the degree of performance management varied substantially and only 13 Areas were rated Good and three Excellent. The majority of Areas were rated Fair and, although there were no Poor ratings, overall there has been only a little real improvement in this aspect. This has the greatest affect on service delivery because if an Area cannot manage its performance its service delivery is unlikely to improve. The CPS performance management system does not key into outcomes or looking at performance over a longer period – the quarterly meetings held with the DPP and Chief Executive look at performance, and the trend, from one quarter to the next. This is generally replicated in the performance management systems adopted in individual Areas.
- 3.57 Areas now have the benefit of performance officers and are better able to collect relevant data, but some are still developing the analytical skills needed to ascertain what has caused the case outcomes, good or bad. Areas who are performing better have separate performance meetings with formal follow through, including communication of results to staff, and a clear joint CJS approach to performance management.
- 3.58 The national CQA system was not robust or comprehensive in a number of Areas in 2005 and this continues to be the position. Some did not meet the target of examining one case per prosecutor per month, while others focused on the numbers examined but did not ensure that the file selection provided any real value. The scheme is flexible and can monitor the strengths and weaknesses of individuals, although this is more difficult without case ownership. The nature of the scheme also lends itself to generous assessments of performance as Areas themselves are rated by CPS Headquarters on the quality of the results. Nevertheless, we will be working with the CPS to make it more user friendly and effective.
- 3.59 In many Areas there still remains a lack of emphasis on what happens in court, with limited advocacy monitoring being undertaken.

Securing community confidence	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Excellent	6	7
Good	18	17
Fair	16	18
Poor	2	0

- 3.60 There has been an improvement in the work Areas undertake to secure the confidence of the community, with none assessed as Poor and an increase to seven of the number of Areas assessed as Excellent. Community engagement is much more mainstream now and linked to core business and the CPS Equality and Diversity Unit has set a clear agenda for Areas, with effective monitoring of its implementation. Many Areas are undertaking more meaningful engagement, with a cross-section of staff participating, and are making efforts to engage with additional groups and to set up hate crime scrutiny panels. There is also good work undertaken jointly through LCJB confidence sub-groups. There remains, however, some confusion between what is true community engagement and what is staff engagement or in reality business as usual, that is, engagement with other criminal justice agencies.
- 3.61 Areas are not always recording the activities they undertake, nor are they evaluating their work and thereby enabling casework improvement. However, some are able to show the benefits of their community engagement work while others focus too much on quantity and not on the quality of their engagement. There is a need to understand how community engagement can impact on community confidence and thereby on case outcomes. It can be difficult for Areas to show the link between community engagement and improvement, but there were good examples of liaison with domestic violence groups leading to the development of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. Some Areas are using community confidence links to feed into the WCUs and thereby to increase the awareness of witness care officers about issues that may affect victims and witnesses.
- 3.62 A core measure undertaken by the British Crime Survey, which relates to public confidence in the ability of criminal justice agencies as a whole to bring offenders to justice, was regarded as something of an unreliable measure of individual agency performance. For example, CPS Humberside, assessed as an Excellent Area, has the lowest level in the country while CPS Surrey, a Poor Area, has the second highest. The measure appears to be more of an indicator of public confidence in the police than in the CPS.



CPS AREA ASSESSMENTS

Assessments of 42 CPS Areas, including the four CPS London sectors

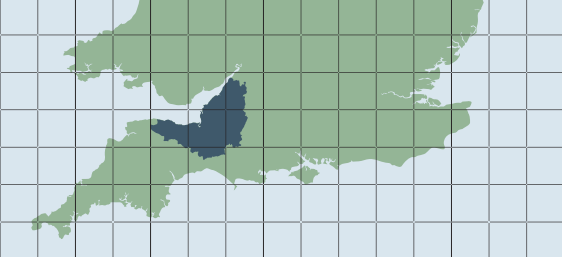
- 4.1 We have set out the OPAs and ratings for individual aspects for both the current and previous assessments, together with a short summary of the findings. Baseline information for 2004-05 and 2006-07 is set out for each Area, including numbers of staff as “full-time equivalents”, numbers of lawyers, budget amounts broken down into the general non ring-fenced administrative costs for staff, agents and running costs, and prosecution costs of counsel and expenses in the Crown Court, together with special cases in the magistrates’ courts.
- 4.2 Individual reports upon each Area are available in printed form and on our website. They may be obtained on request from our Publications Team at:

HMCPSI
 26-28 Old Queen Street
 London
 SW1H 9HP
 020 7210 1197

CPS Areas

1 Avon and Somerset	17 Hertfordshire	29 Northumbria
2 Bedfordshire	18 Humberside	30 Nottinghamshire
3 Cambridgeshire	19 Kent	31 South Wales
4 Cheshire	20 Lancashire	32 South Yorkshire
5 Cleveland	21 Leicestershire	33 Staffordshire
6 Cumbria	22 Lincolnshire	34 Suffolk
7 Derbyshire	23 London	35 Surrey
8 Devon and Cornwall	Serious Casework Sector	36 Sussex
9 Dorset	North & East Sector	37 Thames Valley
10 Durham	South Sector	38 Warwickshire
11 Dyfed Powys	West Sector	39 West Mercia
12 Essex	24 Merseyside	40 West Midlands
13 Gloucestershire	25 Norfolk	41 West Yorkshire
14 Greater Manchester	26 North Wales	42 Wiltshire
15 Gwent	27 North Yorkshire	
16 Hampshire and the IOW	28 Northamptonshire	

CPS AVON AND SOMERSET

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Barry Hughes		
Area Business Manager	Sarah Trevelyan		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	161.9 (<i>66.4</i>)	153.8 (<i>67.9</i>)	
General budget	£6,174,589	£7,283,475	
Prosecution costs	£2,946,700	£2,513,600	
Date of assessment	10/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Good	Custody time limits	Poor	Poor
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Poor	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS Avon and Somerset serves the area covered by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. It has two offices, at Bristol and Taunton. The Area Headquarters is based at the Bristol office.

It has made some progress since the last OPA although the overall assessment remains Fair. The Area has been keen to take an early part in national initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of the CJS, but the effort and commitment of managers and staff has not yet been reflected in outcomes and the Area has not achieved its full potential.

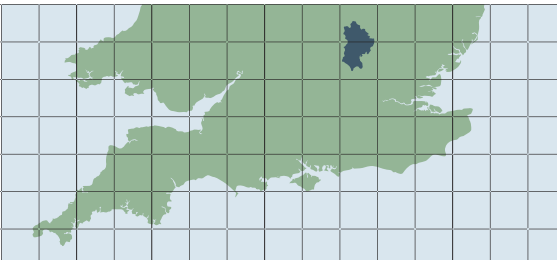
The Area has been at the forefront of carrying forward the CPS's advocacy strategy in developing and increasing the use of in-house Higher Court Advocates in Crown Court trials. It should have placed a greater emphasis on planning and engagement with the Bar and the judiciary, and now needs to develop effective monitoring and review of the quality of advocates.

The overall conviction rates have increased since the last OPA, although they remain below the national average. The operation of the charging scheme has improved, although some weaknesses remain and there is a higher than average rate of such cases being discontinued in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. Sensitive cases are handled well and the conviction rate for hate crimes is increasing and was above the national average for 2006-07.

The progress of cases in the courts is not as good as the national picture, and the proportion of ineffective trials in the Crown Court needs to improve. However, the proportion of effective trials in both the magistrates' and the Crown Court in 2006-07 was better than nationally. Performance in processing cases involving persistent young offenders has declined and in relation to the duties of disclosure of unused material needs to be more secure, particularly in the Crown Court.

The Area as a whole has engaged with a wide range of community groups, and has been able to take advantage of specialist training as a result. The effectiveness of the engagement needs to be assessed in relation to key groups. The service to victims and witnesses has improved in relation to the care of, and provision of information to, victims and witnesses and the No Witness No Justice initiative is working well. The two Witness Care Units, which have been fully functional since November 2005, are considered to be a success and their work has been commended.

CPS BEDFORDSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Richard Newcombe		
Area Business Manager	Tim Riley		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	54.1 (17.6)	61.9 (21.7)	
General budget	£2,286,447	£2,951,998	
Prosecution costs	£859,700	£1,234,900	
Date of assessment	7/2005	6/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
			Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Good
			Securing community confidence	Poor	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	POOR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Bedfordshire serves the area covered by the Bedfordshire Police. It has three offices, at Bedford and Luton (two). The Area Headquarters is based at one of the Luton offices.

Since the last OPA the overall rating has improved. The Area has made significant progress with statutory charging, with a commitment to providing a high level of face-to-face consultations with police. The quality of decision-making is generally good, and the overall successful outcomes rate has improved, particularly in the magistrates' courts, although for 2006-07 it remained below the national average.

Sensitive cases and hate crimes are dealt with appropriately and the conviction rate for hate crimes has improved significantly, although it remains below the national average.

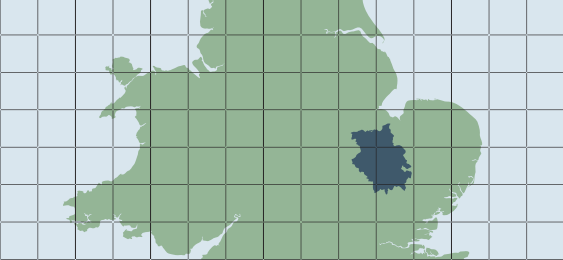
The Area has worked hard, together with the police, to improve its compliance with its duties in relation to unused material. Although procedures have been tightened up, there is still room for substantial improvement.

The effective trial rate was better than the national average in 2006-07, although the number of adjournments per case in the magistrates' courts is slightly higher than the national average. There is good case progression in the Crown Court.

The speed which persistent young offenders are dealt with has fluctuated and there is a need for the Area to take further steps with the other criminal justice agencies to improve its timeliness between arrest and sentence.

Steps have been taken to develop a community engagement strategy, and there has been an improvement in public confidence in the ability of the local criminal justice agencies in bringing offenders to justice. There are positive perceptions held by victims and witnesses who have had contact with the CJS in the courts. Compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims initiative is lower than nationally, although letters are timely when sent.

CPS CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Richard Crowley		
Area Business Manager	Adrian Mardell		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	64 (24.2)	65.7 (27)	
General budget	£2,698,106	£3,080,152	
Prosecution costs	£1,185,800	£1,487,800	
Date of assessment	10/2005	7/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD	Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Cambridgeshire serves the area covered by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary. It has three offices, at Huntington (Central), Peterborough (Northern), and Cambridge (Southern). The Area Headquarters is based at the Huntingdon office.

Since the last OPA one aspect has improved, two have declined and all others have remained stable. The Area has the capacity to improve if it can: build upon the strengths its restructure is proving to have; become consistent and robust in respect of its casework quality assurance; build capacity into securing community confidence; overhaul the direction of Area and partnership plans by addressing the No Witness No Justice minimum requirements; and ensure the custody time limit procedures comply with its own comprehensive policy.

The proportion of successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts has improved since the last OPA and is ahead of national performance. This is mainly due to a substantial reduction in the proportion of magistrates' courts discontinuances.

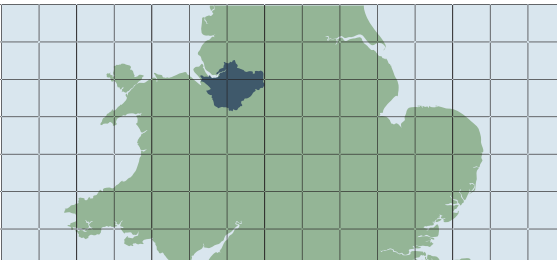
The proportion of successful outcomes in the Crown Court has declined since the last OPA although it appears to be recovering from a dip in 2005-06. The guilty plea rate has improved markedly. Cases tend to progress at each hearing and the Area performs relatively well on timeliness.

The Area has a comprehensive custody time limit policy that incorporates national policy and some elements of good practice; however our reality check of files revealed that the Area was not always adhering to the policy.

Whilst it is clear the Area is committed to improving the service to victims and witnesses, overall its performance has declined. The No Witness No Justice project needs to be formally reviewed so that the Area has a better understanding of whether it is meeting minimum standards required.

There is clear commitment to CJS initiatives and other inter-agency working where joint performance is analysed and information shared, however CPS Cambridgeshire has been unable to engage with the community in a proactive way.

CPS CHESHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Ian Rushton		
Area Business Manager	Angela Garbett		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	105 (42.5)	95.3 (40.0)	
General budget	£4,199,672	£4,466,122	
Prosecution costs	£1,863,200	£1,845,800	
Date of assessment	7/2005	6/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Excellent	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Fair
			Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Excellent	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Cheshire serves the area covered by the Cheshire Constabulary. It has three offices, at Chester, Crewe and Warrington. The Area Headquarters is based at the Chester office.

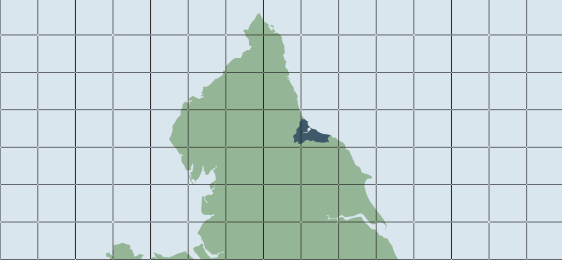
The Area has maintained its Good overall performance since the last OPA in 2005, largely due to its consistent and reliable casework. It has continued to achieve well in terms of successful outcomes, with conviction rates in both Crown Court and magistrates' courts cases significantly better than national performance. Successful outcomes for sensitive and hate crime cases are also better than the national average. In particular, there has been good work in tackling domestic violence, where successful outcomes are increasing.

Overall during 2006-07 the time taken to deal with persistent young offenders, from arrest to sentence, was within Government targets. However, there remain some concerns over timeliness in case preparation which impacts on the number of magistrates' courts hearings and trials that are not ready to proceed on the day fixed.

The needs of victims and witnesses are generally dealt with well, although the Area needs to improve the speed with which it sends letters to victims when proceedings have been dropped or a charge has been substantially reduced.

The Area has the benefit of an accomplished and well organised management team. The statutory charging scheme has been implemented effectively, and conditional cautioning is in use. There has also been a recent restructure. Resources are managed well, although improvements need to be made to performance management systems and arrangements for delivering change if the Area is to build on its achievements and improve further.

CPS CLEVELAND

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Gerry Wareham		
Area Business Manager	Margaret Phillips		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	104.9 (34.6)	102.1 (34.4)	
General budget	£3,596,316	£4,271,644	
Prosecution costs	£1,762,800	£1,895,500	
Date of assessment	7/2005	11/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Excellent	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Excellent	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD	Managing performance to improve	Good	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Good

Summary

CPS Cleveland serves the area covered by the Cleveland Police. It has two offices in Middlesbrough, one of which is at the police centralised custody suite. The Area Headquarters is based at the Middlesbrough CPS office.

The overall performance rating has remained Good since the last OPA. However, performance has declined in six aspects, with four remaining stable and three improving.

The quality of prosecutors' decision-making at the pre-charge stage is generally sound and although the statutory charging scheme is now well embedded, not all the benefits of charging are being realised, with outcomes in Crown Court cases being worse than in magistrates' courts cases.

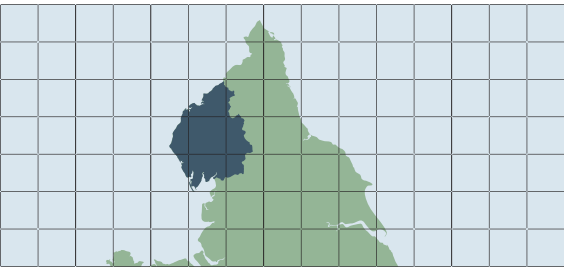
The quality of case preparation and decision-making is generally good although performance in relation to case outcomes is mixed compared to the last OPA. Overall, the rate of convictions in magistrates' courts cases has improved and in 2006-07 the Area's successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts were higher than the national performance. However, performance in the Crown Court declined and was worse than nationally. The conviction rate in sensitive cases and hate crime cases has improved and these cases are well handled.

The proportion of effective trials is better in the magistrates' courts than the Crown Court and there is scope to improve joint case progression systems in the Crown Court. The Area has demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the service to victims and witnesses although the main reason for ineffective trials remains witness difficulties. Performance against the timeliness between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders has declined since the last OPA, but remains within the national target.

There has been a noticeable decline in performance in relation to the duties of disclosure of unused material to the defence; the Area has identified this and action was being taken to address weaknesses.

There is now a sound community engagement strategy and Area staff have met with a wide range of community groups in order to improve public confidence in the CJS.

CPS CUMBRIA

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Claire Lindley		
Area Business Manager	John Pears		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	64.3 (23.8)	65.1 (25)	
General budget	£2,696,413	£3,202,646	
Prosecution costs	£1,240,000	£1,057,100	
Date of assessment	8/2005	7/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
			Managing resources	Poor	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Poor	Good
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	POOR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Cumbria serves the area covered by the Cumbria Constabulary. It has four offices, at Carlisle (where the Area Headquarters is based), Workington, Kendal and Barrow-in-Furness.

Since the last OPA, the Chief Crown Prosecutor has initiated a number of early improvements which led to a more positive Area effectiveness inspection report a year later. That initial progress has continued and the overall assessment has improved to Fair.

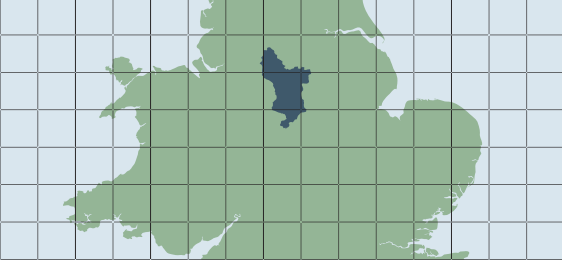
Casework performance is generally good, particularly magistrates' courts cases, although there has been some decline in the proportion of successful outcomes in the Crown Court. Arrangements for statutory charging are now embedded and prosecutors are more proactive in their approach to reviewing cases.

The Area has developed a clearer sense of purpose. Financial management has been tightened and greater deployment of in-house Higher Court Advocates has allowed additional lawyers to be recruited. Senior managers work well with their criminal justice partners and have successfully implemented a number of joint projects including conditional cautioning and the opening of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court in Carlisle. The implementation of the CJSSS initiative, which was piloted in the west of the county, brought significant improvements in case progression and the time taken to deal with persistent young offenders continued to be well within the Government's target.

Senior managers are committed to community engagement and, although public confidence in the CJS in Cumbria has declined, levels remain higher than those nationally. The Area successfully piloted the holding of pre-trial interviews with witnesses but there is still a need to work with partners to ensure the needs of victims and witnesses are fully met throughout the prosecution process.

High sickness levels remain a problem. Staff morale continues to improve and the more positive approach will help the Area with future challenges.

CPS DERBYSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Brian Gunn OBE		
Area Business Manager	Chris Mitchell		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	109 (33.1)	102.5 (34.7)	
General budget	£4,147,650	£4,769,015	
Prosecution costs	£2,147,500	£1,743,200	
Date of assessment	12/2005	11/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Good	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Fair	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	GOOD	Managing performance to improve	Good	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair

Summary

CPS Derbyshire serves the area covered by the Derbyshire Constabulary. It has two offices, at Derby and Chesterfield. The Area Headquarters is based at the Derby office.

Overall, the Area has demonstrated improving performance against high level Government targets since the last OPA in 2005 and has improved its overall assessment to Good. For example, in 2006-07 the proportions of cases ending in conviction were better than national performance in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. The proportion of sensitive and hate crime cases ending in conviction has also increased (although it remains behind the national average), and performance against joint targets is improving, which reflects a greater level of engagement with criminal justice partners.

The main underlying improvement is in statutory charging (under which the CPS has assumed from the police responsibility for the initial decision whether to charge in more serious and contested cases). In 2006-07, the Area achieved five out of six charging related national targets, and performed better than the national average in four of them. There is also a willingness to adopt new ideas and systems (such as the witness intermediary scheme) in order to improve performance generally.

The quality of Crown Court case preparation has improved significantly, although more could be done to deal with foreseeable problems which sometimes lead to cases being dropped. The quality of case preparation in the magistrates' courts has also improved, but it is less reliable than in the Crown Court, and there are still timeliness issues to resolve. Whilst the Area has worked to reduce the high number of cases discharged at committal, the recent improvement is qualified by an equivalent increase in the number of Crown Court cases which are dropped by the prosecution after committal.

The quality of sensitive casework is improving, but not fast enough to remain in line with increased national expectations. The Area demonstrates a clear commitment to improving witness care in both sensitive and volume crime cases, but it recognises that there is further room for improvement.

CPS DEVON AND CORNWALL

Chief Crown Prosecutor Roger Coe-Salazar OBE (now Tracy Easton)		
Area Business Manager	Julie Heron	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	118.1 (47.7)	118.5 (44.6)
General budget	£4,993,359	£5,795,404
Prosecution costs	£1,921,000	£1,986,200
Date of assessment	7/2005	7/2007

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Poor	Good
			Managing resources	Poor	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	POOR	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Devon and Cornwall serves the area covered by the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. It has four offices, at Exeter (two), Plymouth and Truro. The Area Headquarters is based at Exeter.

Overall performance has improved significantly since the last OPA. The management of resources and capacity to deliver change both show particular improvement since the last OPA, when they were assessed as Poor.

In 2006-07 the Area had a higher proportion of successful outcomes (convictions) in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court than found nationally. The quality of decision-making at the pre-charge stage is good, although in some cases the issues which resulted in the case being discontinued should have been identified earlier.

The undertaking of the prosecution's duty of the disclosure to the defence of unused material is generally good. Sensitive cases and hate crimes are handled well, and there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of successful outcomes, particularly in domestic violence cases.

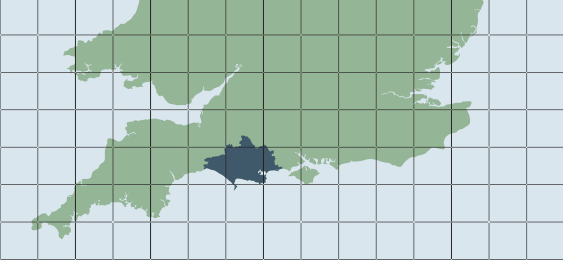
The proportion of effective trials is much better than that found nationally in both the magistrates' and the Crown Court. However, the timeliness of other aspects of case progression in the magistrates' courts needs to be improved. Additionally, the Area needs to work with its criminal justice partners to speed up the handling of persistent young offenders from arrest to sentence.

The service to victims and witnesses remains good, with targets for Direct Communication with Victims usually being met.

The Area needs to ensure its systems for managing custody time limits are secure.

The Area's focus in 2006-07 on improving its core business and delivering a major restructure to enable it to work more closely and effectively with the police resulted in there being less overall focus on community engagement than at the time of the last OPA.

CPS DORSET

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Kate Brown		
Area Business Manager	Jason Putnam		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	56.7 (22.1)	59.4 (21.8)	
General budget	£2,492,153	£3,002,327	
Prosecution costs	£1,052,850	£1,398,200	
Date of assessment	8/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Excellent	Excellent

Summary

CPS Dorset serves the area covered by the Dorset Police. It has one office, at Bournemouth, where the Area Headquarters is based.

Since the last OPA, the overall rating has declined. Some of the decline in casework handling may be tied into weaknesses in supporting systems and processes, which the Area is addressing through restructuring and earlier monitoring of casework.

There are weaknesses in the quality of decision-making at the pre-charge stage, leading to a high rate of cases being discontinued in the magistrates' courts. Decision-making after charge is satisfactory, although the overall successful outcomes rate in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court has deteriorated and in 2006-07 was below the national average. The Area deals with sensitive cases and hate crimes well and its conviction rate for hate crimes is above the national average.

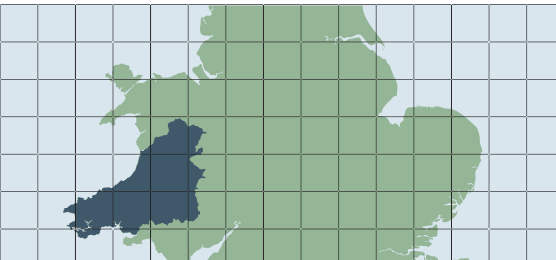
Compliance with the duties in relation to disclosure of unused material has declined since the last OPA and there is limited recording of decisions and actions.

The proportion of effective trials is better than the national average and performance in the Crown Court is excellent. The overall progress of cases in the magistrates' courts is not good, with more adjournments per case than found nationally and a need to hold more case management hearings than agreed with the courts. The progress of cases is better in the Crown Court, although compliance with court orders is not always prompt. The speed which persistent young offenders are dealt with has declined.

The Area's commitment to engaging with the community is commendable, and there has been an improvement in public confidence in the ability of the local criminal justice agencies to bring offenders to justice. The work undertaken by the Area to publish details of racially aggravated prosecutions has seen the number of prosecutions double as more victims and witnesses have felt able to come forward to report racist incidents.

The service to victims and witnesses has declined and the Area does not always comply with the Direct Communication with Victims initiative.

CPS DYFED POWYS

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Jim Brisbane		
Area Business Manager	Jeff Thomas		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	59.3 (20.5)	58.9 (20)	
General budget	£2,470,827	£2,774,489	
Prosecution costs	£694,600	£700,800	
Date of assessment	6/2005	12/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
			Managing resources	Poor	Poor
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Dyfed Powys serves the area covered by the Dyfed Powys Police. It has three offices, at Carmarthen, Haverfordwest and Newtown. The Area Headquarters is based in Carmarthen.

The overall assessment remains unchanged at Fair, but there has been some significant progress, with improved ratings in four aspects of performance. Six aspects remained stable, but there has been a decline in two. Although the assessment was based primarily on 2006-07, there has been continuing improvement in the first half of 2007-08.

The Area has a team of experienced prosecutors which forms the foundation for good quality casework. The handling of sensitive cases and hate crime is good, leading to outcomes which are significantly better than national performance. The overall conviction rate in the magistrates' courts has remained broadly stable albeit marginally behind the national average, and the Crown Court conviction rate was slightly better than nationally. The proportion of effective trials is substantially better than the national average in both magistrates' courts and in the Crown Court.

This has been supported by a significant improvement in the arrangements for statutory charging, to the extent that the national target was achieved in five out of six of the benefits realisation indicators, including a substantial reduction in the proportion of cases discontinued. The Area has also strengthened its compliance with the prosecution duties of disclosure in relation to unused material and its handling of cases involving custody time limits.

Overall, the Area is well led, and has worked hard to overcome the difficulties posed by the geographical distances between courts, offices and police stations. However, there has been a decline in performance relating to resource management. The general budget has been overspent in each of the last five years and the Area is likely to be overspent again in 2007-08, which is a cause for concern, although it is reducing agent usage and creating more flexible working patterns in an effort to improve budgetary control.

Weaknesses in fulfilling obligations under the Direct Communication with Victims scheme has substantially influenced a reduction in the rating for the service to victims and witnesses, although the Area has successfully established a Witness Care Unit together with the police, which has underpinned improvement in some aspects of the care which witnesses receive.

CPS ESSEX

Chief Crown Prosecutor Paula Abrahams (now Ken Caley)		
Area Business Manager	Susan Stovell	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	144 (44)	128.5 (44.3)
General budget	£5,491,431	£6,695,292
Prosecution costs	£3,178,000	£3,534,200
Date of assessment	11/2005	10/2007

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Fair	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Poor	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Poor	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	POOR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Poor	Fair

Summary

CPS Essex serves the area covered by Essex Police. It has one office, at Chelmsford where the Area Headquarters is based.

Overall, performance has improved to Fair from the low base described in the last OPA. It has improved performance in five aspects, improved within the existing level in two, remained stable in five and declined in one. There has been a recent increase in the proportion of cases ending in conviction, which is largely due to the improved arrangements for provision of pre-charge advice to the police. These have enabled prosecutors to work more effectively with police officers at the pre-charge stage, which improves the quality of decision-making. It also ensures that the handling of cases is planned properly from the outset. Consequently, cases are less likely to be dropped by the prosecution or stopped mid-trial.

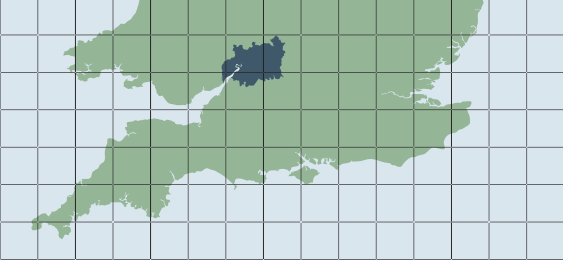
There still remains a need for improved post-charge case preparation and review, especially in relation to magistrates' courts work. Whilst the proportion of successful outcomes is now ahead of the national average, that of committals discharged because they are not ready has increased. The proportion of Crown Court cases with successful outcomes is also improving, but those for cases ending in conviction, as well as those that are dropped by the prosecution, are still behind the national average.

Delay is less of a problem than it was in Essex, and the effective trial rate is better than the national averages in both the Crown Court and magistrates' courts. Overall this tends to improve the experience of witnesses at court and it assists the Area's demonstrated commitment to improving witness care generally.

The Area's compliance with its duties of disclosure of unused material to the defence is still variable.

The Area has undertaken a substantial restructuring exercise and was continuing to manage the risks associated with this. Resources were being managed more effectively.

CPS GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Adrian Foster		
Area Business Manager	Neil Spiller		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	50.4 (17.8)	48.5 (17.4)	
General budget	£2,006,700	£2,205,609	
Prosecution costs	£974,900	£887,300	
Date of assessment	6/2005	10/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Poor	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS Gloucestershire serves the area covered by the Gloucestershire Police. It has one office, at Gloucester, where the Area Headquarters is based.

The Area has made some progress since the last OPA, despite significant changes and temporary appointments in the senior management team. Now the Chief Crown Prosecutor and Area Business Manager positions have been confirmed it is in a position to continue the gradually improving trend.

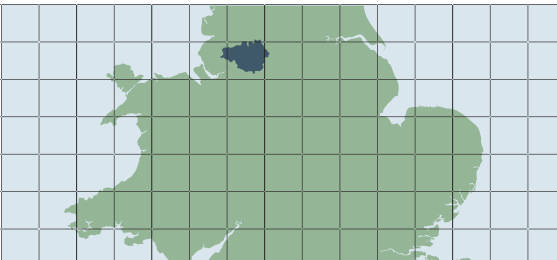
Overall conviction rates have improved since the last OPA, although the rate in the magistrates' courts remains below the national average. Sensitive cases are handled well, and successful outcomes for hate crimes were significantly higher than the national average in 2006-07. Good progress has been made with statutory charging. Decision-making is generally good, but a need for more robust assessments of witness reliability leads to a proportion of cases being discontinued, despite the relatively high level of pre-charge decisions to take no further action.

Cases generally take longer to progress through the courts than the national average, although delays in setting trials in the magistrates' courts have been reduced through joint work with the courts. The proportion of ineffective trials needs to improve, but the proportion of effective trials in the Crown Court in 2006-07 was better than nationally. The performance in processing cases involving persistent young offenders had declined but the target of 71 days from arrest to sentence was achieved in 2007 and performance had improved significantly until flooding caused delays in case finalisation. Compliance with the duties in relation to unused material has declined since the 2005 OPA.

Staff have engaged with a wide range of community groups. Whilst the effectiveness of this needs to be assessed more formally, it has led to some improvements in service delivery.

The No Witness No Justice initiative has not fulfilled its early promise and significant challenges remain in relation to witness care. Compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims initiative is higher than nationally, although letters are not always sent promptly.

CPS GREATER MANCHESTER

Chief Crown Prosecutor	John Holt		
Area Business Manager	Jean Ashton		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	437.7 (159.9)	448.3 (149.8)	
General budget	£16,320,507	£19,022,177	
Prosecution costs	£8,631,850	£10,353,959	
Date of assessment	8/2005	9/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Good
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Greater Manchester serves the area covered by the Greater Manchester Police. It has five branches, and comprises seven offices at Ashton, Bolton, Manchester (two), Oldham, Rochdale and Wigan. The Area Headquarters is based at one of the Manchester offices.

The Area has maintained its overall Good assessment. Within this, it has improved performance in four of the underlying aspects since the last OPA and maintained performance in eight. The aspect which has declined is the service provided to victims and witnesses. The majority of the ten Witness Care Units are achieving at least half of the national minimum requirements, although only one of those requirements is being fully met across the whole of Greater Manchester. Nevertheless the Area works well and co-operatively with its partner criminal justice agencies to bring about improvements.

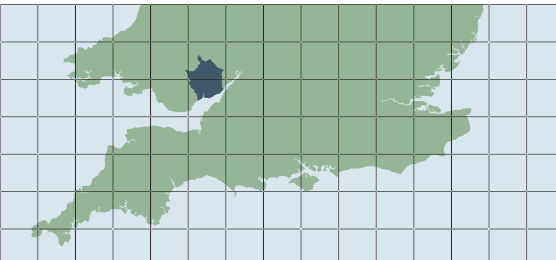
The Area performs consistently well in terms of casework outcomes. The conviction rates in the Crown Court and magistrates' courts are better than national averages and Crown Court cases are generally handled well.

Statutory charging has been implemented successfully with performance better than national averages for all expected outcomes. The handling of sensitive cases and hate crime is also sound with performance again better than nationally.

The Area has delivered some improvements in the handling of unused material since the last OPA but recognises the need for further work. Similarly, it has undertaken much work to standardise procedures and deliver training in relation to custody time limits. However, there was a custody time limit failure during 2006-07 and further improvements are necessary.

The Area is fully aware of where improvements are needed in all aspects of its work and manages performance well. The appointment of a new senior team provides a real opportunity for revisiting the current structure and ensuring it is best placed to deliver the business in the future.

CPS GWENT

Chief Crown Prosecutor	David Archer		
Area Business Manager	Clive Parish		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	80.8 (27.5)	80.6 (27.8)	
General budget	£3,093,242	£3,519,798	
Prosecution costs	£1,596,712	£2,962,400	
Date of assessment	8/2005	12/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Poor	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Poor
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Good	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS Gwent serves the area covered by the Gwent Constabulary. It has one office, at Newport and the Area Headquarters is also based there.

Since the last OPA performance has significantly declined in two aspects, stayed relatively stable in eight and improved in two. The capacity to improve further will depend on the development of clear sense of direction, improved and effective collaboration with criminal justice partners, and the establishment of a settled management team.

The Area was without a permanent Chief Crown Prosecutor from 2004 until August 2007, and has been without a full time substantive Area Business Manager since September 2006. This situation led to a lack of direction and leadership and has prevented some necessary change being progressed or implemented fully.

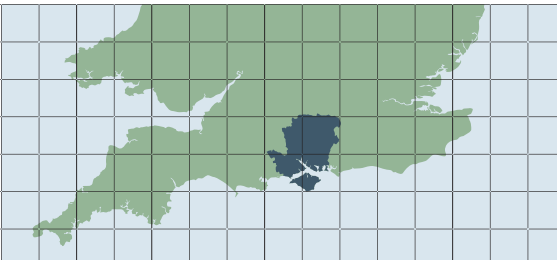
There is a need to improve the arrangements for the provision of pre-charge decision-making, particularly the level of face-to-face advice and decision-making that occurs, and to reduce the proportion of cases that result in no further action. In the Crown Court, successful outcomes were better than the national average for 2006-07, as was the ineffective trials rate. The Area has forged productive relationships with the Crown Court and has benefited from the operation of its two Higher Court Advocate lawyers who undertake Crown Court work.

Overall it is not complying in a consistent manner with obligations designed to improve the service to victims and witnesses.

Custody time limit performance has deteriorated markedly. Systems are sufficient to ensure that limits are correctly calculated and checked; however, the lack of compliance with systems and ineffective monitoring has led to one failure and the risk of more.

The Area overspent its non ring-fenced administration and prosecution budgets for 2006-07 and for the first half of 2007-08 there has been a significant underspend. Arrangements need to be put in place to ensure accurate profiling, monitoring and control.

CPS HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Nick Hawkins		
Area Business Manager	Denise Bailey		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	193.7 (66)	210.5 (74)	
General budget	£7,931,312	£9,583,105	
Prosecution costs	£5,136,050	£3,730,800	
Date of assessment	11/2005	6/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Good	Excellent	Delivering change	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD	Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS Hampshire and Isle of Wight serves the area covered by Hampshire Constabulary. It has seven offices, at Aldershot, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Newport, Portswood, Portsmouth and Western Range. The Area Headquarters is based at the Eastleigh office.

The Area has successfully demonstrated a capacity to change and improve. There is strong leadership and nationally-driven projects such as the statutory charging scheme, whereby prosecutors are based in police stations to advise and decide on charges, and Witness Care Units have been implemented successfully.

Casework decision-making is generally satisfactory and cases are prepared on time. In the magistrates' courts, the proportion of cases leading to conviction has continued to improve and is better than the national average. The number discontinued has decreased and fewer contested cases fail to go ahead on the day fixed for trial. The conviction rate in the Crown Court is also improving, but still not as good as the national average. The same is true of the proportion of cases dropped by the prosecution in the Crown Court or where a judge directs an acquittal. These factors mean that greater analysis of the Area's outcomes is necessary.

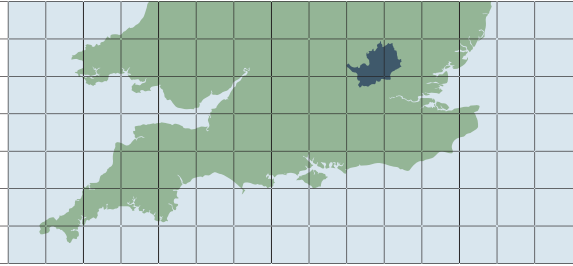
The Area continues to perform well, together with other criminal justice partners, in relation to persistent young offenders which on average were dealt with in 59 days from arrest to sentence, well within the Government's target of 71 days.

Successful outcomes in hate crime cases are better than the national average and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts have been established.

Witness Care Units are working well although there is scope for improvement in the Direct Communication with Victims scheme, whereby the CPS write to a victim when charges are dropped or changed substantially. The Area continues to engage effectively with the local community.

CPS HERTFORDSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Charles Ingham	
Area Business Manager	Linda Fox (now Mark Fleckney)	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	89.9 (33.1)	107.7 (40)
General budget	£4,077,764	£4,928,691
Prosecution costs	£1,496,100	£1,674,800
Date of assessment	11/2005	12/2007



Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Poor	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Poor	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Poor	Disclosure	Poor	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Poor	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Hertfordshire serves the area covered by the Hertfordshire Police. It has three offices, at Hertford, St Albans and Watford. The Area Headquarters is based at the St Albans office.

The quality of prosecutors' decision-making at the pre-charge stage requires improvement and the statutory charging scheme is not delivering the expected benefits: premature decisions to charge have contributed to a high level of unsuccessful outcomes with performance significantly worse in the Crown Court than in the magistrates' courts.

In 2006-07 there were a lower proportion of convictions in the Crown Court than nationally, although performance in the magistrates' courts is showing signs of improvement. Overall the quality of case preparation and progression was variable, although there has been an improvement in successful outcomes in sensitive cases and hate crimes. The Area has worked hard to improve the way it undertakes the duty of disclosure of unused material to the defence, with positive results.

The proportion of effective trials is in line with national performance although long standing backlogs of trials due to lack of court capacity have contributed to a higher than national ineffective trial rate. The timeliness target from arrest to sentence for dealing with persistent young offenders was not met during 2006-07. It has improved but not consistently so.

The Area has proactively taken forward the CPS advocacy strategy and has a dedicated team of full-time Higher Court Advocates who are undertaking an increasing number of high profile and sensitive cases in the Crown Court.

The Area has demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the service to victims and witnesses. The No Witness No Justice initiative has been successfully embedded and compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims initiative is higher than nationally, although the quality of letters requires some improvement.

There has been mixed success in relation to the implementation and evaluation of the success of joint initiatives with criminal justice partners. Overall relationships with other agencies need to be strengthened, although there has been more collaborative planning for recent projects.

CPS HUMBERSIDE

Chief Crown Prosecutor Nigel Cowgill (now Barbara Petchey)		
Area Business Manager	Caron Skidmore	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	98.4 (35.6)	110.9 (40.9)
General budget	£3,954,561	£5,066,911
Prosecution costs	£1,895,600	£1,911,800
Date of assessment	8/2005	6/2007

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Excellent	Excellent	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Excellent	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Excellent	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Excellent	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Excellent
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	EXCELLENT EXCELLENT				

Summary

CPS Humberside serves the area covered by the Humberside Police. It has three offices, in Hull, Grimsby and Scunthorpe. The Area Headquarters is based at the Hull office.

The Area continues to perform extremely well and maintains its overall rating as Excellent. Four of the aspects assessed have an improved rating of which two are critical aspects. Three indicate some slippage, although in two they are still rated as Good. We have seen evidence of recent or planned actions that should enable even further improvement in the future.

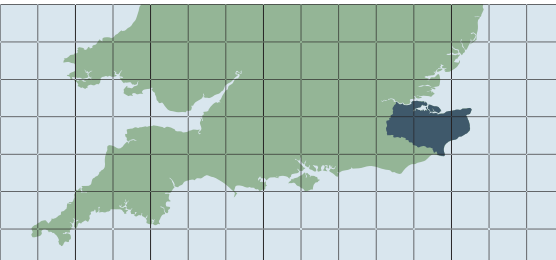
Performance against internal CPS targets is very encouraging and most outcomes are among the best of the 42 Areas and continuing to improve. There is a strong performance culture within CPS Humberside and managers have access to comprehensive data packs which are used to drive up performance where necessary.

There is scope to improve results in respect of some multi-agency targets such as public confidence in bringing offenders to justice, effective trial rates and the timeliness of dealing with persistent young offenders. There is a need to improve the management of custody time limits in complex cases involving multiple defendants and/or offences. There is also a need to improve the preparation of committals to the Crown Court in Hull.

There are good working relationships between the agencies, enabling initiatives to be implemented in a timely and efficient manner. There is strong leadership in the Area and priorities are identified and understood by staff. The service provided to victims and witnesses has improved considerably since the last OPA.

Pre-charge decision making continues to progress well and performance against the anticipated benefits targets is excellent. Sensitive cases, particularly those involving domestic violence, are handled very well. The deployment of Higher Court Advocates in the Crown Court has increased significantly.

CPS KENT

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Roger Coe-Salazar OBE		
Area Business Manager	Ken Mitchell (now Allen Jones (acting))		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	142.1 (55.9)	151.6 (54.7)	
General budget	£6,700,279	£7,663,168	
Prosecution costs	£3,104,900	£3,064,822	
Date of assessment	8/2005	12/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Excellent	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Fair	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Excellent	Good

Summary

CPS Kent serves the area covered by the Kent Police. It has seven offices, at Canterbury (two), Folkestone, Gravesend, Maidstone (two) and Medway. The Area Headquarters is based at one of the Maidstone offices.

The overall rating has not changed since the previous assessment in 2005. Performance has improved in one aspect and remained stable in eight, but has declined in four. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of the measures put in place following a change of Chief Crown Prosecutor but senior managers show a clear commitment and determination to bring about improvement, particularly in those aspects of work which have declined.

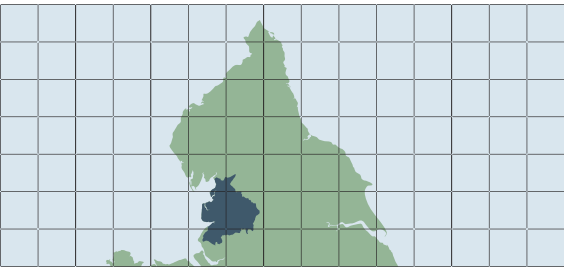
The quality of decision-making in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court is generally good and sensitive cases and hate crimes are being handled well. The overall conviction rates have improved since the last OPA and the overall outcomes in the magistrates' courts, and for hate crime cases, were excellent in 2006-07. The implementation of the charging scheme has not been fully successful. Although decision-making is generally good, there are some weaknesses at the pre-charge stage, which are being addressed as part of a plan to reduce the number of cases which have to be discontinued after charge. There is not always proper recording of decisions and actions taken.

Compliance with the prosecution's duties of disclosure of unused material remains Fair. The Area has worked closely with the police to monitor and improve police compliance with the disclosure provisions.

Cases generally take longer to progress through the courts than the national average. The proportion of ineffective trials is worse than the national average, although a high proportion is attributable to lack of court availability. The performance in processing cases involving persistent young offenders was poor in 2006-07 but it has improved significantly, with the Government target of 71 days from arrest to sentence being more than achieved in the three months to July 2007.

The No Witness No Justice initiative has not been fully effective; Kent does not benefit from dedicated Witness Care Units either within the police service or the CPS. The Area does not always send letters to victims in all appropriate cases, although those that are sent are timely. Senior managers are committed to engaging with the whole community, identifying and working with groups at particular risk of exclusion.

CPS LANCASHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Robert Marshall		
Area Business Manager	Ian Farrell		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	229 (83.7)	229 (87.8)	
General budget	£8,980,142	£10,027,735	
Prosecution costs	£3,584,150	£3,293,500	
Date of assessment	9/2005	7/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Lancashire serves the area covered by the Lancashire Constabulary. It has four offices, at Burnley, Blackpool, Lancaster and Preston. The Area Headquarters is based at the Preston office.

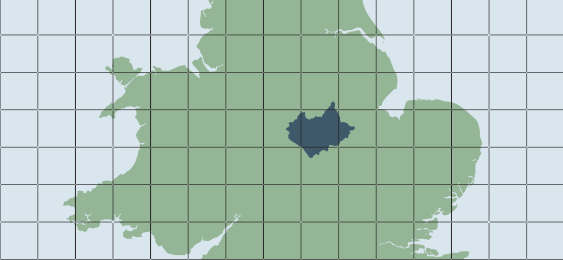
The Area has maintained an overall Good performance since the last OPA. During the intervening period it has experienced a significant increase in caseload, in both the magistrates' courts and Crown Court, implemented and piloted new initiatives, and restructured.

The standard of decision-making is good and conviction rates in Crown Court and sensitive and hate crime cases are above national levels. In magistrates' courts conviction rates are slightly below the national average, although in 2006-07 over 1,000 cases were dealt with effectively as conditional cautions, which might otherwise have gone through the courts.

Conditional cautioning was well implemented and the Area has worked effectively with its criminal justice partners in many respects. Targets for the numbers and value of orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act have been exceeded; the time taken to deal with persistent young offenders from arrest to sentence is well within Government targets; and the Area has made a significant contribution to the Lancashire criminal justice area exceeding its target for the number of offences brought to justice.

Some performance needs to be improved, in particular timely preparation and progression of magistrates' courts cases, and the service provided to victims and witnesses, where the Area has found it difficult to meet the enhanced standards of witness care now required. It needs to work with criminal justice partners to achieve the necessary improvements. CPS Lancashire has a sound management team. Senior managers are committed to engaging with the community and undertake a considerable amount work in this field.

CPS LEICESTERSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Kate Carty		
Area Business Manager	Jane Robinson		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	115 (41.6)	118.2 (41.1)	
General budget	£4,305,305	£5,281,570	
Prosecution costs	£1,829,000	£1,714,800	
Date of assessment	11/2005	12/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Poor	Poor	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Excellent	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Poor	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Poor	Managing resources	Good	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	POOR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Excellent	Excellent

Summary

CPS Leicester serves the area covered by the Leicestershire Constabulary. It has one office, in Leicester, where the Area Headquarters is based.

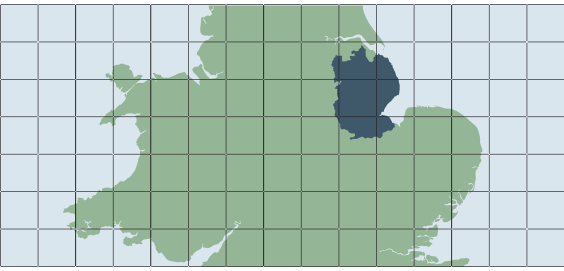
Since the OPA in 2005 performance has declined from Fair to Poor. An Area effectiveness inspection carried out in April 2007 highlighted substantial weaknesses and the need for CPS Leicestershire to focus its effort on some basic issues. It was apparent by the time of the assessment that the Area had begun to address problems and establish a stronger performance management regime. The recent appointment of a new permanent Chief Crown Prosecutor will further consolidate the changes being implemented.

Magistrates' courts case outcomes are worse than the national average and, despite an improvement of results from the previous year, the conviction rate remains significantly below the national average. Detailed examination of casework (during the April 2007 inspection) identified that the quality of review was generally sound, although supporting processes were undermining case ownership and accountability. There was evidence of more recent improvement. Crown Court outcomes are also below the national rate, although more recent results in the 2007-08 year are improving at a better rate than nationally. The establishment of statutory charging arrangements has been problematic, but there has been a more recent focus on delivering the initiative and working with the police to embed the scheme. The Area has yet to meet the expectations in relation to three out of six of the anticipated benefits of the scheme.

Handling of sensitive cases remains a strength and the creation of specialist youth and domestic violence teams is allowing the Area to handle these cases more consistently and reduce unsuccessful outcomes. More work needs to be done to improve the service to victims and witnesses. Community engagement activity is well marshalled and used to develop and improve processes and systems. There are effective processes in place to evaluate the benefit of community engagement activity.

The Area needs to take action to improve its budgetary forecasting and management. The budget was substantially underspent budget in 2006-07 and is currently on course to replicate this outcome in 2007-08.

CPS LINCOLNSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor Colin Chapman (now Narwal Jaswant)			
Area Business Manager Sue Lloyd (now Gail Pessol)			
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	64.1 (24.9)	69.9 (26.5)	
General budget	£2,519,860	£3,182,459	
Prosecution costs	£1,041,200	£1,316,250	
Date of assessment	6/2005	10/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Excellent
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
			Managing resources	Poor	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Excellent
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	EXCELLENT			

Summary

CPS Lincolnshire serves the area covered by the Lincolnshire Police. It has two offices, at Lincoln and Grantham. The Area Headquarters is based at Lincoln.

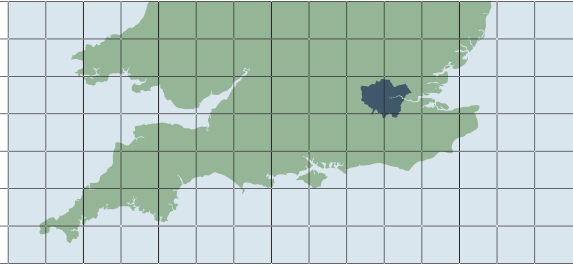
The Area has made considerable improvements in most aspects of performance since the last OPA, to the extent that it has progressed from Fair to Excellent in terms of its overall performance. The intervening period has been one of greater stability following the appointment of a new Chief Crown Prosecutor at the beginning of 2006. An effective performance management system, which includes detailed case reports for learning casework lessons and particularly robust operation of the Casework Quality Assurance scheme, has helped to ensure good conviction rates in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court and they continue to improve. Experienced prosecutors provide pre-charge decisions to the police of a high quality, although only a quarter of all decisions are provided through face-to-face consultation and this needs to improve.

Case progression arrangements, which include a dedicated trials lawyer in each Criminal Justice Unit to ensure consistency in summary trial preparation, have ensured that cases are taken forward quickly in the magistrates' and the Crown Court and cracked and ineffective trial rates (cases fixed for contested hearing which do not proceed on the appointed day) are better than the national average. Casework handling processes are sound. Disclosure of unused material is handled particularly well; decisions and actions are recorded clearly and in detail at each stage of the disclosure process. Staff training and a system of regular monitoring checks have improved the handling of cases involving a custody time limit. Recent action to improve performance against the persistent young offender pledge has seen a steady reduction (improvement) over the year to 50 days from arrest to sentence against the Government target of 71 days.

Clear change management structures and a more systematic approach to reviewing plans have helped in implementing recent national and local initiatives including the setting up of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court and the Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel. Despite some changes in composition since the last OPA, senior managers promote a corporate and inclusive approach to management, and have worked particularly well with criminal justice partners to achieve improvements within CPS and at local criminal justice area level. This is also reflected in the high level of commitment to community engagement from all staff. The Area provides a good service to victims and witnesses.

CPS LONDON

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Dru Sharpling CBE	
Operations Director	Lesley Burton	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	1,140.4 (389.8)	1,279.2 (450.4)
General budget	£53,527,512	£61,651,088
Prosecution costs	£28,545,476	£37,574,648
Date of assessment	12/2005	12/2007



Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Poor	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Poor	Poor
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Fair	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS London serves all 31 London boroughs, the City of Westminster, and the City of London. It deals with cases from the Metropolitan, City of London and British Transport Police and is the largest of the 42 CPS Areas, accounting for approximately 18% of Crown Court and 13% of magistrates' courts caseload nationally. The Area is divided into three geographical Sectors: North & East, South, and West, and has two non-geographical Sectors, Serious Casework and the Fraud Prosecution Service (the latter was not included in the OPA).

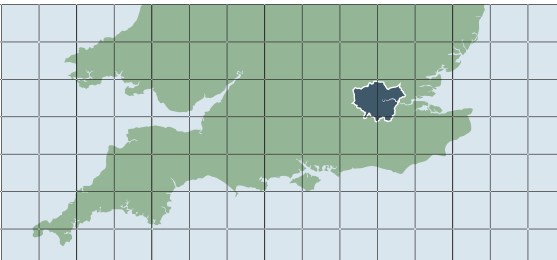
CPS London has maintained its overall Fair assessment since the last OPA. The Area is fully aware of where improvements are needed in all aspects of its work and has a proactive approach to joint working with partners to deliver these. It has played a significant role in the development of the London Reform Programme, which provides the overarching criminal justice strategy for London, requiring a holistic approach to service delivery.

The volume of cases in a number of high crime boroughs impacts adversely on the overall Area performance, overshadowing improvements in an increasing number of better performing boroughs. The conviction rates in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court are both worse than the national averages despite a trend of improvement over a sustained period. The Area recognises the need to refocus its efforts on the Crown Court. Casework outcomes generally still fall well behind national averages and outcomes. The rate of unsuccessful outcomes for hate crime is also significantly worse than nationally, although there is good strategic leadership and appropriate structures in place to drive improvements in performance.

Statutory charging has been implemented with mixed success. Timeliness of charging decisions is better than the national average but the Area is only achieving two of the six expected benefits of the scheme, although in the remaining measures there has been some improvement. There has been a concerted effort with the police to improve the operation and benefits of the charging scheme. The management of custody time limits remains poor and needs improvement. Control of the budget was weak in 2006-07 and there was a substantial overspend.

The Area is committed to improving standards of care to victims and witnesses but actual performance is variable. Senior managers also demonstrate a strong commitment to engaging with, and securing the confidence of, local communities.

CPS LONDON SERIOUS CASEWORK SECTOR

Sector Director	René Barclay		
Sector Business Manager	Clare Toogood		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	98 (24.4)	106.4 (31.8)	
General budget	£3,288,637	£5,433,000	
Prosecution costs	£2,137,287	£12,342,000	
Date of assessment	12/2005	11/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Not assessed	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

The Serious Casework Sector forms part of CPS London, which serves the area covered by the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police. It is based in the CPS London Headquarters at the Ludgate Hill office.

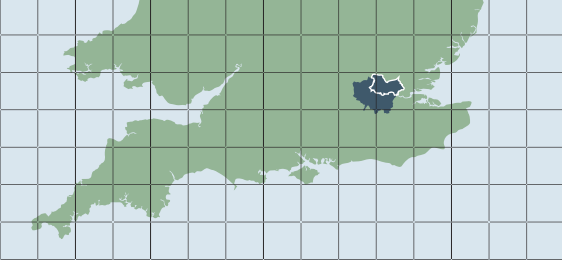
The Sector has maintained its overall Good performance since the last OPA, and has seen improvement in four aspects (two of which were significant improvements within their existing ratings), with decline in only one. The Sector's casework, taking in some of the most complex and serious cases from across London, carries the risk of significant damage to public confidence if not handled properly. The high degree of teamwork between the Sector, the police, and prosecuting barristers has helped secure the standards required in case preparation and presentation, and an improvement in the handling of sensitive cases.

The Sector needs to address the approach to the prosecution's duties of disclosure. There is also work to do to ensure that lawyers acquire and maintain the necessary advocacy experience and skills to meet the Sector's needs and the target for use of Higher Court Advocates. More care is needed when recording or calculating custody time limits, although there have been no failures.

In the Crown Court, successful outcomes are better than the national average. Whilst they are worse than nationally in the magistrates' courts, the small number of cases and the nature of the Sector's casework make drawing conclusions problematic.

The Sector has paid closer attention to delivering change, business planning and performance management since the last OPA, with two key pieces of work the Complex Casework Project and the Victims' Advocate Scheme, being well managed. Generally, the care of victims and witnesses is of a high standard.

CPS LONDON NORTH & EAST SECTOR

Sector Director	Wendy Williams		
Sector Business Manager	Bob King		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	357.7 (130)	398.8 (113.8)	
General budget	£14,403,500	£15,700,000	
Prosecution costs	£10,125,500	£7,498,315	
Date of assessment	12/2005	11/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Poor	Poor	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Poor	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Poor	Poor
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Poor	Managing resources	Fair	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	POOR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair

Summary

CPS London North & East Sector covers 11 boroughs. The Sector has offices at Stratford and Ludgate Hill and in five police stations at Bethnal Green, Chingford, Edmonton, Holborn and Stoke Newington. There is also the Pathfinder unit based at Snaresbrook Crown Court. The Sector Headquarters is based at the Stratford office.

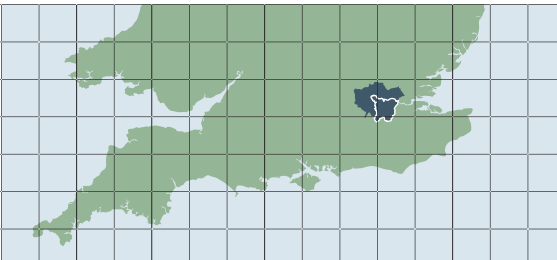
The Sector has fallen off in its overall performance from Fair to Poor. Within this it has improved in one aspect, remained stable in seven (with four showing significant improvement within their existing ratings) and declined in four.

The Sector has some way to go in fully realising the benefits of charging, particularly in respect of Crown Court casework. The conviction rates in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court have improved but remain below the national average, especially in the Crown Court. The proportion of cases discontinued in the magistrates' courts was better than the national average, but the number of committal cases discharged because the prosecution is not ready to proceed requires specific urgent action. Compliance with the duty of disclosure has greatly improved. There are significant problems with files not being available for court and adjournments contributing to overall delay. There have been a number of monitoring failures in custody time limits cases, although expiry and review dates are accurately recorded on files.

Implementation of national initiatives is managed on an Area basis, although the Sector was involved in the implementation of integrated prosecution teams in some of its boroughs. Changes in managers and structures have provided challenges to both continuity and communication through the Sector. Joint working with criminal justice partners has improved, and there are signs of improving performance in key aspects of casework. Restrictions were imposed following a budget overspend in 2006-07. Although managers have tried to make some value for money improvements, this has been hampered to some extent by a high sickness rate.

There is a commitment to community engagement, particularly at senior level. Much of the Sector's activity has related to engagement with its criminal justice partners but it is now beginning to target priority groups. Performance in notifying victims when a charge is altered or dropped needs to be improved, although progress continues to be made towards meeting the minimum requirements of witness care under the No Witness No Justice initiative.

CPS LONDON SOUTH SECTOR

Sector Director	Simon Clements		
Sector Business Manager	Clare Toogood		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	389.4 (137.6)	435.7 (162)	
General budget	£15,776,100	£19,087,902	
Prosecution costs	£7,251,500	£10,067,897	
Date of assessment	12/2005	11/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Poor	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Poor	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Poor	Poor
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
			Managing resources	Good	Poor
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS London South Sector covers nine boroughs and the City of London. It has six offices, at the Cooperage, Hillgate House, Croydon, Sidcup, Bishopsgate Police Station and Bexleyheath Police Station. The Sector's Headquarters is based at the Cooperage office.

The Sector has made some progress since the last OPA, but has not been able to sustain performance in all aspects and its rating remains Fair. A number of factors contributed to the comparatively slow rate of progress including, significant changes in the management team and organisational structure, changes to Crown Court caseload and the need to prepare for initiatives to be rolled-out in 2007-08. There were indications of further improvements in 2007-08 although more work is still required, particularly in respect of Crown Court cases.

The statutory charging scheme has yet to deliver the expected level of benefits which, combined with some significant weaknesses in case progression systems has led to comparatively high levels of unsuccessful case outcomes, particularly in Crown Court cases.

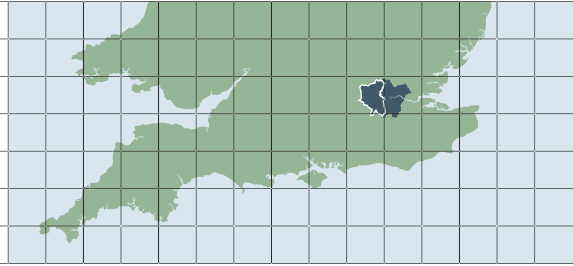
The Sector was involved in a number of pilots as part of the London Reform Programme and in implementing national initiatives. Some of these have already shown positive signs which, if maintained, should lead to improved performance. Relationships with partner criminal justice agencies were generally positive and collaborative, which augers well for the future when significant change is planned. The service provided to victims and witnesses did not progress as anticipated.

Financial controls were weak at Sector and Area level in 2006-07. Greater stability in staff and managers, changes to reporting lines, and improved systems are factors that have contributed to better performance in 2007-08. Good progress was made in increasing deployment of CPS resources to court. The greater use of prosecutors and Higher Court Advocates in court produced some financial benefits, but impacted adversely on case preparation and progression systems.

Despite the Sector's endeavours to improve the management of custody time limits there were still too many occasions where non-compliance with procedures led to failures. Some positive work has been undertaken to focus on sensitive cases, although this has not led to substantial improvements in case outcomes in the period covered by this assessment. The appointment of specialist rape advocates was a positive development.

CPS LONDON WEST SECTOR

Sector Director	Nazir Afzal OBE	
Sector Business Manager	Richard Heatley (now Andrew Torrington)	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	425 (125.4)	365 (128.5)
General budget	£14,825,400	£15,050,000
Prosecution costs	£6,662,900	£5,013,900
Date of assessment	12/2005	11/2007



Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Poor	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Poor	Disclosure	Fair	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Poor
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Fair	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS London West Sector serves an area covered by the Metropolitan Police Force. It has three offices, at Harrow, Kingston-upon-Thames and Ludgate Hill. The Sector Headquarters is based at the Harrow office.

The Sector has received the same overall Fair rating as at the last OPA. Its underlying performance has been mixed, with an improved rating in three aspects and improvement in four aspects within their existing rating. The strengthened emphasis on performance at borough level should assist the Sector, where necessary, in improving service delivery. Some major changes have been delivered successfully, for example the Sector restructuring and the creation of a centralised fee payment unit, with benefits being realised as a result. However three aspects, particularly the operation of the custody time limits system and management of the budget in 2006-07, give rise to significant concerns.

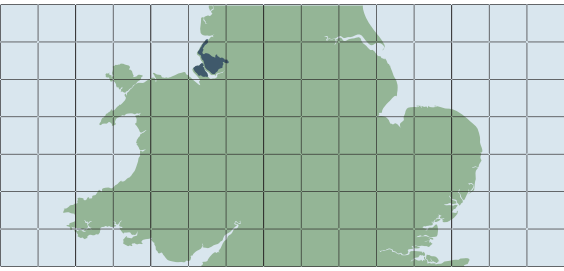
Managers have worked hard to improve the operation of the pre-charge decision scheme, and this is starting to lead to a reduction in the proportion of cases where no further action is directed. There has also been an improvement in the handling of magistrates' courts cases, with an increase in the conviction rate since the last OPA. In respect of Crown Court cases there has been a much smaller increase in the conviction rate.

Cases are still not always progressed effectively and the timeliness of compliance with court orders and some actions associated with compliance with the duties of disclosure needed improving. Too many cases are still discharged at the committal stage because the prosecution are not ready and an adjournment is refused.

The treatment of victims and witnesses was mixed. Compliance at court with the Prosecutors' Pledge was effective, with positive feedback from witnesses, but far too few letters were being sent to victims explaining why a case had been dropped or the charge substantially reduced.

Managers have a high profile, which continues to be developed within the local communities and a wide range of community engagement activity is undertaken, some of which has a national dimension.

CPS MERSEYSIDE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Paul Whittaker		
Area Business Manager	Andrew Illingworth (now Angela Walsh)		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	251.6 (85.1)	267.4 (92.4)	
General budget	£9,707,279	£10,940,675	
Prosecution costs	£3,910,000	£4,254,800	
Date of assessment	10/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Poor
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Merseyside serves the area covered by the Merseyside Police. It has five offices, at Liverpool (three), Crosby and Birkenhead. The Area Headquarters is based in Liverpool.

Conviction rates in magistrates' courts and Crown Court cases are slightly below the national average, but is improving in the magistrates' courts. More attention needs to be paid to case preparation and progression particularly in magistrates' courts cases, and to the quality assurance systems, which are not yet effective.

In the Crown Court, the Area is using its own Higher Court Advocates to drive up standards, but needs to maintain its focus on witness care, which impacts on case outcomes significantly in Merseyside.

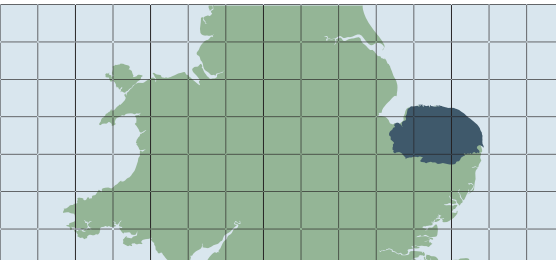
Generally the Area works well with partners. There has been effective work with the police on confiscation of criminal assets and persistent young offenders are dealt with within the national target of 71 days from arrest to sentence. The introduction of new IT systems with the police was managed effectively.

CPS Merseyside has been through a period of considerable organisational change set against a background of falling caseload; the consequent reduction in budget in the current year means that change is continuing. The caseload still contains some very serious crime, but some of the more minor cases are now being dealt with by the police issuing warnings or fixed penalty notices, which has shifted the balance. A period with no permanent Area Business Manager and the significant commitment by the Chief Crown Prosecutor to national initiatives have also presented challenges.

The Area is working hard to engage with local communities and sensitive cases, such as the murder of Anthony Walker and the death of a child from injuries inflicted by a dog, are handled well.

Systems for monitoring custody time limits need to be strengthened substantially.

CPS NORFOLK

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Peter Tidey		
Area Business Manager	Catherine Scholefield		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	86.8 (30.2)	87.3 (30.2)	
General budget	£3,326,338	£3,663,679	
Prosecution costs	£1,330,300	£1,362,700	
Date of assessment	12/2005	9/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Excellent	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT	Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair

Summary

CPS Norfolk serves the area covered by the Norfolk Constabulary. It has one office, at Norwich, where the Area Headquarters is based.

The Area has demonstrated strong all round performance achieving a rating of Excellent in one aspect and Good in ten, a significant achievement giving it an overall rating of Excellent.

Statutory charging is well established and a good level of benefits is being realised as a result of this. In magistrates' courts cases, the proportion of cases resulting in conviction is increasing and is better than the national average. The standard of case review is generally satisfactory and case preparation timely. There are effective arrangements in place with other criminal justice agencies for progressing cases. There is a high rate of effective trials and this continues to improve.

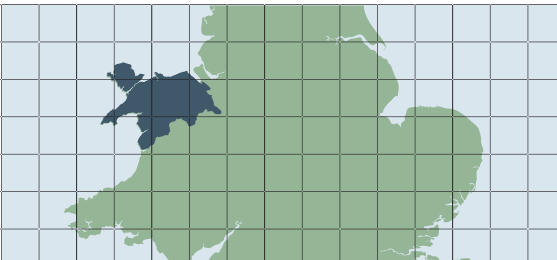
In Crown Court cases, the conviction rate has improved and in 2006-07 was one of the best in the country. The rates of judge ordered and judge directed acquittals are also significantly better than national averages. There is a good standard of case review and preparation. Performance in the timeliness of dealing with persistent young offenders declined in 2006-07 but this has been addressed and performance between April-August 2007 has been excellent, Norfolk ranking first equal out of the 42 Areas.

Good efforts have been made to improve compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims scheme, whereby prosecutors write to victims when a charge is discontinued or substantially altered explaining the reasons for this. The level of service provided by the Witness Care Units improved but there are some concerns that progress has stalled as a result of the recent amalgamation of the four units into a single one.

Successful outcomes in sensitive and hate crime cases are excellent and the system of case allocation ensures that sensitive cases are handled by a prosecutor with appropriate expertise and experience.

There is sound leadership and the Area has demonstrated effectively its capacity to implement change and improve. Nationally-driven projects have been implemented successfully.

CPS NORTH WALES

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Ed Beltrami		
Area Business Manager	Wray Ferguson		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	68.5 (25.1)	69.9 (24.8)	
General budget	£3,018,452	£3,374,029	
Prosecution costs	£699,400	£820,200	
Date of assessment	8/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Excellent	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Excellent	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Excellent	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	GOOD	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Good
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Good

Summary

CPS North Wales serves the area covered by North Wales Police. It has two offices, at Wrexham and Colwyn Bay. The Area Headquarters is based at the Wrexham office.

Having demonstrated improvement in six aspects of performance, and a decline in only one, the overall rating for CPS North Wales has improved significantly from Fair to Good since the last OPA.

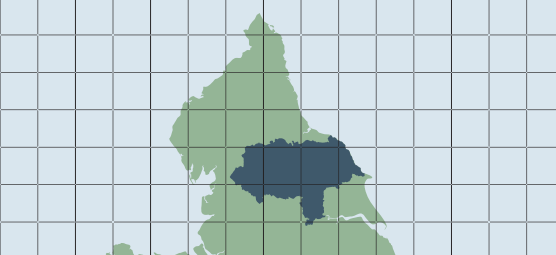
The proportion of cases that end in conviction is better than the national average in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. Performance continues to improve despite the pressure of a 25% increase in Crown Court work since the last OPA. This success is largely due to sound decision-making and the proactive case management demonstrated by prosecutors and administrative staff, who work with managers as an effective team.

The handling of sensitive cases and those involving hate crimes is also better than the national performance. The improvement in outcomes is primarily due to improvements in the handling of domestic violence cases. Substantial progress has also been made in engaging with minority groups such as the local lesbian, gay and bisexual community.

Cases are processed at a good rate and trials are usually ready to go ahead on time, although the Area has identified a problem in relation to the timeliness of cases involving persistent young offenders. Senior managers have worked with the police and the Courts Service to improve systems for joint case handling. This has led to improvement, but more still needs to be done to strengthen the timely preparation of cases for committal to the Crown Court. Further joint work is also required to improve the frequency and quality of Direct Communication with Victims and witness liaison generally.

Overall, senior managers have shown themselves to be effective leaders, and this has helped ensure success in a number of recent internal projects which are intended to help improve the service provided to the community. In particular, statutory charging has been effectively implemented, under which the CPS has assumed responsibility for the initial decision whether to charge in relation to more serious and contested cases.

CPS NORTH YORKSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Robert Turnbull		
Area Business Manager	Andrew Illingworth		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	67.9 (27)	71.1 (27.5)	
General budget	£3,020,960	£3,289,028	
Prosecution costs	£1,103,300	£1,258,360	
Date of assessment	8/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Excellent	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Poor
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	FAIR			

Summary

CPS North Yorkshire serves the area covered by the North Yorkshire Police. It has three offices, one each in York, Harrogate and Scarborough. The Area Headquarters is based at the York office.

The overall performance assessment has fallen back from Good to Fair, primarily because of poor resource management. Performance improved in one aspect and improved within its existing rating in two. It was maintained in five and declined in four. The Area has undergone significant structural changes since the last OPA to enable it to deal more effectively with the difficulties inherent in having to cover four Crown Court centres and six magistrates' courts.

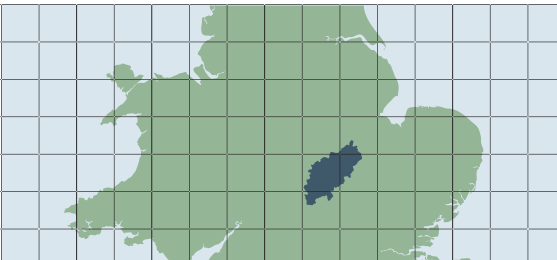
Key measures, such as ineffective trial and successful outcome (convictions) rates, improved. In the magistrates' courts, whilst the overall conviction rate was marginally better than nationally, the percentage of cases discontinued was worse than the national average, and there is a significant number of cases dropped on public interest grounds. In the Crown Court, the overall conviction rate was better than nationally. Nevertheless, in all cases there was room to improve how the Area prepares and manages its cases, and learns lessons from adverse case results.

The Area is comfortably out-performing the national target and national average for timeliness of cases involving persistent young offenders. There is also strong performance on confiscation of criminal assets and in domestic violence allegations. Sensitive cases are usually handled well. There is a need to ensure that applications for special measures for witnesses are timely, but generally, victims and witnesses receive a good service.

Whilst the Area needs to work more closely with the police on joint delivery issues, generally the relationships between the CPS and other agencies are good. Confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system in North Yorkshire to bring offenders to justice grew in 2006 to 43.2% compared to 42.3% nationally.

More focus is needed on resource management. Financial controls have strengthened, but the Area has for the past seven years consistently overspent its budget and did so again in 2006-07. There are recent signs of sustainable improvement in financial management.

CPS NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Grace Ononiwu OBE		
Area Business Manager	Fiona Campbell		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	65.2 (25)	66.9 (22.5)	
General budget	£2,633,300	£2,899,316	
Prosecution costs	£1,108,800	£1,070,300	
Date of assessment	10/2005	12/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Poor	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Northamptonshire serves the area covered by the Northamptonshire Police. It has one office, at Northampton, where the Area Headquarters is based.

The overall assessment remains stable at Fair but the underlying picture is a very positive one.

The overall conviction rate in relation to magistrates' courts cases has improved and continues to do so. During 2006-07 it was significantly below the national average but recent months have seen it exceed that average. Crown Court casework has improved, with the overall conviction rate substantially better than nationally. There is also a trend of improvement.

The Area has worked more closely with the police to improve the arrangements for statutory charging and the Area is now consistently realising five out of the six expected benefits of the scheme.

There are effective trial rates which are significantly better than the national averages in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court.

Prosecutors deal well with their duties in relation to disclosure of unused material to the defence. The procedures for monitoring cases involving custody time limits need to be tightened.

There have been improvements in the service provided to victims and witnesses but the Area needs to be able to satisfy itself that the minimum requirements of witness care under the national No Witness No Justice initiative are being met.

The results of the 2006 staff survey and a more recent Investors in People review both confirm high level of staff satisfaction.

The Area's engagement with the community has focused on victims and witnesses. It is now working with the police to identify and prioritise those parts of the county where community safety is a particular issue and focus on the relevant communities.

CPS NORTHUMBRIA

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Nicola Reasbeck	
Area Business Manager	Adele Clark (now Brenda Flint)	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	234 (90.2)	241.6 (86.2)
General budget	£9,317,673	£10,176,613
Prosecution costs	£2,652,400	£2,955,700
Date of assessment	9/2005	10/2007

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Fair	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Northumbria serves the area covered by the Northumbria Police. It has an office in Newcastle upon Tyne and teams based in co-located units at police stations in Bedlington, North Tyneside, Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside. The Area Headquarters is based at the Newcastle office.

The Area has improved performance in one aspect since the last OPA, although performance has declined in four aspects and needs improvement, in particular the service to victims and witnesses. The Area is aware of where improvements are required and had embarked on a restructuring programme prior to the inspection taking place. However, it needs to be clear on the management structures and mechanisms necessary to ensure that the desired improvements are achieved.

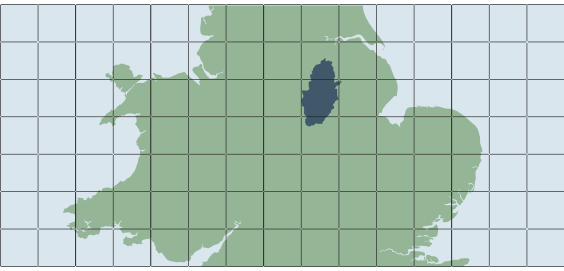
Northumbria performs well in terms of casework outcomes and has been consistently above national performance, although there has been a slow decline over a significant period of time. The conviction rates in the Crown Court and magistrates' courts still remain better than national averages and Crown Court cases are generally handled well. In contrast, the management and preparation of magistrates' courts casework is not as good and there is evidence that cases tend to drift through the system, impacting on timeliness and case preparation.

The handling of sensitive cases and hate crime is sound with performance again better than national levels. The work undertaken in relation to allegations of rape is impressive, supported by the Chief Crown Prosecutor who leads at national level.

Statutory charging has been implemented successfully and the Area is achieving four of the six expected benefits. However, it is failing to meet national discontinuance rate targets in the magistrates' and the Crown Court, with performance declining against an improving national trend.

Success in terms of joint victim and witness care has been slower in coming. Police staffing difficulties and the inconsistency of performance between the seven Witness Care Units have prevented the Area from meeting the listed 14 obligations and it is unclear how many are being met. However, an agreement to centralise all the units in the Newcastle offices should have significant impact on performance.

CPS NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor Kate Carty (now Judith Walker OBE)			
Area Business Manager Gail Pessol (now Adele Clarke)			
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	168.4 (60.1)	154.8 (52.9)	
General budget	£6,069,220	£6,378,522	
Prosecution costs	£1,603,400	£1,796,300	
Date of assessment	8/2005	7/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Poor	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Poor	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Excellent
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Fair
			Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Nottinghamshire serves the area covered by the Nottinghamshire Police. It has two offices, at Nottingham and Mansfield. The Area Headquarters is based at the Nottingham office.

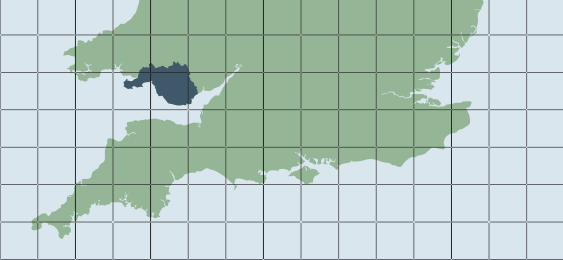
2006-07 was a transitional year for Nottinghamshire. Some significant changes to their structures and the management team took place and this will have impacted on delivery in the short term. They have built a foundation from which they can improve, but in doing so, they 'took their eye off the ball' for some important existing initiatives. This has contributed to the mixed results of this assessment whereby four aspects show improvement, but another four show a decline against the last OPA. The Area has the capacity to improve its rating if it can build on improvements implemented in the latter months of 2006-07.

Casework outcomes are mixed but tend to be in the lower quartile of CPS national performance for magistrates' courts cases, sensitive cases and pre-charge decisions. The Area has put a strong focus on its serious casework and this has led to better results in the Crown Court. Performance with regard to the handling of cases involving persistent young offenders is very good.

There were signs of progress and actions towards the end of the year that auger well for the future for some aspects of work, for example the handling of disclosure of unused material to the defence. The Area has made concerted efforts to improve management of custody time limits, resulting in an Excellent rating. It has done well to bring spend in line with budget allocation, following sustained reductions in caseload and hence its share of the national budget. The Area has also been able to make good progress in terms of the level of deployment of in-house prosecutors, designated caseworkers and Higher Court Advocates.

There is a need to improve the provision and quality of pre-charge decisions. In some instances police co-operation will be required but others, such as the quality of decisions, are within CPS control. Prosecutors are struggling with case progression, which is contributing towards the high level of ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts. Whilst the service provided to victims and witnesses shows some signs of improvement, further work is required to deliver a consistently good service. The management of major projects and initiatives needs to be tighter to ensure that the anticipated benefits are achieved.

CPS SOUTH WALES

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Christopher Woolley		
Area Business Manager	Mike Grist		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	208.4 (71.5)	223.1 (78.9)	
General budget	£7,849,691	£9,493,620	
Prosecution costs	£3,605,000	£3,830,000	
Date of assessment	10/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Poor	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Poor	Poor
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Fair	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good

Summary

CPS South Wales serves the area covered by the South Wales Police. It has five offices, one at Cardiff, two at Swansea, and two at Merthyr Tydfil. The Area Headquarters is based at the Cardiff office.

The Area has improved its level of performance in three aspects (within their existing rating), remained stable in nine and declined in one since the last OPA, and its overall performance was Fair.

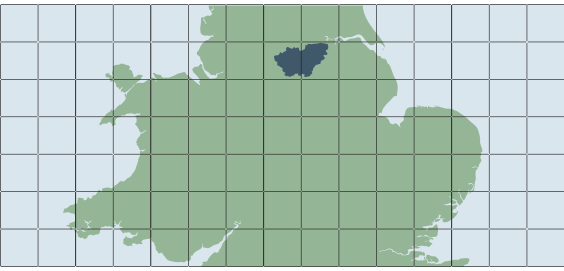
Business is divided between three geographical divisions and there is considerable autonomy at divisional level which has resulted in different systems, processes and mixed performance in relation to casework across the three divisions. The Area has regressed in terms of the operation of the statutory charging scheme; it has been difficult to get the scheme accepted as core business and action needs to be taken to improve this. The Area's conviction rate in the Crown Court is better than nationally whilst the rate in the magistrates' courts is not as good. Crown Court cases are handled well and generally progress through the system, whereas the performance in magistrates' courts cases is less good, but once cases enter the court system they usually progress in a timely manner.

Considerable work has been undertaken to address deficiencies in relation to the disclosure of unused material and some improvements have been delivered, but not across South Wales as a whole and further improvement is required.

The introduction of the Witness Care Units with the police has been successful and enables the Area to deliver a good service to victims and witnesses. Similarly the handling of sensitive cases and hate crime is sound and has produced some very good results, as has some of the joint work supporting the three Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

The lack of strategic and Area-wide approaches has impacted on the implementation of initiatives and service delivery. The Area needs to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver further improvements through a corporate and consistent approach across all three divisions, more robust management of projects and performance, and by ensuring effective partnerships with other agencies.

CPS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor Judith Walker OBE (now Nigel Cowgill)			
Area Business Manager	Christopher Day		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	154.1 (<i>58.8</i>)	155 (<i>63.6</i>)	
General budget	£6,908,956	£7,535,756	
Prosecution costs	£3,094,100	£2,937,500	
Date of assessment	8/2005	9/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Excellent	Good	Delivering change	Good	Excellent
			Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Good	Excellent
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	EXCELLENT EXCELLENT				

Summary

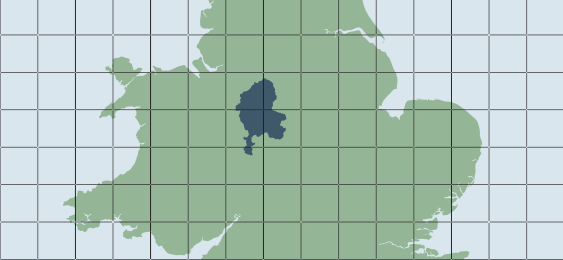
CPS South Yorkshire serves the area covered by South Yorkshire Police. It has four offices, at Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. The Area Headquarters is based at the Sheffield office.

In 2006-07, the proportion of successful outcomes (cases ending in conviction) in the Crown Court and magistrates' courts was ahead of target and the national average, while still improving. The proportion of successful outcomes in sensitive and hate crime cases also increased ahead of the national target and performance. With its partners, the Area has exceeded the targets set for the number of offences brought to justice and there is prompt resolution of cases involving persistent young offenders. It is also delivering a good service to victims and witnesses.

The quality of legal decision-making is high in the charging centres, where arrangements for joint working are continuously reviewed and improved. The quality of post-charge legal work and case preparation is also generally good, although reviews are not always timely or well documented, which can lead to delay. There is a joint approach between the CPS and other criminal justice agencies towards analysing the reasons for any cases being dropped by the prosecution, but further joint work is needed to reduce the high level of cases (substantially more than the national average in 2006-07) discharged at the committal stage because the prosecution was not ready and the court refused an adjournment, or no application was made in anticipation of refusal.

Overall, the Area's integrated approach to leadership, performance management and change management lies behind its creditable performance. It has worked hard to maintain high standards, and performance and change management systems are in place to ensure that improvement continues. However, the Area needs to focus more on some narrower aspects of casework such as discharged committals, disclosure and custody time limits to ensure that weaker performance in these aspects does not undermine the continuing improvement elsewhere.

CPS STAFFORDSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Harry Ireland		
Area Business Manager	Brian Laybourne		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	123.7 (39.6)	129.6 (48)	
General budget	£4,576,651	£5,663,116	
Prosecution costs	£1,433,500	£1,924,400	
Date of assessment	10/2005	9/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Good	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Excellent	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Excellent	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Fair
			Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Staffordshire serves the area covered by the Staffordshire Police. It has two offices, at Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. The Area Headquarters is based at the Stoke-on-Trent office.

The quality of prosecutors' decision-making at the pre-charge stage is generally good and the statutory charging scheme is now well embedded with most of the expected benefits being realised. However, the needs of victims and witnesses are not always identified at time of the pre-charge decision.

In 2006-07 there was a higher proportion of convictions in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court than national performance. Cases are generally well prepared, in particular there has been an improvement in the proportion of successful outcomes in sensitive cases and hate crimes. Nevertheless, joint arrangements with other criminal justice agencies for progressing cases through the courts would benefit from strengthening.

There has been a noticeable decline in performance in relation to the duties of disclosure of unused material to the defence, which was previously assessed as Excellent. The Area has identified this and action is being taken to address weaknesses.

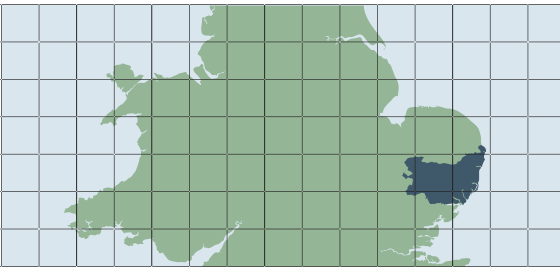
The proportion of effective trials is better in the magistrates' courts than the Crown Court and there is scope to improve joint case progression systems. Additionally, the Area needs to work with its criminal justice partners to speed up the processing of persistent young offenders so that the Government target of 71 days from arrest to sentence can be met.

There is effective joint planning for new initiatives, but Staffordshire needs to ensure that it does not lose sight of ongoing requirements for initiatives once implementation has been achieved.

Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure a better service is provided to victims and witnesses so that they are kept informed throughout the court process.

CPS SUFFOLK

Chief Crown Prosecutor Ken Caley (now Paula Abrahams)		
Area Business Manager	Caroline Gilbert	
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	65.6 (28.6)	68.6 (26.1)
General budget	£2,807,297	£3,103,000
Prosecution costs	£894,700	£1,135,100
Date of assessment	11/2005	7/2007



Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Excellent	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Excellent
			Managing resources	Good	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Excellent	Excellent
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	EXCELLENT GOOD				

Summary

CPS Suffolk serves the area covered by the Suffolk Police. It has three offices, at Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. The Area Headquarters is based at the Ipswich office.

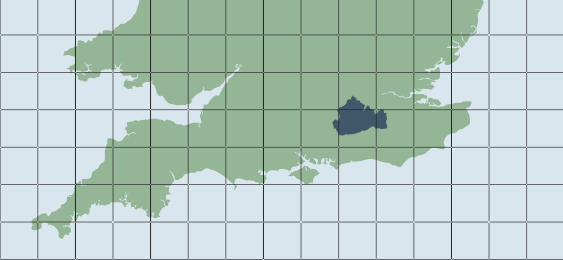
Since the last OPA when performance was consistently good across all aspects, it has now become more mixed. This has meant that the overall assessment has declined from Excellent to Good.

The proportion of unsuccessful outcomes in the magistrates' courts has improved and overall the rate is Excellent. However, performance in the Crown Court has declined as a result of a high proportion of jury acquittals. Overall cases are well prepared and progressed, and the rate of effective trials in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court is significantly higher than the national average. Persistent young offenders were brought to justice within the target of 71 days during 2006-07. There is, however, room for improvement in the duty of disclosure of unused material in the magistrates' courts.

Statutory charging is now embedded and some of the expected benefits are being realised, with performance in respect of magistrates' courts cases better than those in the Crown Court.

The Area deals well with sensitive cases and hate crimes and the successful outcomes for hate crimes were significantly better than the national average in 2006-07. There is a high level of commitment to meeting the needs of victims and witnesses and the service provided is good. The Area has maintained a proactive community engagement strategy and has ensured active participation in a diverse range of community events.

CPS SURREY

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Portia Ragnauth		
Area Business Manager	Ben Widdicombe		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	62.2 (24)	66.4 (23.1)	
General budget	£2,850,789	£3,202,877	
Prosecution costs	£1,805,000	£1,778,000	
Date of assessment	12/2005	9/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Poor	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Poor
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Poor	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Poor
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Fair	Poor
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Poor
Leadership	Fair	Poor	Delivering change	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Poor	Managing resources	Poor	Poor
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	POOR	Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Surrey serves the area covered by the Surrey Police. It has one office, at Guildford, that includes the Area Headquarters.

CPS Surrey performed weakly for much of 2006-07, following a poorly planned restructure in the early part of the year. The subsequent administrative systems were inadequate and had a significant knock-on impact on many aspects of work including case progression, casework outcomes and the budget. The restructure and subsequent difficulties led to tensions between the criminal justice agencies in Surrey. Managers were unable to identify timely, effective solutions to the difficulties they encountered. The management of custody time limits, handling of sensitive cases, and compliance with the prosecutor's duty of disclosure were all weak and in need of improvement.

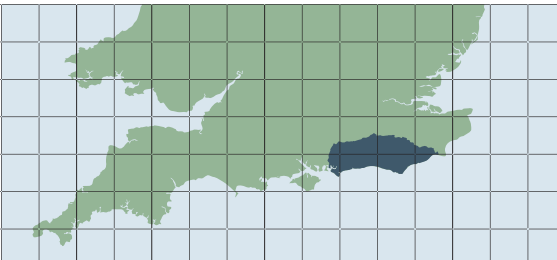
Some improvement in the provision of pre-charge decisions occurred in 2006-07, although there was still a need to increase the level of face-to-face advice given to police officers. The Area had the highest level of jury acquittals in the country and detailed analysis needs to be undertaken to understand the reasons for this. Other than that, Crown Court outcomes were generally better than found nationally.

The Area was clearly committed to providing high levels of victim and witness care. Some improvements were made in 2006-07 despite the undoubted difficulty faced by the Witness Care Unit, caused by the ineffectiveness of CPS administrative systems. If the improvements seen in early 2007-08 in clearing administrative backlogs can be maintained, witness care should also benefit.

Despite the difficulties encountered performance against the Public Service Agreement targets was generally satisfactory.

Changes to the management team have taken place and a recovery programme was launched in February 2007 with some assistance from CPS Headquarters. By the time of this assessment it was clear that plans were in place to bring about improvements in many aspects of work and, in some, progress was already being made. Of particular importance was the progress made in reducing administrative backlogs, which, if sustained, should be a catalyst for more widespread improvements. There was, however, still much to do and this will require the ongoing commitment of the management team and staff if the Area is to reap the benefits of its efforts since February.

CPS SUSSEX

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Sarah Jane Gallagher		
Area Business Manager	Iain Everett (now Sam Goddard)		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	122 (52.1)	138.2 (54.7)	
General budget	£5,474,696	£6,452,110	
Prosecution costs	£3,100,300	£3,132,700	
Date of assessment	10/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
			Managing resources	Good	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Good	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Sussex serves the area covered by the Sussex Police. It has five offices, two in Brighton and others in Chichester, Crawley and Eastbourne. The Area Headquarters is based in Brighton.

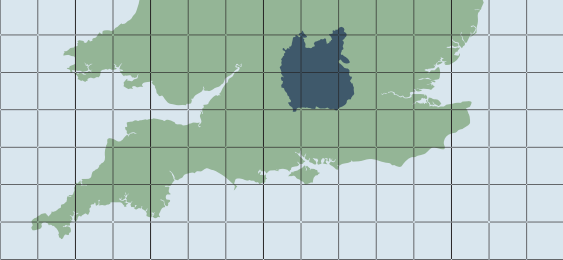
The overall performance of has remained stable at Good since the last OPA, with improvement in four aspects offset by decline in three.

Statutory charging is now embedded, although not all benefits are being realised. Conviction rates in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court have improved, but not to the same extent as across the CPS nationally. An increase in caseload, particularly in the Crown Court, has affected some aspects of performance including aspects of case preparation such as committals for trial. Nevertheless case review and preparation is generally sound and the prosecution's obligations in relation to unused material are dealt with particularly well.

Senior managers promote a corporate approach and staff at all levels are involved in developing Area plans. The Area's deployment of designated caseworkers (non-lawyers with special training authorised to conduct certain types of proceedings in the magistrates' courts) improved. Although in-house court coverage is slightly worse than the national average this is being addressed through negotiations with the Courts Service to improve deployment. Managers have maintained their commitment to managing performance and are proactive with their criminal justice partners in promoting new initiatives. The Area has adapted its Casework Quality Assurance system to allow some self-assessment by the reviewing lawyer followed by discussion of issues with the Unit Head. There are some concerns about the effectiveness of this approach in practice.

Sussex has now developed a strategy for community engagement, although it still needs to improve its approach to ensure objectives in the strategy are met. Public confidence in relation to the ability of the CJS to bring offenders to justice has declined as it has nationally, although the Area has improved its service to victims of crime and witnesses. The introduction of Witness Care Units since the last OPA has ensured that witnesses, including victims of crime, are kept informed of case progress. The numbers and timeliness of letters sent to victims explaining why charges may have been dropped or reduced are both better than the national average.

CPS THAMES VALLEY

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Baljit Ubhey		
Area Business Manager	Karen Sawitzki		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	169.6 (69.6)	190.8 (69.1)	
General budget	£7,323,595	£9,313,740	
Prosecution costs	£2,887,200	£3,142,100	
Date of assessment	11/2005	6/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Good	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Good	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Good	Good
			Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Good
			Securing community confidence	Good	Excellent
Rating for critical aspects		Good			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	GOOD			

Summary

CPS Thames Valley serves the area covered by the Thames Valley Police. It has three offices, at Aylesbury, Cowley and Reading. The Area Headquarters is based at the Reading office.

Since the last OPA performance has improved significantly and the overall rating has risen from Fair to Good. Performance has improved in five aspects, improved within its existing rating in six and remained stable in two.

The statutory charging scheme is now embedded across the Area and some of the expected benefits are being realised, although performance is not as good as that found nationally. Inspectors found that the quality of pre-charge decision-making was satisfactory and action plans (which set out what further work the police need to do on a case) were good.

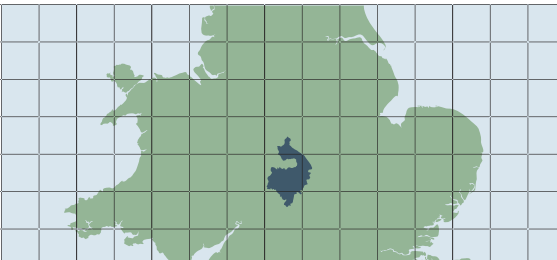
The significant weakness in Thames Valley is its magistrates' courts outcomes which, despite some sound work, need to improve considerably. Performance is significantly better in Crown Court cases. Other aspects of casework are good and performance has improved since the last OPA. The proportion of successful outcomes in sensitive cases and hate crimes is increasing.

The speed which persistent young offenders are dealt with has fluctuated against the Government's target of 71 days from arrest to sentence. Having deteriorated significantly in 2006, it has improved to an average of 75 days in March-May 2007, and further to 68 days in September-November 2007.

There are proportionately more effective trials in Thames Valley than found nationally and the service provided to victims and witnesses is good. There is a high level of compliance with the requirement to write to the victim when proceedings are dropped or the charge is changed substantially.

The Area has undertaken a number of positive initiatives to improve its engagement with the communities of Thames Valley, including a high profile project on the Blackbird Leys estate.

CPS WARWICKSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Mark Lynn		
Area Business Manager	Ian Edmondson		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	36.4 (13.7)	37.9 (15.7)	
General budget	£1,496, 900	£1,859,494	
Prosecution costs	£437,000	£371,200	
Date of assessment	8/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Good	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	Excellent	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Excellent	Disclosure	Excellent	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Excellent	Custody time limits	Fair	Good
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Excellent	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT	Managing performance to improve	Good	Excellent
			Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS Warwickshire serves the area covered by the Warwickshire Constabulary. It has just one office based at Leamington Spa that also houses the Area Headquarters.

Since the last OPA seven aspects have improved, one has declined and all others have remained stable. The Area has the capacity to improve if it can; build upon the strengths of a combined criminal justice centre; consult with staff about implementing a more constructive meeting structure that is more effective in encouraging views and ideas; and developing a more refined community engagement strategy.

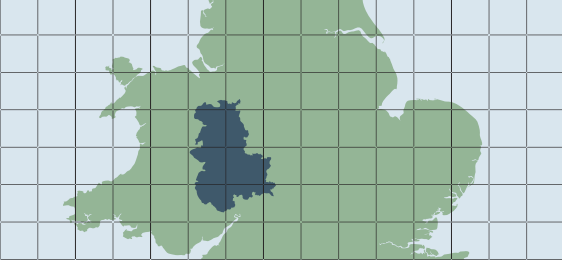
Warwickshire has the highest number of successful outcomes in the country for both magistrates' courts and Crown Court cases. The cracked and ineffective trial rates in the magistrates' and Crown Court remain consistently good and successful outcomes in hate crimes are excellent.

There is clear commitment to victims and witnesses with the Area contributing to an innovative Victim Information Partnership through which all multi-agency activity is directed. The proportion of cracked and ineffective trials caused by prosecution witness problems and the proportion of letters sent to victims when charges are dropped or altered substantially are some of the best nationally.

There is clear evidence of commitment to planning and working with partners in joint initiatives and shared targets, with a CPS representative on all major change programmes. There are effective systems in place to monitor budgets, and non ring-fenced administration spend has been consistently Good to Excellent since 2004. The average sickness absence is the lowest nationally and has improved since 2005-06.

It is clear from the Chief Crown Prosecutor down that the Area possesses a performance-focussed culture. There is also considerable evidence of CJS partners working together to improve performance and the formation of the Southern Justice Centre Group is an innovative project aimed at creating synergy between agencies. Efforts in respect of community engagement tend to be focussed through collaborative efforts with other criminal justice agencies.

CPS WEST MERCIA

Chief Crown Prosecutor Chris Enzor (now Colin Chapman)			
Area Business Manager	Laurence Sutton		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	111.3 (40.5)	124.9 (44.5)	
General budget	£4,608,476	£5,861,551	
Prosecution costs	£1,865,800	£2,202,100	
Date of assessment	11/2005	10/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Good	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Disclosure	Fair	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Fair
Leadership	Fair	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	GOOD	Securing community confidence	Fair	Fair

Summary

CPS West Mercia serves the area covered by the West Mercia Constabulary. It has two offices, at Droitwich and Shrewsbury, and a sub-office in Hereford Police Station. The Area Headquarters is based at the Droitwich office.

Overall performance has improved significantly since the last OPA and there has been improvement in a number of aspects of casework delivery. These include the provision of pre-charge advice and decisions, the handling of sensitive cases and hate crimes and compliance with the prosecution's duty of disclosure in respect of unused material.

In 2006-07 the Area had a higher proportion of successful outcomes (convictions) in the Crown Court than found nationally. Performance in the magistrates' courts was very close to the national average, although there was a need to reduce the number of committals discharged because they are not ready to proceed. The Area had addressed a number of performance issues and this was bringing about improvement in the quality of pre-charge decisions and the analysis of unsuccessful outcomes.

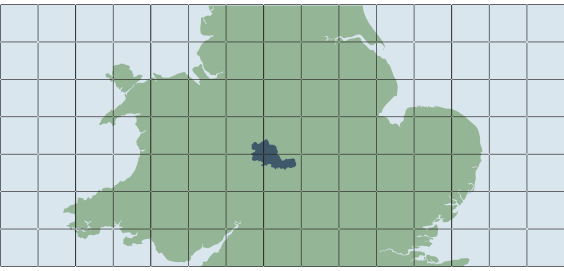
The monitoring of compliance with the prosecution's duty of disclosure was particularly good. However, there is some way to go before the target for the forfeiture of criminal's assets is met.

The proportion of effective trials is better than that found nationally in the magistrates' courts, although it needs to improve in respect of Crown Court cases.

The time taken to deal with persistent young offenders improved throughout 2006 and 2007 and the criminal justice area was meeting the national target of 71 days from arrest to sentence by mid-2007.

The Area was failing by some way to meet its targets for Direct Communication with Victims but a successful change programme was implemented, which resulted in the target being met fully by the end of the year. Whilst there was some community engagement activity, overall this needed to be developed with a clear focus on activity which assisted core business.

CPS WEST MIDLANDS

Chief Crown Prosecutor	David Blundell		
Area Business Manager	Mike Grist (now Nigel Gumley)		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	471.8 (149.8)	484.2 (172.3)	
General budget	£17,553,046	£19,915,196	
Prosecution costs	£8,694,070	£7,775,700	
Date of assessment	10/2005	7/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Poor	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Good	Custody time limits	Good	Poor
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Fair	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Good	Managing resources	Fair	Good
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	FAIR	FAIR	Securing community confidence	Excellent	Excellent

Summary

CPS West Midlands serves the area covered by the West Midlands Police. It has 11 offices, at Birmingham (three), Brierley Hill, Coventry, Halesowen, Smethwick, Solihull, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton. The Area Headquarters is based at one of the Birmingham offices.

Overall performance has been mixed since the last OPA. In 2006-07 the Area had a slightly lower proportion of successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts than the national average, although performance in respect of cases heard at the Crown Court was better.

Inspectors found that the quality of prosecutors' decision-making at the pre-charge stage was good although too many cases subsequently have to be dropped, particularly in the magistrates' courts.

The undertaking of the duties of disclosure to the defence of unused material is good and the Area has worked hard to improve performance. Sensitive cases and hate crimes are handled well, although domestic violence cases remain problematic.

The proportion of effective trials is worse than that found nationally, although overall cases progress quickly through the courts. Despite substantial improvement since 2001 there are still a large number of relatively serious cases set for committal to the Crown Court which are withdrawn or discharged because the prosecution is not ready. The cause may rest with either the CPS or the police, but performance needs to be further improved.

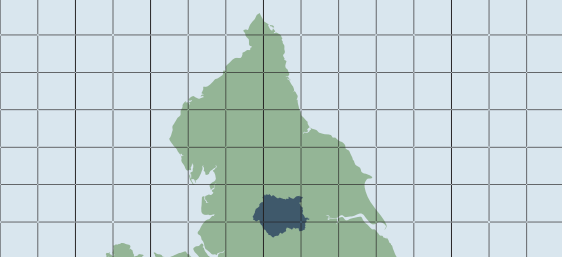
The overall treatment of victims and witnesses is good and the Witness Care Units perform to a high standard.

Prosecutors make a positive contribution to seizing the assets of criminals and in 2006-07 a total of £4,473,495 was seized which far exceeded the target of £2,557,041.

Otherwise good overall performance was let down by the handling of cases involving custody time limits.

The Area has maintained its excellent work with the diverse communities of the West Midlands, with the aim of improving public confidence.

CPS WEST YORKSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Neil Franklin OBE		
Area Business Manager	Karen Wright		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	290.7 (112.6)	292.8 (113.6)	
General budget	£12,862,894	£13,547,681	
Prosecution costs	£6,722,050	£3,895,783	
Date of assessment	11/2005	10/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Excellent	Excellent
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Fair	Good	Disclosure	Good	Poor
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Good	Fair
Leadership	Good	Good	Delivering change	Excellent	Good
Rating for critical aspects		Fair	Managing resources	Good	Good
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	FAIR	Managing performance to improve	Good	Good
			Securing community confidence	Excellent	Excellent

Summary

CPS West Yorkshire serves the area covered by the West Yorkshire Police. It has offices in Leeds and Bradford and is co-located with the police in five police stations. The Area Headquarters is based at the Leeds office.

2006-07 was a mixed year: some aspects of work have continued to meet the high standards previously reported; some aspects of legal work have shown some decline; and others are progressing, but failed to deliver the expected benefits in 2006-07.

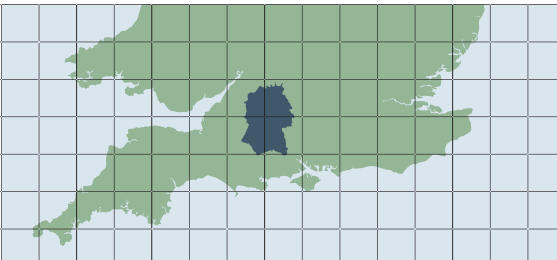
There was a strong focus on serious and complex casework in 2006-07 and this was reflected in the improved results in the Crown Court. Positive work continues to be undertaken in the handling of sensitive casework, including hate crimes. West Yorkshire continues to be at the forefront of developing community engagement, with some innovative activity in 2006-07.

Significant progress was made against the Area's advocacy strategy with strong performance in the deployment of Higher Court Advocates and designated caseworkers. Financial controls were satisfactory. There is a strong performance culture, although there is still opportunity to strengthen the analysis of information to identify the most effective remedial actions and deliver improved outcomes. Relationships with the other criminal justice agencies are generally strong at strategic levels, but more variable among operational staff.

Whilst the level of successful outcomes in magistrates' courts cases improved over that of previous years there has been a very high level of discontinuance which, despite a significant improvement in 2006-07, remained among the worst in the country. There are strong links between these outcomes and the quality of pre-charge decisions, which the Area recognised as weak in early 2006. Remedial actions were taken and have led to improvements and further revisions to the provision of pre-charge decisions made in 2007-08 show encouraging early signs in terms of improved outcomes. Progress in respect of Crown Court cases was better.

There is an urgent need to improve performance in respect of the prosecution's duty of disclosure. Particular care needs to be taken to ensure that all appropriate material, including that which might assist the defence, is disclosed in a timely manner. More needs to be done to improve the level of victim and witness care, with only limited progress made in 2006-07. Activity is underway in 2007-08 to try and improve compliance with the Victims' Code.

CPS WILTSHIRE

Chief Crown Prosecutor	Karen Harrold		
Area Business Manager	Kim O'Neill		
Area statistics	2004-05	2006-07	
Staff numbers (<i>number of lawyers</i>)	51.0 (18.8)	53.3 (18.8)	
General budget	£2,014,527	£2,417,966	
Prosecution costs	£956,800	£885,800	
Date of assessment	11/2005	8/2007	

Critical aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Other aspects	OPA 2005	OPA 2007
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair	Fair	Progressing cases at court	Fair	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Fair	Fair	Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Fair	Disclosure	Good	Fair
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	Fair	Custody time limits	Fair	Poor
Leadership	Good	Fair	Delivering change	Good	Fair
			Managing resources	Good	Fair
			Managing performance to improve	Fair	Fair
			Securing community confidence	Good	Fair
Rating for critical aspects		Fair			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	GOOD	FAIR			

Summary

CPS Wiltshire serves the area covered by the Wiltshire Constabulary. It has one office, at Chippenham, where the Area Headquarters is based.

The Area restructured in 2006. Whilst this has potentially put it in a better position to deliver national priorities, performance has been slower to recover than anticipated. Continued work is needed with both staff and criminal justice partners to bring this about. However, senior managers have worked hard to set out and communicate a clear vision and direction for the Area and there was some indication of improvement towards the end of 2006-07.

Statutory charging is well established and the quality of decision-making is generally good. The level of magistrates' courts cases that are discontinued is a cause for concern requiring more focused attention.

The proportion of magistrates' courts cases resulting in a conviction is improving. The timeliness of case preparation and progression needs to be addressed as the level of ineffective trials has continued to rise.

The Crown Court conviction rate has improved since our last OPA but is still worse than the national average. The Area is working well to ensure trials are effective, both its effective and ineffective trial rates being better than national averages. Performance in timeliness of dealing with persistent young offenders declined significantly in 2006-07, but recent data indicates improvement.

Performance in hate crimes outcomes is generally improving. We found generally high standards of decision-making in such cases and good systems to ensure the effective handling of high profile cases of local concern.

Witness care is generally good but there is scope for improvement in the Direct Communication with Victims scheme. Manager and staff involvement with the local community gained momentum during the year and engagement took place with a diverse range of local groups.

ANNEX 1 – THE 13 ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

Aspect 1: Pre-charge decision-making – management and realising the benefits

- The Area ensures pre-charge decision-making operates effectively at police charging centres and is accurately documented and recorded.
- The Area ensures that pre-charge advice and decisions are in accordance with the Director's Guidance, the Code for Crown Prosecutors, charging standards and policy guidelines.
- The Area is able to demonstrate the benefits of their involvement in pre-charge decision-making.

Aspect 2: Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts

- Successful outcomes are increasing.
- Effective case management and decision-making enables cases to progress at each court appearance.

Aspect 3: Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court

- Successful outcomes are increasing.
- Effective case management and decision-making enables cases to progress at each court appearance.

Aspect 4: Progressing cases at court

- The Area ensures that cases progress at each court appearance.

Aspect 5: Sensitive cases and hate crimes

- The Area identifies and manages sensitive cases effectively.

Aspect 6: Disclosure

- There is compliance with the prosecution's duties of disclosure.

Aspect 7: Custody time limits

- Area custody time limit systems comply with current CPS guidance and case law.

Aspect 8: The service to victims and witnesses

- The Area ensures the timely and effective consideration and progression of victim and witness needs.
- The Area, with its criminal justice partners, has implemented the No Witness No Justice scheme effectively.

Aspect 9: Delivering change

- The Area has a clear sense of purpose supported by relevant plan
- A coherent and co-ordinated change management strategy exists.
- The Area ensures staff have the skills, knowledge and competences to meet the business need.

Aspect 10: Managing resources

- The Area seeks to achieve value for money, and operates within budget.
- The Area has ensured that all staff are deployed efficiently.

Aspect 11: Managing performance to improve

- Managers are accountable for performance, and performance information is accurate and timely.
- The Area is committed to managing performance jointly with CJS partners.
- Internal systems for ensuring the quality of casework and its prosecution at court, are robust and founded on reliable and accurate monitoring and analysis.

Aspect 12: Leadership

- The management team communicates the vision, values and direction of the Area well.
- Senior managers act as role models for the ethics, values and aims of the Area and the CPS, and demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity policies.

Aspect 13: Securing community confidence

- The Area is working proactively to secure the confidence of the community.

ANNEX 2 – THE DETERMINISTIC RULE DRIVEN MODEL

Determination of the combined critical aspects rating:

Critical aspect assessments	Overall critical aspect assessment
All 3 or 4 (and majority 4)	4
All 2, 3 or 4 (and majority 3 or 4)	3
No more than one was as low as 1	2
Any other combination	1

Overall performance assessment takes account of the combined critical aspects assessment, which drives the overall score and overlays the rating for the other defining aspects

Overall critical aspect assessment	Other defining aspect assessments	Overall performance category
4	All 3 or 4	Excellent
4	All 2, 3 or 4 and no more than two at 2	Excellent
4	Any other combination	Fair
3	All 3 or 4	Excellent
3	All 3 or 4 and no more than two (critical or other defining aspects) as low as 2	Excellent
3	All 2, 3 or 4	Good
3	No more than two as low as 1	Fair
3	Any other combination	Poor
2	All 3 or 4	Good
2	All 2, 3 or 4 and no more than two as low as 1	Fair
2	Any other combination	Poor
1	All 2, 3 or 4	Fair
1	Any other combination	Poor

- 4 = Excellent
- 3 = Good
- 2 = Fair
- 1 = Poor

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