

THE INSPECTORATE'S REPORT
on
THE MANCHESTER SOUTH
BRANCH
of
CPS NORTH WEST

Manchester South Branch



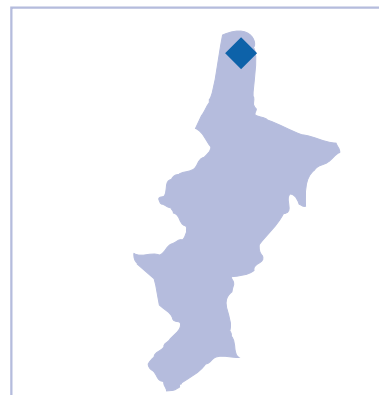
BRANCH OFFICE

◆ Manchester

COURTS COVERED

Magistrates' Court
Manchester City

Crown Court
Manchester (at Crown Square)



REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF THE CPS MANCHESTER SOUTH BRANCH

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's report about the quality of casework in the Manchester South Branch of CPS North West (as it was until 31 March 1999).
- 1.2 A good casework decision is one which results in the right defendant being charged with the right offence in the right tier of court at the right time, thereby enabling the right decision to be taken by the court. The decision must also be taken at the right level within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and be prosecuted by the right prosecutor.
- 1.3 The purpose and aims of the Inspectorate are set out on the inside back cover of this report. The inspection process focuses on the core business of the CPS: providing advice; reviewing cases; preparing cases; and presenting cases in court.
- 1.4 The Manchester South Branch has its office at Manchester. On 1 February 1999, it employed 59.8 staff (the Branch Crown Prosecutor (BCP), a Special Casework Lawyer and 22.4 other prosecutors; three senior caseworkers and 29.4 other caseworkers; and three typists). The Branch also shares reception facilities with two other Branches and Area headquarters in the same building.
- 1.5 The Branch comprises three teams. One team (6.2 prosecutors, one senior caseworker, and eight other caseworkers) is responsible for cases originating from one of the sub-divisions of North Manchester Police Division. Another team (8.8 prosecutors, one senior caseworker and 12 other caseworkers) is responsible for cases originating from two of the sub-divisions of South Manchester Police Division. The third team (7.4 prosecutors, one senior caseworker and 9.4 other caseworkers) is responsible for cases originating from the other two sub-divisions of South Manchester Police Division. All cases are dealt with at Manchester City Magistrates' Court. Each team is also responsible for Crown Court cases originating from its magistrates' court cases.

- 1.6 The team of three inspectors visited the Branch between 1 and 12 February 1999. During this period, we observed 13 CPS advocates in the magistrates' court at Manchester. We also observed three CPS advocates, CPS caseworkers and prosecuting counsel in the Crown Court sitting in Manchester at Crown Square.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Branch deals with a heavy caseload of serious cases. Overall, the standard of decision-making is good; the standard of advocacy is excellent. Summary trials are very well prepared, and the standard of file management is commendable.
- 2.2 Branch staff have excellent working relationships with representatives of all the other agencies in the criminal justice system, and its participation in training sessions for police officers and magistrates is impressive. Branch staff are kept abreast of legal developments by the circulation of regular bulletins, and presentations at team meetings.
- 2.3 There are, nevertheless, some areas which require improvement. Review does not take place at the earliest opportunity in all cases, and prosecutors do not make sufficiently full endorsements of their review. The evidence in some cases needs to be analysed more carefully at key stages, in particular when cases are being prepared for committal. In addition, instructions to counsel should deal with all the issues in the case, and the acceptability of pleas.
- 2.4 To assist the Branch in improving its casework, we recommend that:
 - i the BCP should ensure that pre-charge advice is always linked to an ensuing prosecution file (paragraph 4.6);
 - ii the BCP should ensure that timely and effective initial review is carried out in all cases (paragraph 5.9);

- iii the BCP should ensure that all charging standards, particularly those relating to assaults and public order offences, are applied correctly by all prosecutors (paragraph 5.21);
- iv the BCP should ensure that prosecutors always make detailed file endorsements about bail applications including any conditions that may be imposed (paragraph 5.29);
- v the BCP should liaise with the police, with a view to improving witness care, particularly in those cases which are committed to the Crown Court, in an effort to reduce the number of cases which have to be dropped by the prosecution (paragraph 5.52);
- vi prosecutors should ensure that they review Crown Court cases effectively, and deal with all the issues in the case (paragraph 5.56);
- vii prosecutors should record their review on the file, to include references to the evidential and public interest tests, mode of trial considerations, and reasons for decisions (paragraph 5.60);
- viii the allocated caseworker and reviewing prosecutor should complete reports in all their Crown Court failed cases; and the BCP should compile a monthly analysis of all Crown Court failed cases, and make it available to all prosecutors and caseworkers, so that appropriate casework lessons may be learned (paragraph 5.65);
- ix the BCP should monitor the handling of unused material in magistrates' court cases, to ensure that such material is properly considered and dealt with by prosecutors (paragraph 6.10); and
- x the BCP should ensure that, in particular, schedules of sensitive unused material are completed in all relevant cases, to provide assurance that the correct decisions and action have been taken (paragraph 6.12);
- xi the BCP should continue to work with the police, through Joint Performance Management (JPM), to seek improvements in the quality and timeliness of police files, so that the preparation and service of committal papers can take place efficiently, and at the appropriate time (paragraph 6.23);
- xii the Branch Management Team (BMT) should ensure that caseworkers undertake increasing amounts of committal preparation (paragraph 6.26);
- xiii prosecutors and caseworkers should ensure that instructions to counsel fully address the issues in the case, and, where appropriate, the acceptability of pleas (paragraph 6.30);
- xiv in relation to custody time limits, the BCP should ensure that:
 - the custody time limit expiry and review dates are endorsed correctly on every relevant file;
 - accurate endorsements are made in the appropriate diaries; and
 - all three teams follow consistent procedures and practices in relation to the monitoring of custody time limits (paragraph 6.46);
- xv the BCP should liaise with representatives of chambers, in order to improve the percentage of cases in which counsel originally instructed attends the plea and directions hearing (PDH) and the trial (paragraph 7.6).

THE INSPECTION

- 3.1 In the year ending 31 December 1998, the Branch dealt with 20,020 defendants in the magistrates' court and 1,915 defendants in the Crown Court. In a further 1,012 cases, advice was given to the police before charge.
- 3.2 The inspection team examined a total of 285 cases, ranging from those where an acquittal was directed by the judge, through those where the

prosecution terminated proceedings, to those where the defendant pleaded guilty. The team interviewed members of staff in the Branch and local representatives of the criminal justice agencies that directly affect, or are affected by, the quality of casework decisions taken in the Branch. A list of those representatives from whom we received comments is at the end of this report.

PROVIDING ADVICE

Appropriateness of requests for advice

- 4.1 In the year ending 31 December 1998, advice cases constituted 4.8% of the Branch's total caseload, compared with 4.2% nationally.
- 4.2 Prosecutors consider that the police seek advice in appropriate cases. This was the position in nine of the ten cases in our sample. In the tenth case, the police officer acknowledged that there was insufficient evidence against the proposed defendant, but still requested advice.
- 4.3 There is no formal agreement with the police about the types of case which should be submitted for pre-charge advice. Since our visit, the BCP has drafted guidelines on the referral of cases to the CPS for advice, and these have been circulated to the local Chief Superintendents. We are pleased to note that this will become the basis of an agreement between the Branch and the police.
- 4.4 Prosecutors give a substantial amount of advice to police officers over the telephone. Indeed, over half the advice given is provided in this way. Such advice is noted and captured in the Branch's Performance Indicators (PIs). Prosecutors do not, however, make a record of the advice they have given. The BCP will wish to ensure that the good practice commended in the Inspectorate's report on the review of advice cases, which was published in September 1998 (thematic review 3/98), is followed. This will ensure that all telephone advice is properly dealt with and recorded.
- 4.5 Branch staff rely on the police to identify cases where previous advice has been given, and to indicate this on the prosecution file. In practice,

some files are not readily identified as involving earlier advice, whether given in writing or by telephone. It is important to ensure that advice is linked to any subsequent prosecution file, so that the prosecutor is aware of the previous CPS involvement, and to ensure continuity of approach. The proposed agreement to which we refer in paragraph 4.3 is designed to assist this.

4.6 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that pre-charge advice is always linked to an ensuing prosecution file.

Quality of advice

- 4.7 Advice files are allocated to prosecutors according to their experience and expertise.
- 4.8 Overall, the quality of advice is good. All advices were typed. We agreed with the advice given in nine of the ten cases that we examined, and these were well reasoned.
- 4.9 In the tenth case, the prosecutor advised the police to charge a defendant, in circumstances where he should have asked the police to provide further evidence before making a decision, in order to clarify which, if any, offence had been committed. In the event, the police did not initiate criminal proceedings.
- 4.10 The quality of advice is not formally monitored at present. Prosecution Team Leaders (PTLs) discuss the more serious and difficult cases with prosecutors, before advice is given to the police. In addition, when appearing in court as advocates, PTLs see advices which have resulted in prosecutions. They do not see, however, the cases in which prosecutors have advised the police to take no further action.
- 4.11 We are pleased to note that once the guidelines referred to at paragraph 4.3 are in force, the PTLs will monitor the quality of all advice cases.

Timeliness of advice

- 4.12 The CPS has set a target of providing advice within 14 days of receipt of the file from police.

Prosecutors are complying well with this target, and receive regular feedback on timeliness. Branch figures for the quarter ending 31 December 1998 show that advice was timely in 92.2% of cases. The advice in all ten cases that we examined was prepared in a timely fashion. When the guidelines referred to in paragraph 4.3 are in force, the PTLs will also monitor the timeliness of advice.

Advice from counsel

- 4.13 There are very few cases in which advice from counsel is sought before charge or committal. Any such request has to be authorised by the BCP. Similarly, there are few requests for advice from counsel in cases that have been committed to the Crown Court. These requests have to be authorised by the PTLs.
- 4.14 We did not see any cases in the sample where counsel's advice was sought pre-charge or pre-committal. We saw two cases in which counsel's advice had been sought after committal. One request was inappropriate because the issue was clear, and the reviewing prosecutor could have made the appropriate decision.
- 4.15 We also saw four cases in which counsel had provided unsolicited advice after committal. In three cases, it was appropriate for counsel to have advised. The advice in the fourth case was properly tendered, although it related to an issue that the reviewing prosecutor had taken steps to deal with, but which had not been referred to in the instructions to counsel. We comment on the quality of instructions to counsel in paragraphs 6.28 - 6.30.
- 4.16 Conferences with counsel are held in a significant number of cases. We accept that conferences may benefit the preparation and presentation of serious and complex cases, and that the high proportion of such cases handled by the Branch (see paragraph 5.1) inevitably increases the number of conferences held. However, there is no system to ensure that conferences are necessary for the proper conduct of the case, and the BCP is aware of the need to monitor the position.

REVIEWING CASES

Caseweight

- 5.1 The Branch has a high proportion of serious cases. In particular, it deals with a large number of homicides and serious offences of violence, many involving firearms, and numerous serious drugs offences. This means that the Branch is dealing with many very difficult and time consuming cases. In addition, there is a major problem with ensuring that witnesses attend court to give evidence, and we comment further upon this in paragraphs 5.49 - 5.52.
- 5.2 The proportion of cases committed for trial to the Crown Court (8.4%) is above the national average (6.9%), and the proportion of indictable only cases (30.2%) is substantially higher than the national average (21.4%). The case sample that we examined clearly reflected this serious and difficult caseload.

Quality of review decisions

- 5.3 Under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, the CPS is required to review every case it deals with in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors (the Code). It must establish whether there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, and whether it is in the public interest to prosecute the matter.
- 5.4 We inspected the quality of the review decision in 80 files, covering cases in the magistrates' court and the Crown Court. We agreed with the assessment of the evidence in 79 cases. We agreed with the public interest decision in all relevant cases.
- 5.5 We disagreed with the decision to prosecute in one case of assault. The reviewing prosecutor had correctly identified that the credibility of the complainant was in issue, but had wrongly concluded that it was appropriate to allow the case to proceed. The defendant was acquitted.
- 5.6 We consider that the overall standard of decision-making in the Branch is good. The Branch has proper arrangements in place for the handling of youth cases.

Timeliness of review

- 5.7 The Branch's own figures show that, in December 1998, 94 out of 130 new files (72.3%) were reviewed within seven days of receipt. We found that 44 out of 68 cases (64.7%) in our sample were reviewed within seven days of receipt, or by the first date of hearing. Seven of the 24 cases which were not reviewed on time were not reviewed until after the first date of hearing. Two of the seven were only reviewed after not guilty pleas had been entered.
- 5.8 Late review can delay progress in the case and reduces the time available for liaison with the police about further evidence, amendments to charges, or possible discontinuance.
- 5.9 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that timely and effective initial review is carried out in all cases.**
- 5.10 Twelve cases in our sample of 80 were received on the day of the first court appearance, but the initial review was dated after the case had been adjourned. We were told that these cases were reviewed by advocates preparing for the first court appearances, but we are concerned that notes of these reviews were not recorded on the file. Advocates ought to be in a position to undertake an initial review of files received before or at court, and to endorse the files accordingly. The BCP will wish to ensure that they do so.

Selection of the appropriate charge and charging standards

- 5.11 Police charges required amendment in 15 of the 80 cases (18.8%) that we examined. By amendment, we include instances in which more appropriate charges should have been preferred. We were pleased to note that 13 of these (86.7%) were amended at the first reasonable opportunity.
- 5.12 Charges were not amended promptly in two cases. In one case, the charge was never amended to specify that the charge of common assault involved beating. In the second, a single charge of possession of drugs was separated properly into two specific offences only on the day of the trial.
- 5.13 We observed a case being presented in court, where the defendant had been charged with wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. The reviewing prosecutor had noted in the instructions to counsel that a plea to a lesser charge was acceptable, but had not included it in the indictment. The defendant pleaded guilty to the lesser offence. We also saw two cases in our sample where indictments were amended to accommodate acceptable pleas of guilty.
- 5.14 It is important that charges are amended as soon as the need arises, so that defendants know the extent of the case against them as early as possible. The BCP will wish to ensure that action is taken to amend charges at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- 5.15 The CPS and the police nationally have agreed charging standards for assaults, public order offences and some driving offences, to ensure a consistent approach to levels of charging. We agreed with the application of the standards in 30 out of 32 relevant cases (93.8%) in our sample.
- 5.16 Both cases where we disagreed involved allegations of assault. In one, a charge of causing grievous bodily harm was proceeded with, in circumstances where the injuries amounted only to actual bodily harm. In the other, a charge of affray was added, when common assault would have been the more appropriate charge.
- 5.17 We noted other cases, outside our formal sample, in which prosecutors selected inappropriate charges. In one case, the reviewing prosecutor had proceeded with a charge alleging assault occasioning actual bodily harm, when the injuries amounted only to common assault.
- 5.18 In another case, the police had charged three defendants with offences of threatening behaviour, but subsequently suggested more serious charges. The reviewing prosecutor added charges of violent disorder. The defendants were committed to the Crown Court for trial, but, in the event, pleas to charges of threatening behaviour by two defendants were accepted, and the third defendant was bound over to keep the peace.

5.19 Representatives of other criminal justice agencies told us that charges of affray are sometimes used in inappropriate circumstances. We saw five examples of this. We referred to one case in paragraph 5.16. In four cases, charges of affray had been inappropriately added to assault charges. The practice can complicate cases unnecessarily, or lead to cases being committed to the Crown Court inappropriately.

5.20 It is important that all charging standards are applied properly, in order to ensure consistent decision-making by prosecutors.

5.21 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that all charging standards, particularly those relating to assaults and public order offences, are applied correctly by all prosecutors.

5.22 In two further cases involving allegations of assault, which we saw being presented in court, the reviewing prosecutor had correctly identified that the charge selected by the police did not comply with the charging standards. In both cases, the prosecutor had consulted the police about proposed amendments. In one case, the police did not agree to the proposal, and the correct charge was never added to the indictment. In the other case, a response had not been received from the police, almost two months later. The case was fixed for trial, without amendment, or any indication that one might be made in the future.

5.23 It is important that the police are consulted about decisions on the level of charges. However, it is vital that prosecutors exercise judgement in their decision-making, and that they take action, when appropriate. The BCP will wish to ensure that the consultation process does not override or delay the interests of justice.

Mode of trial

5.24 Representatives of other criminal justice agencies confirmed our observations that prosecutors make appropriate representations whether a case should be heard in the magistrates' court or in the Crown Court. They provide magistrates with the necessary

information for decisions to be made, and often refer to the Lord Chief Justice's guidelines when making their representations.

5.25 Mode of trial representations accorded with the guidelines in all 46 relevant cases in our sample. However, the reviewing prosecutor recorded the relevant considerations about mode of trial in only 18 of the 46 cases (39.1%). It is important that prosecutors make such records, in order to assist colleagues when dealing with cases in court. We deal with the quality of review endorsements in paragraphs 5.58 - 5.60.

5.26 In two other cases that we examined, the reviewing prosecutor did not give a clear indication about mode of trial, and stated that the case was borderline. We considered both cases to be suitable for summary trial. Indeed, we considered that, in one case, the appropriate charge was triable only in the magistrates' court. We referred to this case in paragraph 5.16.

Bail

5.27 We were told that prosecutors opposed bail in appropriate cases. We examined 14 cases where the defendant appeared in custody, and an appropriate decision whether to oppose bail was made in every case. However, the reasons for opposing bail were endorsed on the file in only nine of the 14 cases (64.3%); and the reasons for the court refusing bail were endorsed in eight of the 13 relevant cases (61.5%). It is important that prosecutors endorse these reasons, in order to assist their colleagues in dealing with any subsequent applications for bail, or appeals against the refusal of bail.

5.28 Prosecutors do not always endorse conditions of bail on the file, relying instead on the bail form provided by the magistrates' court. Whichever system is used, it is important that the conditions are readily ascertainable. We observed one case at the Crown Court where the prosecutor was unable to confirm the details to the judge immediately.

5.29 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that prosecutors always make detailed file endorsements about bail applications,

including any conditions that may be imposed.

Discontinuance

- 5.30 The Branch's discontinuance rate of 7.1% for the year ending 31 December 1998 is significantly lower than the national average of 12%.
- 5.31 We examined 115 cases that were stopped by the prosecution in the magistrates' court during November 1998, in order to look at the reason for termination, and to find out whether the police were consulted about, and agreed with, the decision. Three cases were incorrectly categorised; 45 (40.2%) were formally discontinued by notice under section 23, Prosecution of Offences Act 1985; 41 (36.6%) were withdrawn in court; and the prosecution offered no evidence in 26 (23.2%).
- 5.32 Forty-two cases were terminated because there was insufficient evidence, and 17 because it was not in the public interest to prosecute. The prosecution was unable to proceed in 37 cases, and in 16 the defendant produced the relevant driving documents.
- 5.33 Of the cases dropped on evidential grounds, 20 (47.6%) were because of doubts concerning identification evidence; 18 (42.9%) were terminated because of deficiencies in other evidence; and four (9.5%) were because an essential legal element was missing.
- 5.34 Five of the 17 cases dropped on public interest grounds were because a caution was considered appropriate. Only one case was dropped because of the likelihood of a small or nominal penalty being imposed. The remaining 11 cases (64.7%) were stopped for a variety of reasons.
- 5.35 We were very concerned that of the 37 cases where the prosecution was unable to proceed, prosecution witnesses refused to give evidence in 21 cases (56.8%), and that they failed to attend court in a further eight (21.6%). We comment further on this issue at paragraphs 5.49 - 5.52. The prosecution was not ready to proceed in five cases (13.5%), and the court did not grant a request for an adjournment. In three cases

(8.1%), the defendant's offences had been taken into consideration in other criminal proceedings.

- 5.36 The police were consulted in 91 cases (81.3%). They objected to the decision to discontinue in only one case. There, the prosecutor considered that a caution was more appropriate, given the frank admissions made by the defendant. The police were of the opinion that the defendant had not fully co-operated, and that a caution was, therefore, inappropriate. In 19 cases, the decision to discontinue was made at court, so that consultation was not feasible. We could not ascertain why the prosecutor did not consult police in the two remaining cases. These findings confirm the high priority given to consultation with police, about which we were told.
- 5.37 We examined ten terminated files, in order to assess whether the Code tests had been correctly applied. We agreed with the decisions taken in all ten cases. In one of the cases, however, we disagreed with the reasoning, which related to difficulties about identification evidence. We comment further upon difficulties in cases involving disputed identification in paragraphs 5.42 and 5.44 - 5.45.
- 5.38 There was no endorsement on the file of the reasons for termination in four of the cases: see paragraphs 5.58 - 5.60.
- 5.39 Four of the ten cases (40%) were not discontinued at the earliest opportunity. A late decision to discontinue means that unnecessary resources are devoted to continuing with a case, not only by the Branch, but also by other agencies in the criminal justice system. The implications for the defendant are self-evident. The same issue of delay in decision-making in relation to the amendment of charges is referred to in paragraphs 5.14 and 5.23.

Cases lost on a submission of no case to answer in the magistrates' court and discharged committals

- 5.40 The Branch PIs show that, in the year ending 31 December 1998, 47 trials were stopped by the magistrates at the close of the prosecution case. This is 0.3% of the Branch's caseload, which is higher than the national average of 0.2%. Only

one such case was identified in the PIs for the three month period we examined. We found another case incorrectly categorised as a magistrates' courts acquittal.

- 5.41 We agreed with the initial decision to proceed in both cases.
- 5.42 In the same period, ten defendants were discharged at committal after the magistrates decided that there was insufficient evidence to commit them to the Crown Court for trial. We examined two such cases, and agreed with the initial decision to prosecute in one. There was insufficient evidence of identification in the second case, a problem that was compounded by delay in the arrest of the defendant. Although the weaknesses in the case were recognised by the reviewing prosecutor, the issues were never properly analysed.

Judge ordered and judge directed acquittals

- 5.43 In the year ending 31 December 1998, 186 cases were not proceeded with in the Crown Court. This represents 11.6% of the Branch's caseload, which is higher than the national average of 9.4%. The great majority were stopped by the judge at the request of the prosecution before the trial started (judge ordered acquittals).
- 5.44 We examined 53 judge ordered acquittals. We disagreed with the decision to prosecute in two (3.8%). Both cases had identification difficulties. In one, the reviewing prosecutor should have advised the police to continue their efforts to hold an identification parade for one witness, and the case should not have been committed for trial without satisfactory identification having been made. In the other case, there was insufficient evidence of identification. In neither case were the difficulties fully addressed at committal.
- 5.45 We have already referred to two other cases in which errors were made in cases involving identification problems. We are aware that a prosecutor prepared and circulated a paper dealing with difficulties in identification last year. However, the BCP will wish to ensure that all prosecutors use the CPS National Casework Guidelines on Visual Identification when

assessing the weight which can be attached to the evidence available in identification cases.

- 5.46 In another case where we agreed with the decision to prosecute, we could not ascertain the reason for the case being dropped in the Crown Court. The reason was not endorsed on the file, and there was no failed case report. It is important that reasons for decisions are set out clearly on the file, and that reports are completed in cases such as this: see paragraphs 5.58 - 5.60 and 5.63 - 5.65.
- 5.47 In a further seven cases (13.2%), we agreed with the original decision to prosecute, but considered that the decision not to proceed to trial could have been made at a much earlier stage, and certainly before committal. In two of the seven cases, exhibits which undermined the prosecution case were not examined until after committal. In another, there were weaknesses in the case which should have been resolved before committal. The defendants were bound over to keep the peace in the remaining four cases, and the decision to proceed in this way could have been made in the magistrates' court.
- 5.48 In all the cases referred to in the preceding paragraphs, a careful analysis of the evidence and issues should have resulted in further evidence being obtained, or the cases being disposed of at a much earlier stage.
- 5.49 In 18 of the 53 cases (34%), prosecution witnesses failed to attend or declined to give evidence. Although there was only one case in our sample where it was suggested that the witnesses were afraid to give evidence, we learnt from other sources that intimidation, or fear of reprisals, leads to a large number of cases not proceeding. A high number of cases also had to be terminated because of witnesses refusing or failing to attend the magistrates' court (see paragraph 5.35).
- 5.50 We found the same problem during our inspection of the neighbouring Stockport/Sale Branch. We are extremely concerned about this, and repeat the observations and the recommendation that we made in our report on that Branch, which was published in November 1998 (Branch Report 25/98).

5.51 Steps need to be taken to identify the sorts of case which do not proceed at the Crown Court because of the non-attendance or reluctance of witnesses who have made statements to the police. Some witnesses may be only temporarily resident at their address; others may be vulnerable, or the subject of intimidation; and others may be reluctant to give up time to attend court. Measures to assist vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give their evidence in court are included in Part II of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Bill which is currently before Parliament. Branch staff will want to undertake as a priority the planned training on the implementation of these measures, and other non-statutory measures which were recommended in the report entitled Speaking Up for Justice.

5.52 We recommend that the BCP should liaise with the police, with a view to improving witness care, particularly in those cases which are committed to the Crown Court, in an effort to reduce the number of cases which have to be dropped by the prosecution.

5.53 In the same period, there were 48 cases in which the judge directed an acquittal after the trial had started. This represents 3.5% of the Branch's caseload, which is higher than the national average of 2.2%.

5.54 We agreed with the original decision to prosecute in 11 out of 13 judge directed acquittals (84.6%) that we examined. Eight (61.5%) were stopped by the judge because of witness difficulties. These difficulties included witnesses failing to attend; declining to give evidence; or not giving evidence in accordance with the statements provided to the police. This further demonstrates the problem that the Branch has with the non-attendance of witnesses and gives additional weight to the recommendation at paragraph 5.52.

5.55 We disagreed with the decision to prosecute in two cases. Both cases involved two co-defendants. In each, we agreed with the decision to prosecute one defendant, but not the second. The evidence against each defendant required careful analysis. The reviewing prosecutor had failed to address what were difficult issues. A thorough review at

committal should have identified the weaknesses in the evidence against the second defendant in each case.

5.56 We recommend that prosecutors should ensure that they review Crown Court cases effectively, and deal with all the issues in the case.

5.57 Two judge directed acquittals in our sample had been wrongly categorised as judge ordered acquittals. Another case was wrongly categorised as a judge directed acquittal, when it was a combination of a judge ordered acquittal and a guilty plea. We referred to another example of a wrongly categorised case at paragraph 5.40. Although incorrect categorisation of cases does not appear to be a major problem for the Branch, the BCP will wish to ensure that all staff are properly trained on the need for accurate recording of PI information.

Review endorsements

5.58 The reviewing prosecutor had made an appropriately full note of the evidential issues in only 34 of the 80 cases (42.5%) in our sample. Public interest factors were fully endorsed in only 15 cases (18.8%).

5.59 Prosecutors use a pro-forma to endorse their review decisions. In many cases, the prosecutor had marked the appropriate boxes, but there was little or no analysis of the issues. In the absence of good review endorsements, it is very difficult for anyone else dealing with the file subsequently to identify the factors which were taken into account when the decision to proceed was made. This can make it difficult for another prosecutor to make decisions about the case.

5.60 We recommend that prosecutors should record their review on the file, to include references to the evidential and public interest tests, mode of trial considerations, and reasons for decisions.

Learning from experience

5.61 We were impressed by the efforts made by Branch staff to keep up-to-date on new legislation

and case law. Regular team meetings are held, during which there is frequent discussion of casework issues, and presentations on new legislation. There is also a considerable amount of formal training undertaken by the Area training committee. In addition, the BCP circulates regular Branch minutes on casework topics. One prosecutor prepares a bulletin which summarises legal periodicals, and a prosecutor on another Branch circulates regular summaries of recent case law.

- 5.62 All Crown Court case results are recorded and passed back to the reviewing prosecutors.
- 5.63 Prosecutors prepare reports for all failed cases in the magistrates' court. Caseworkers prepare similar reports in respect of Crown Court cases. In one team, the allocated caseworker prepares the report, before passing it to the reviewing prosecutor to add any relevant comments. In another team, the reports are prepared by caseworkers on a rota basis, and are not seen by the reviewing prosecutor. Staff in the third team acknowledged that reports are not always completed, and that, if they are, copies are not always kept.
- 5.64 The reports are passed to the PTLs, who raise any concerns with individual prosecutors, and may raise significant issues at team meetings. It is important to ensure that the allocated caseworker and reviewing prosecutor are involved in the preparation and consideration of reports on failed cases in the Crown Court. The reports could be made more valuable if the BCP prepared a monthly analysis of why the cases failed. The preparation and circulation of this analysis of failed cases would enable all members of Branch to have an opportunity of learning appropriate casework lessons.
- 5.65 We recommend that the allocated caseworker and reviewing prosecutor should complete reports in all their Crown Court failed cases; and the BCP should compile a monthly analysis of all Crown Court failed cases, and make it available to all prosecutors and caseworkers, so that appropriate casework lessons may be learned.**

PREPARING CASES

File management

- 6.1 The Branch's files are exceptionally well managed and maintained. Each team uses different coloured file jackets, making it easy to identify their cases. Separate coloured folders are used for different types of material. This assists continuing review of the files and ease of retrieval of material at court.
- 6.2 Administrative staff are assisted by the use of a Branch manual, which sets out their duties in a methodical and step-by-step fashion. Laminated desk instructions set out steps for the caseworkers' file management.
- 6.3 We commend the Branch for the quality of its file management.

Advance information

- 6.4 On first review, the prosecutor indicates what material should be prepared for advance disclosure. This note also acts as a record of the material that is served. Caseworkers then prepare the material. If the identity of the defence solicitor is known, advance information is served at this stage. Otherwise, it remains on file until requested, or until the first court appearance.
- 6.5 National guidelines require advance information to be provided within seven days of the Branch being in possession of the file from the police and staff knowing the identity of the defence solicitor. In December 1998, Branch statistics showed that advance information was sent within seven days of receipt of the file in 72 out of 74 cases (97.3%). It was served promptly in 41 out of 47 relevant cases (87.2%) in the sample that we examined.
- 6.6 The Branch receives requests for advance information in cases in which the law does not require the prosecution to provide it. Branch policy is that such disclosure should be made in all summary cases which are punishable by imprisonment, and in all cases which are set down for a pre-trial review (PTR) (see paragraph 6.19). In other cases, prosecutors will show the witness statements to the defence solicitor in court. We were pleased to note that

the policy is well understood, and that it is consistently implemented.

Unused and sensitive material

- 6.7 All prosecutors and caseworkers received training on the disclosure provisions in the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) when they first came into force. Branch staff generally understand the provisions and apply them properly.
- 6.8 We found that the unused material disclosure schedule had been correctly completed in 47 out of 57 relevant cases (82.5%). Disclosure was made in 49 out of 55 relevant cases (89.1%) and was timely in all 49.
- 6.9 The six cases where the disclosure schedule had not been served were summary trials. The provisions relating to unused material apply as much to magistrates' court cases, as they do to Crown Court cases. It is essential that the provisions are properly applied.
- 6.10 We recommend that the BCP should monitor the handling of unused material in magistrates' court cases, to ensure that such material is properly considered and dealt with by prosecutors.**
- 6.11 We are concerned about the handling of sensitive material. The relevant disclosure schedule had been correctly completed in only two out of the seven relevant cases (28.6%) in our sample. We saw a further nine schedules in the course of our inspection; only four had been correctly completed. It appeared that failure to complete the schedules had not had an adverse effect on disclosure. It is important, however, that the schedules are correctly endorsed, to show that they have been considered, and that the correct action has been taken.
- 6.12 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that, in particular, schedules of sensitive unused material are completed in all relevant cases, to provide assurance that the correct decisions and action have been taken.**

- 6.13 Concern was expressed by prosecutors about whether the police fully understood the provisions of the CPIA. We saw cases where unused material schedules were only partially completed by the police. We also saw cases where confidential forms had been used by the police for the provision of routine information.
- 6.14 In one case that we examined, the disclosure officer had failed to include material that could undermine the prosecution case in the relevant schedule. We saw another case in which the prosecution was denied access to relevant material (although we were assured this was a misunderstanding, rather than a contravention of the guidance in the Code of Practice). We also saw a case that had to be dropped at the Crown Court because of the failure by the disclosure officer to disclose relevant material, and, furthermore, where there was uncertainty on the part of a police officer in the case about the identity of the disclosure officer.
- 6.15 It is essential that prosecutors are given full details of unused material, at the proper time. If they are not, they cannot properly discharge their duties of disclosure. We are pleased to note that these concerns are being addressed, by including sessions on the CPIA in the Branch's training of police officers.

Summary trial preparation

- 6.16 Summary trials are prepared very well. We examined 29 summary trials. In 28 cases (96.6%), the police were told promptly which witnesses to warn. Branch statistics for December 1998 show that witnesses were warned promptly in 100% of cases. Appropriate statements were served under section 9, Criminal Justice Act 1967 in all 22 relevant cases in our sample.
- 6.17 Prosecutors are aware of the procedure for agreeing admissions of fact under section 10, Criminal Justice Act 1967. We saw a case being presented in court where admissions were made. There were also two Crown Court cases in our sample where admissions were made. The use of section 10 saves valuable court time and prevents witnesses being called unnecessarily.

- 6.18 Prosecutors are also familiar with section 23, Criminal Justice Act 1988. Subject to certain conditions, this enables a witness' statement to be read to the court if he or she is outside the United Kingdom, or is mentally or physically unfit to attend court, or is too frightened to attend court. We were told that the provisions are used in appropriate cases, and are regularly considered in cases where witnesses are afraid to attend court or give evidence. We saw one Crown Court case where the provisions were carefully considered, although the decision was made not to use them.
- 6.19 PTRs should ensure that the prosecution and defence are ready to proceed on the date fixed for trial. We were told by the magistrates' court users that they are effective, and that prosecutors contribute to their success. We observed a PTR court, and were impressed with the active role played by the prosecutor.
- 6.20 Branch staff have devised a form, which is completed by the advocate after the PTR, highlighting any action required and the agreed issues. Cases are automatically referred back to the reviewing prosecutor, who ensures that all necessary action is taken, including the preparation of copies of any relevant legal authorities.

Committal preparation

- 6.21 National guidelines require Branch staff to prepare and serve committal papers within 14 days in cases where the defendant is on bail, and within ten days, if the defendant is in custody, once they have received a complete file from the police. Branch statistics for December 1998 show that committal papers were served within the CPS guidelines in 37 out of 47 cases (78.7%). We examined a sample of 30 cases. We found that service was timely in 22 out of 23 cases (95.7%), where the position could be ascertained.
- 6.22 Concern was expressed, however, about the late delivery by police of these files, which in turn leads to service of the relevant papers on the defence on the day of committal. The Branch and the police monitor the quality and timeliness of police files through JPM and the BCP has been liaising with the police over the last four years, in an attempt to secure improvements in the quality and timeliness of police files. Even though some improvements have been achieved, in the quarter ending 30 September 1998 only 96 out of 552 full files (17.4%) were received within the agreed timescales and were fully satisfactory. A further 97 files (17.6%) were timely and sufficient to proceed, although more evidence was required before the cases were ready for trial.
- 6.23 We recommend that the BCP should continue to work with the police, through JPM, to seek improvements in the quality and timeliness of police files, so that the preparation and service of committal papers can take place efficiently, and at the appropriate time.**
- 6.24 Prosecutors prepare most committals. Caseworkers used to undertake the preparation of some committals, under the supervision of the reviewing prosecutor. This practice has decreased, as so many committals have to be prepared shortly before the date of hearing (see paragraph 6.22).
- 6.25 If caseworkers undertook some committal preparation, it would release prosecutors to spend more time on complex and difficult cases. It would also offer caseworkers valuable experience, and assist in their career development.
- 6.26 We recommend that the BMT should ensure that caseworkers undertake increasing amounts of committal preparation.**
- 6.27 Committals are prepared using a Branch committal instruction sheet, and the CPS Crown Court Case Preparation Package. The latter produces a series of standard paragraphs, with free-text options for instructions to counsel. These enable the caseworker and prosecutor to prepare a case summary, and to insert information and specific instructions relevant to the case.
- 6.28 The instructions to counsel contained a summary of the case in only 17 of the 30 cases (56.7%) in our sample. A well prepared summary, which addresses the issues in the

case, will always be a useful aid to counsel, particularly in complex cases. We are concerned that, although the quality of review is generally good, it is not being reflected in the majority of instructions. Prosecutors prepare detailed openings when there are contested committal hearings. These include case summaries, an analysis of the issues, and reference to any relevant law. The openings are primarily for the examining magistrates, but they are included with the instructions to counsel. The documents that we saw were of high quality and we commend the practice.

- 6.29 The instructions to counsel addressed the acceptability of any mixed pleas in only four of the 12 cases (33.3%) where that would have been appropriate. The absence of guidance in this area can cause unnecessary delay in the Crown Court, as cases may have to be put back for a prosecutor to be consulted.

6.30 We recommend that prosecutors and caseworkers should ensure that instructions to counsel fully address the issues in the case, and, where appropriate, the acceptability of pleas.

- 6.31 Branch staff, in accordance with national guidelines, provide an outline of the case to the Crown Court, to assist the court with listing arrangements. Judges told us that these summaries are often too brief. We saw nine examples of insufficiently detailed summaries, and one which was inaccurate. Prosecutors will wish to ensure that they prepare accurate summaries, and that they are sufficiently detailed to assist in the listing of cases.
- 6.32 In 26 of the 30 cases (86.7%) that we examined, the instructions were delivered to counsel within the agreed Bar Standard time guidelines. Branch figures for the quarter ending 31 December 1998 show that 249 out of 321 instructions (77.6%) were delivered on time.

Quality of indictments

- 6.33 Branch staff draft indictments when the committal papers are prepared. Indictments have to be lodged within 28 days of committal or

transfer. All 30 indictments in our file sample were lodged within the time limit.

- 6.34 Amendments to indictments were made in six out of 30 cases (20%). In one case, this was because a count to which the defendant had pleaded guilty in the magistrates' court was wrongly included in the indictment. A further three indictments, involving allegations of causing grievous bodily harm or wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, were amended to add alternative counts, not requiring proof of intent. We agreed with the original charges selected by the reviewing prosecutor, but it appears to be the preferred local practice in the Crown Court that such alternatives are added to indictments, in which case they should have been included in the indictment in the first instance.
- 6.35 Two of the six amendments were made to accommodate acceptable pleas of guilty to alternative offences. We referred to these cases in paragraph 5.13.

The CPS in the Crown Court

- 6.36 The magistrates' court commits cases to the Crown Court sitting in Manchester at Crown Square, as do the magistrates' courts covered by the Manchester North Branch.
- 6.37 The PDH court is covered by a dedicated caseworker from either the Manchester South or Manchester North Branch. Other courts are also covered by caseworkers from both Branches. Some courts have a dedicated caseworker; other courts are covered on the basis of one caseworker for two courtrooms. We observed that the caseworkers provided a high standard of instruction of, and support to, counsel.
- 6.38 Branch prosecutors conduct half the bail applications in chambers at the Crown Court. Prosecutors from the Manchester North Branch conduct the remainder. Prosecutors assist with any queries arising in the PDH courts, but they do not generally remain in court. Concern was expressed by judges about the lack of a permanent prosecutor presence. Whilst the proximity of the office enables prosecutors to

attend the Crown Court at short notice, the BCP will wish to consider the feasibility of the prosecutor remaining at court to deal with any issues that may arise.

- 6.39 The PDH courts are handled well. Caseworkers familiarise themselves with the files relating to cases to be dealt with in advance, and are able to respond promptly to queries about the cases. They use a PDH information form, which is stapled to the inside cover of all Crown Court files. The form is a good, easy-to-follow guide to the state of the case, and ensures that any appropriate steps are taken before the PDH. We commend the use of this simple form.
- 6.40 We saw nine cases in our sample where orders had been made at PDH. The orders were complied with in eight cases. Branch staff had dealt with the ninth case properly and expeditiously, but were not supplied with the necessary information in time to comply with the order promptly.

Custody time limits

- 6.41 Custody time limit provisions regulate the length of time during which an accused person may be remanded in custody in the preliminary stages of a case. Failure to monitor the expiry date, and to make any application to extend the time limits, could result in the defendant's release from custody. This occurred in one of the Branch's cases during the last 12 months, and resulted in the three defendants being released from custody. An investigation by the Branch identified the failure as resulting from poor communication about the outcome of a PDH. The Branch's practices and procedures were revised, to ensure that such a situation does not arise in the future.
- 6.42 We examined ten files which were subject to custody time limits. In seven cases, review and expiry dates together with diary entries were correctly endorsed. In one case, the review date was incorrectly endorsed in the diary. Although no direct adverse result would have occurred, the BCP will wish to ensure that the system for calculating the above dates and endorsing diaries includes an additional check for accuracy.

6.43 In the other two cases, the magistrates' court file jacket was not endorsed with the review and expiry dates. Branch staff transfer magistrates' court files into Crown Court file jackets at the point when it is known that a case is to be committed to the Crown Court for trial. We were told by Branch staff that this may have been the reason for not recording the relevant dates on the front of the magistrates' court file jacket. However, these two cases were not recorded in the magistrates' court diary either, which suggests that there is a serious flaw in the Branch system.

- 6.44 The Branch uses a diary-based system for monitoring custody time limits, and uses notice boards and file markings to alert staff to the status of individual files.
- 6.45 The three teams use varying review periods for Crown Court cases. There was no apparent reason for this variation. When notified of our findings, the BCP took immediate steps to check the status of all custody cases, and to ensure that the teams use the same review periods.

6.46 We recommend that, in relation to custody time limits, the BCP should ensure that:

- **the custody time limit expiry and review dates are endorsed correctly on every relevant file;**
- **accurate endorsements are made in the appropriate diaries; and**
- **all three teams follow consistent procedures and practices in relation to the monitoring of custody time limits.**

File endorsements

- 6.47 We have made recommendations about the need to improve the quality of review endorsements in paragraph 5.60. The standard of other file endorsements was generally much better.
- 6.48 Twenty-eight out of 29 relevant Crown Court cases had endorsements clearly and legibly recorded in the appropriate section of the file. Fifty-nine of the 62 relevant magistrates' court cases (95.2%) were properly endorsed.

6.49 All 30 Crown Court files and 74 out of 80 magistrates' court files had a comprehensive record of case progress in court. We referred to the practice of using Crown Court file jackets in the magistrates' court in paragraph 6.43. Prosecutors then use the Crown Court file jacket to record case progress in the magistrates' court. This practice makes it difficult to follow the progress of the case. The BCP will wish to ensure that all endorsements relating to proceedings in the magistrates' court are made on the correct file jackets.

PRESENTING CASES IN COURT

- 7.1 We observed 13 Branch advocates presenting cases in the magistrates' court and in the youth court, and two advocates dealing with bail applications at the Crown Court. We also observed one of the Branch's higher court advocates presenting a case that had been committed to the Crown Court for sentence.
- 7.2 Overall, the standard of advocacy is excellent. The advocates whom we observed were, almost without exception, very well prepared. We observed three advocates presenting trials, and one advocate replying to submissions in a complex, multi-defendant case that was being committed to the Crown Court for trial. They were all thorough, dealt well with all the issues, and provided the court and defence with copies of relevant case law. Their provision of legal authorities for the assistance of the court and defence was commented upon favourably by members of other criminal justice agencies.
- 7.3 The PTLs monitor the advocacy of prosecutors once a year. In addition, they see prosecutors at court on an informal basis. When monitoring is carried out, feedback is given to the prosecutors.
- 7.4 Our examination of Crown Court cases showed that counsel originally instructed dealt with only 12 out of 30 PDHs (40%) and six out of 20 trials (30%). In our experience, this is a high level of returns.
- 7.5 When a brief is transferred, particularly at the last minute, it can mean that counsel is not well prepared, and can involve an unnecessary

adjournment of a case. The high rate of returns is of particular concern, in view of the high number of serious and complex cases handled by the Branch.

7.6 We recommend that the BCP should liaise with representatives of chambers, in order to improve the percentage of cases in which counsel originally instructed attends the PDH and the trial.

- 7.7 The CPS and the Bar Council have agreed that the number of returned briefs should be monitored by chambers on a monthly basis. Figures collated by chambers used by the Branch show that for the quarter ending 31 December 1998, counsel originally instructed attended court in 121 out of 207 hearings (58.5%). The BCP will want to be satisfied that the discrepancy between these figures and the rate of return revealed in our sample can be explained.
- 7.8 Counsel whom we observed in the Crown Court were all well prepared, and performed competently. However, members of other criminal justice agencies were concerned about the lack of experience of prosecuting counsel in comparison to defence counsel in some serious cases. There is no formal monitoring of counsel's performance, although the views of prosecutors and caseworkers are sought when counsel apply for re-grading.
- 7.9 It is important that every effort is made to ensure that counsel of appropriate experience is instructed in all cases. In view of the concern expressed, the BCP will wish to consider implementing a formal system to monitor counsel's performance to assess the position.

THE BRANCH AND OTHER AGENCIES

- 8.1 Branch staff have excellent working relations with all the other agencies in the criminal justice system. Representatives from the Branch attend formal liaison meetings, which are effective in resolving any difficulties. In addition, they attend ad hoc meetings, which deal with issues as they arise.

8.2 We were particularly impressed with the Branch's involvement in the training of police officers and magistrates. There is regular attendance at training sessions, as well as assistance in specialised training, for example of bereavement officers. Prosecutors also assisted in the training of all uniformed police officers in the South Manchester Police Division over a six-week period last year, and further training is planned.

8.3 The relationship with the Probation Service is positive, and has strengthened and improved considerably in recent months. In particular, the timeliness of the provision of information for pre-sentence reports has improved. There is a close working relationship with the Witness Service and Victim Support, and Branch staff provide a high standard of witness care.

KEY STATISTICS

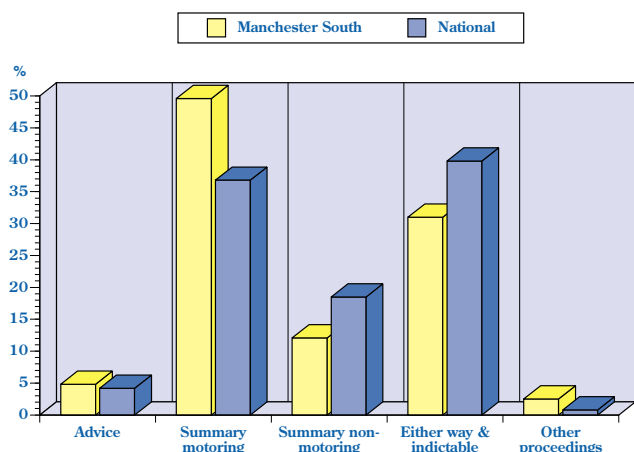
9.1 The charts which follow this page set out the key statistics about the Branch's casework in the magistrates' court and the Crown Court for the year ending 31 December 1998.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

10.1 On page 20, there is a list of the local representatives of criminal justice agencies who assisted in our inspection.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS

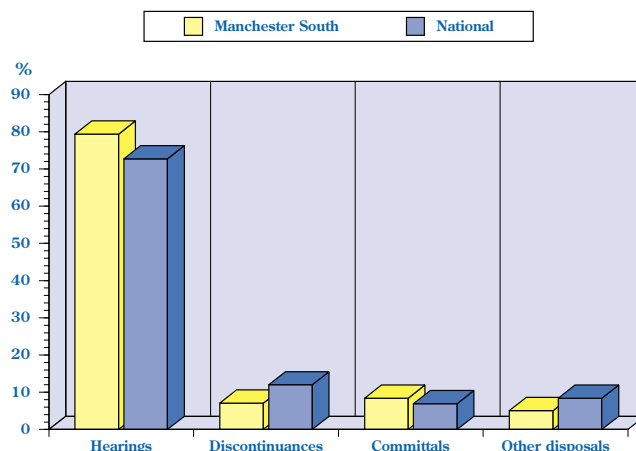
1 - Types of case



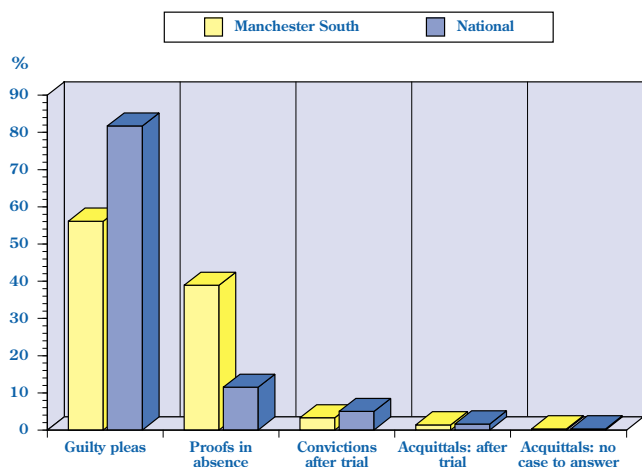
	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Advice	1,012	4.8	59,799	4.2
Summary motoring	10,425	49.6	525,813	36.8
Summary non-motoring	2,550	12.1	264,365	18.5
Either way & indictable	6,518	31.0	568,918	39.8
Other proceedings	527	2.5	11,660	0.8
Total	21,032	100	1,430,555	100

2 - Completed cases

	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Hearings	15,481	79.4	987,943	72.7
Discontinuances	1,391	7.1	162,661	12.0
Committals	1,630	8.4	94,151	6.9
Other disposals	991	5.1	114,342	8.4
Total	19,493	100	1,359,097	100



3 - Case results

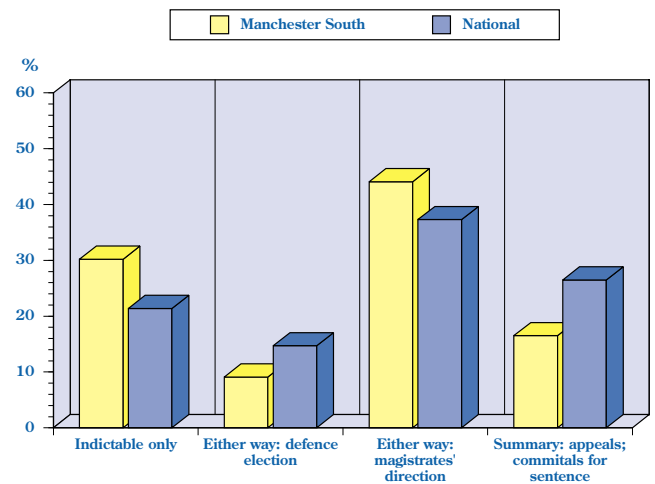


	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Guilty pleas	8,730	56.1	810,952	81.7
Proofs in absence	6,052	38.9	114,133	11.5
Convictions after trial	510	3.3	49,466	5.0
Acquittals: after trial	217	1.4	15,442	1.6
Acquittals: no case to answer	47	0.3	2,248	0.2
Total	15,556	100	992,241	100

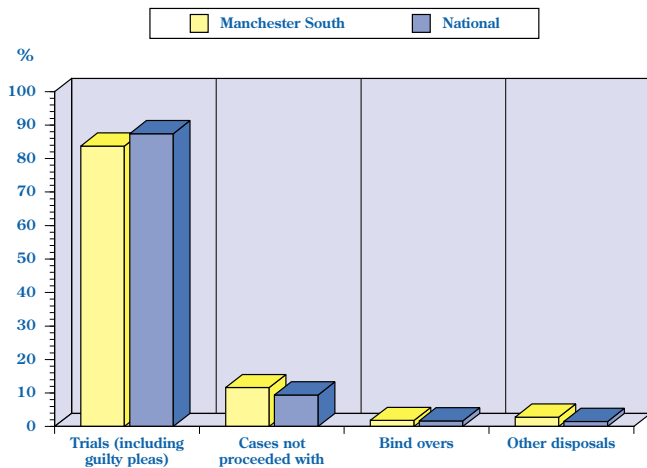
CROWN COURT

4 - Types of case

	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Indictable only	579	30.2	26,918	21.4
Either way: defence election	175	9.1	18,481	14.7
Either way: magistrates' direction	845	44.1	46,915	37.3
Summary: appeals; committals for sentence	316	16.5	33,357	26.5
Total	1,915	100	125,671	100



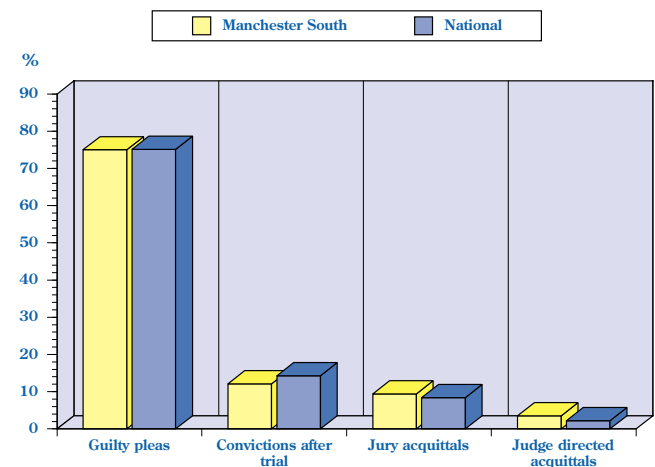
5 - Completed cases



	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Trials (including guilty pleas)	1,339	83.7	80,743	87.4
Cases not proceeded with	186	11.6	8,680	9.4
Bind overs	29	1.8	1,567	1.7
Other disposals	45	2.8	1,404	1.5
Total	1,599	100	92,394	100

6 - Case results

	Manchester South		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Guilty pleas	1,026	75.0	61,863	75.1
Convictions after trial	165	12.1	11,754	14.3
Jury acquittals	129	9.4	6,910	8.4
Judge directed acquittals	48	3.5	1,851	2.2
Total	1,368	100	82,378	100



LIST OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES WHO ASSISTED IN OUR INSPECTION

Judges	His Honour Judge Rhys Davies QC, Honorary Recorder of Manchester His Honour Judge Lewis
Magistrates' court	Mr A Berg, Stipendiary Magistrate Mr M Abelson, Stipendiary Magistrate Mr D Slade, Justice of the Peace and Chair of the Magistrates' Courts Committee Mr M Hammond, Justice of the Peace and Chair of the Magistrates' Court Users Committee Mr H Kelshaw, Justice of the Peace and Chair of the Youth Court Users Committee Mr I Lomax, Justices' Chief Executive and Clerk to Manchester City Justices
Police	Chief Superintendent J Cantrell Chief Superintendent L King Inspector C Mason Inspector C Ready
Defence solicitor	Mr J Potter
Counsel	Mr P Openshaw QC
Probation Service	Mr R Mathers, Deputy Chief Probation Officer
Witness Service	Mr P Laker Mr F Palmer

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE INSPECTORATE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the Crown Prosecution Service through a process of inspection and evaluation; the provision of advice; and the identification and promotion of good practice.

AIMS

- 1** To inspect and evaluate the quality of casework decisions and the quality of casework decision-making processes in the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 2** To report on how casework is dealt with in the Crown Prosecution Service in a way which encourages improvements in the quality of that casework.
- 3** To carry out separate reviews of particular topics which affect casework or the casework process. We call these thematic reviews.
- 4** To give advice to the Director of Public Prosecutions on the quality of casework decisions and casework decision-making processes of the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 5** To recommend how to improve the quality of casework in the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 6** To identify and promote good practice.
- 7** To work with other inspectorates to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.
- 8** To promote people's awareness of us throughout the criminal justice system so they can trust our findings.



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