

Press Notice

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CPS Cambridgeshire

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSi) has today published its Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of CPS Cambridgeshire.

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in fourteen aspects of work, five of which are categorised as critical. Each of the aspects is assessed as being excellent, good, fair or poor. The Area is then assessed on its overall performance in the light of these markings.

The overall performance assessment of CPS Cambridgeshire was **Good**.

The table below provides a breakdown of the assessed level of performance against the fourteen aspects:

Critical Aspects	Assessment
Pre-charge decision-making	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes	Good
Leadership	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good
Resource management	Good
Other Defining Aspects	
Managing magistrates' courts cases	Good
Managing Crown Court cases	Good
Handling sensitive cases and hate crimes	Fair
Custody time limits	Fair
Disclosure	Good
Presenting and progressing cases at court	Good
Delivering change	Good
Managing performance to improve	Fair
Securing community confidence	Fair

The critical aspects are those which have a particularly significant impact on the overall performance of a CPS Area. They are weighted differently from the other aspects in determining the overall performance of an Area.

CPS Cambridgeshire generally takes good quality decisions and progresses casework efficiently; there is sound case management which helps to ensure that discontinuances and unsuccessful outcomes are kept at a low level. Its handling of sensitive cases and hate crime was sound but not as strong as other categories of case.

The Area has a corporate approach to managing the business and members of the senior team are active in leading cross-agency initiatives. The Area has taken a pro-active approach to achieving value for money, and the budget is actively controlled. However, the Area still needs to improve the performance management regime and also needs to focus its attention on its approach to engaging more fully with the community.

There is a sound approach to planning. At the time of our visit the Area was on track to deliver statutory charging in April 2006 and was realising many of the anticipated benefits from the shadow scheme. Witness care units had recently been implemented throughout the Area, and overall, victims and witnesses are receiving a good level of support.

Stephen Wooler, HM Chief Inspector of the CPS, said:

“It is encouraging to see that CPS Cambridgeshire has continued to make progress since our last inspection and has improved performance across a wide range of its business. This is to the credit of managers and staff alike. I am confident that the Area will build on this assessment focussing on those aspects of performance which received lower assessments.”

The report is now available to journalists on an embargoed basis by visiting the Inspectorate’s website (www.hmcpai.gov.uk) which contains an embargoed section for the media. It may be accessed by using the following details:

- Username: MEDIA
- Password: OPAS2

For further information, please contact HMCPSI Communications Section, on 020 7210 1143. If the query relates to the CPS, contact Gill Bremner on 01480 825204.

Notes to Editors

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) was established as an independent statutory body by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000, on 1 October 2000. The Chief Inspector is appointed by, and reports to, the Attorney General.

The Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) report is based on assessments and judgments that have been made by HMCPSI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPSI assessments, and by assessment under the criteria and indicators of good performance set out in the OPA framework. The exercise included visits to all 42 CPS Areas over a seven month period between June and December 2005.

The inspectorate uses an assessment model which is designed to give pre-eminence to the ratings for 'critical' aspects of work as drivers for the final overall performance level. Assessments for the critical aspects are overlaid by ratings in relation to the other defining aspects, in order to arrive at the OPA. This assessment model is included in the framework and is available to all Areas.

This exercise is not a full inspection and differs from traditional inspection activity. While it is designed to set out comprehensively the positive aspects of performance and those requiring improvement, it intentionally avoids being a detailed analysis of the processes underpinning performance. However, it is designed to provide a benchmark from which future work can be informed. The inspectorate will use this information to determine where best to focus its resources in order to promote improvement within the CPS and the criminal justice system as a whole. It is also hoped that the CPS Areas, and CPS HQ, will use this information to address issues at local and national level where this is necessary.

CPS Cambridgeshire serves the area covered by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Its main office is based at Huntingdon. In the year ended March 2005, the Area employed 64 full time equivalent staff and handled 15,122 cases, which included 3405 (22.5%) where advice was given to the police before charge.

This press release and the report in relation to CPS Cambridgeshire should be read in conjunction with HMCPSI's national press release and the summative report which provides an overall performance assessment in relation to all 42 CPS Areas. These are also available on HMCPSI's website in the embargoed sections. Twenty-two of the reports were published in December 2005 to avoid an unacceptably long lapse between assessment and publication. Those relating to the remaining twenty Areas are published today.