

CPS Cambridgeshire

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Overall Performance Assessment

Undertaken October 2005

March 2006

Promoting Improvement in Criminal Justice

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## **A. INTRODUCTION TO THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

This report is the outcome of Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's (HMCP*SI*) overall assessment of the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in Cambridgeshire and represents a baseline against which improvement will be monitored.

Assessments and judgments have been made by HMCP*SI* based on absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data; CPS self-assessment; HMCP*SI* assessments; and by assessment under the criteria and indicators of good performance set out in the Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) Framework, which is available to all Areas.

The OPA has been arrived at by rating the Area's performance within each category as either 'Excellent' (level 4), 'Good' (level 3), 'Fair' (level 2) or 'Poor' (level 1) in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Framework.

The inspectorate uses a rule-driven deterministic model for assessment, 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.

The table at page 7 shows the Area performance in each category.

An OPA 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. That sort of detailed examination will, when necessary, be part of the tailored programme of inspection activity

## B. AREA DESCRIPTION AND CASELOAD

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

Area business is divided on functional lines between Crown Court and magistrates' courts work. There is a Trial Unit (TU) in Huntingdon which handles all cases dealt with in the Crown Court. There is also a Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) at Huntingdon which handles cases dealt with in the magistrates' courts. This CJU also has an office in Cambridge dealing with Cambridge and Ely cases and there is a further CJU at Peterborough which handles work in Peterborough and Wisbech. Both the TU and the two CJUs are co-located with the police.

During the year 2004-05, the average Area number of staff in post was 64 full-time equivalents.

Details of the Area's caseload in the year to 31 March 2005 are as follows:

Category	Area numbers	Area % of total caseload	National % of total caseload
Pre-charge advice to police	3,405	22.5	20.9
Advice	1,322	8.7	5.1
Summary offences	5,953	39.5	46.9
Either way and indictable only	4,437	29.3	26.7
Other proceedings	5	0	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,122</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **C. SUMMARY OF JUDGMENTS**

The Area inspection of CPS Cambridgeshire, published in March 2003, concluded that the Area had effected significant improvement in the quality of its Crown Court casework since the earlier report in November 2000. However, it appeared to have come to some extent at the expense of work in the magistrates' courts, where the standard of work had not been maintained. Co-location with the police in 2002 had brought tangible benefits in the form of better file quality and better understanding. The inspection report contained five recommendations. The follow-up inspection was conducted in October 2003 and found that the Area's managers recognised there were some serious issues to be addressed and responded by working towards improvement in most of the areas concerned. Progress was generally encouraging and there had been some improvement in relation to all the recommendations made.

Similar to many Areas, CPS Cambridgeshire has been subject to change. At the time of the last inspection it had moved to co-location with the police at three sites and the benefits of this were being realised. Since that time Cambridgeshire has introduced the electronic case management system (CMS) and during 2004-05 has implemented or progressed other national initiatives; Witness Care Units (WCUs) have been established and shadow charging has been progressed. Other joint work is also being undertaken, including the use of secure e-mail and e-business. The Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) is being taken forward by a consultant engaged by the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB).

The Area Management Team (AMT) has adopted the national Vision and Values which have been incorporated into the Area Business Plan and linked to local service delivery. There is a corporate approach to managing business and members of the AMT are active in leading cross-agency initiatives. The Area's approach to planning is sound, with AMT members allocated responsibility for the management and delivery of individual projects. The Team receives regular performance information on Cambridgeshire's key targets, although the management of performance could be improved by more unit-specific data and more effective dissemination to staff at all levels. The AMT has taken a pro-active approach to achieving value for money and this principle is embedded throughout the Area; the budget is actively controlled. However, the commitment of the AMT towards engaging the local community is limited by available resources, the absence of a Community Engagement Strategy and a named officer to marshal activity.

Full shadow charging has been introduced across the Area and is on track to deliver statutory charging in April 2006. Area performance in relation to the headline targets of attrition, discontinuance and guilty plea rates was mixed for the last quarter of 2004-05 in both magistrates' courts and the Crown Court.



WCUs have recently been implemented throughout the county; the final two went 'live' in October 2005. Speaking Up for Justice is generally embedded throughout the Area. The performance in relation to cracked and ineffective trials which are attributable to witness issues in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court was better than national averages. However, the volume and timeliness of letters sent under the Direct Communication with Victims DCV scheme failed to meet national targets.

The quality and timeliness of review is generally good and the vast majority of cases can proceed at the first hearing. In the Criminal Justice Units the case progression functions are currently undertaken by the police case file co-ordinators, with support from the lawyers and CPS administrative staff as part of core business. The systems in place have been incorporated into the ETMP. The quality of police files is formally monitored and the standard of file quality is generally good across the Area.

Cambridgeshire performed well in relation to the management of Crown Court cases during the last inspection and the standard has been maintained. In the Trial Unit, caseworkers undertake the case progression function. The timeliness of service of committal papers and service of briefs to counsel were better than the national averages during 2004-05. The Area is committed to the use of CMS; the figures show the Area performs better than the national average in relation to recording of full file reviews and indictments.

Area Champions disseminate information and provide guidance and training on sensitive and specialised casework; a wide range of training has been provided within the Area. Cambridgeshire endeavours to reflect CPS policies in its practices and tries to ensure that cases are allocated to appropriate specialists.

The Area is among those agencies leading the initiative to improve case progression at court. The standard of preparation for court is reflected in its good performance in relation to ineffective trials and unsuccessful outcomes. A high percentage of magistrates' courts in the Area are covered by in-house prosecutors and designated caseworker (DCW) usage is better than the national average.

The written custody time limit (CTL) system complies for the most part with the national guidance. There was one failure during 2004-05 which resulted in a full review of the system and revision of the written guidance. However, the 'reality check' of the files indicated that there is still a training need.

CPS Cambridgeshire was a good performing Area on disclosure during the last inspection cycle. There is an effective Area Champion who has provided extensive training, both internally and to the police, which has resulted in improved performance. Performance is formally assessed through the Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) system with additional informal checks by the Unit Heads.

Outcomes in relation to the shared Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets are generally good. The target for Offences Brought to Justice (OBTJ) is a shared one set by reference to the criminal justice agencies. The ability of the CPS to influence this particular target is limited because it includes offences dealt with by non-prosecution disposals. The CPS's contribution comes through managing cases to keep discontinuances and unsuccessful outcomes low and good decision-making and case management. Cambridgeshire has been pro-active in relation to all of these factors. However, the OBTJ target for 2004-05 was not met; the agencies achieved joint performance of +18.7% against a target of +24.9%. There has been extensive inter-agency work and implementation of new initiatives which has enabled the agencies to turn performance around, the OBTJ rate for 2005-06 is above target, the target having been achieved by August 2005.

The ineffective trial rates in the Crown Court and the magistrates' courts are better than the local and national targets, and the national averages. Persistent young offenders (PYOs) are generally dealt with effectively and the target from arrest to sentence has been met consistently for the last five years, although there was a dip in performance at the start of 2005 due to a small number of cases which proved to be intractable, despite the managed processes. The rolling three-month average for PYO cases at February 2005 was 78 days against a target of 71 days. Public confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system to bring offenders to justice has increased to 47% in 2004-05 and is ahead of target. Performance in relation to unsuccessful outcomes and all adverse case categories is as good as, or consistently better than, the national averages.

In light of these findings the Area's overall performance assessment is **GOOD**.

<b>CRITICAL ASPECTS</b>	<b>Level 3 - GOOD</b>
Pre-charge decision-making	3 - Good
Ensuring successful outcomes	3 - Good
Leadership	3 - Good
The service to victims and witnesses	3 - Good
Managing resources	3 - Good
<b>OTHER DEFINING ASPECTS</b>	
Managing magistrates' courts cases	3 - Good
Managing Crown Court cases	3 - Good
Handling sensitive cases and hate crimes	2 - Fair
Custody time limits	2 - Fair
Disclosure	3 - Good
Presenting and progressing cases at court	3 - Good
Delivering change	3 - Good
Managing performance to improve	2 - Fair
Securing community confidence	2 - Fair

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>3 - GOOD</b>
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## D. DEFINING ASPECTS

### 1. PRE-CHARGE DECISION-MAKING

3 - GOOD

*Full shadow charging has been introduced across the Area and is on track to deliver statutory charging in April 2006. Area lawyers are of sufficient experience and expertise to deal with pre-charge advice cases, and understand the local and national schemes, and guidance. The case management system (CMS) is being used to record pre-charge advice, although difficulties have been experienced in validating pre-charge advice data as a result of the use of local unique reference numbers (URNs). Area performance in relation to the headline targets of attrition, discontinuance and guilty plea rates was mixed for the last quarter of 2004-05 in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. The Area is considering the introduction of prosecution team performance monitoring (PTPM) to address performance data needs.*

#### 1A: The Area ensures that procedures for pre-charge decision-making operate effectively at Area charging centres

- Timely pre-charge advice is provided at all relevant Area charging centres. Face-to-face advice and a combination of telephone and fax advice are provided at all three co-located centres. The methods chosen by the Area were based on the geographical distances, the number of police stations requiring advice, the volume of advice, and also on the complexity of individual cases.
- The Area initially adopted a flexible and 'open house' approach to the appropriateness of requests for pre-charge advice, to encourage and develop relationships between the police and the CPS. Gradually, some procedures were introduced to manage inappropriate requests for advice, including the discussion of general issues between the police and the Area at regular divisional performance meetings.
- Processes are in place to ensure that pre-charge consultation is taking place on all relevant files. Any instances of files bypassing the scheme inappropriately are brought to the attention of the Unit Heads and discussed with the police. Compliance with pre-charge advice is now monitored and matters outstanding on CMS are referred to police, although historically this procedure has not been employed consistently and effectively throughout the Area.

- The use of CMS by Area lawyers for the recording of advice is embedded. The reality check undertaken to assess the accuracy of recording of pre-charge advice on CMS identified that nine out of ten cases were fully recorded. However, in four cases the check revealed that there was a training issue with regard to saving decisions correctly onto CMS. The Area states it has experienced some difficulties with ISDN lines, consequently access and input can be slow.
- Migration to the statutory scheme was initially problematic and delayed until April 2006 as a result of staffing needs. However, Cambridgeshire is now on course to deliver the project to the revised date, with the release of a Unit Head to manage the implementation of the project. There are no serious risks to future implementation and delivery of the scheme. Liaison with CPS Direct has begun in readiness for the commencement of statutory charging.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The police 'gatekeeper' role has not been successfully introduced throughout the Area, although joint discussions with the police are now underway to ensure consistent and effective procedures for the whole Area.
- The absence of police URNs has hampered the accurate recording and counting of pre-charge cases. The CPS has been reliant on local 'pseudo' URNs and, as a consequence, has experienced problems when linking subsequent charged files and in authenticating and validating pre-charge data. Considerable work has been undertaken by the Area to address these difficulties and police URNs are impending. This should allow for more meaningful performance information to be obtained via the nationally introduced PTPM regime in readiness for statutory charging.

**1B: The Area ensures that all charges advised on are in accordance with the Director's guidance, the Code, charging standards and policy guidelines, and are accurately documented and recorded**

- Area lawyers are generally of sufficient experience and expertise to deal with pre-charge advice cases and there is widespread understanding of the local and national schemes and all relevant guidance.
- The Area has some monitoring systems in place to assure the quality and timeliness of advice, including CQA and informal monitoring through dip-sampling by the Unit Heads and Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) at the charging centres. There is no systematic monitoring of cases where no further action is recommended, and consequently, no relevant performance information is obtained.

- There are clearly documented escalation procedures for cases where there is a disagreement between the police and the CPS on advice provided. There are few instances where disagreements have not been resolved and have required escalation to senior management level.
- Comprehensive instructions have been issued to prosecutors on the completion of MG3s, although there is no formalised monitoring of their accurate completion.

**1C: The Area is able to demonstrate the benefits of its involvement in pre-charge decision-making**

- Area performance in relation to the key measures of benefit realisation was mixed. In the magistrates' courts the guilty plea rate (68.4%) and attrition rate (21.3%) were both better in the last quarter of 2004-05 than national performance. In the Crown Court the discontinuance rate (9.6%) was significantly better than the national performance.
- There is effective and regular liaison with the police and other agencies on the operation of the shadow charging scheme; in addition to informal liaison with the police, there are regular divisional performance meetings.
- There is a formal system for the communication of changes to the scheme throughout the Area via e-mailed bulletins. Discussions also occur at team meetings and on an informal basis within the offices.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The discontinuance rate for pre-charge advice cases in the magistrates' courts for the final quarter of 2004-05 (17.9%) was worse than the national average. Similarly, the guilty plea rate in the Crown Court (34.6%) for the same period, and the attrition rate in the Crown Court (32.7%) were worse than national performance. Difficulties the Area has experienced in confirming the accuracy of data may impact upon the interpretation of the figures.
- Cambridgeshire does not gather a full range of performance data and quantitative performance is centred on the key targets for benefits realisation. The introduction of PTPM and further analysis undertaken in readiness for statutory charging will supplement the currently available data.

**2. MANAGING MAGISTRATES' COURTS CASES**
**3 - GOOD**

*The quality and timeliness of review is generally good and the vast majority of cases can proceed at the first hearing. Case progression functions are currently undertaken by the police case file co-ordinators with support from the lawyers and CPS administrative staff as part of core business. The systems in place have been incorporated into the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) which is being taken forward by a consultant engaged by the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB). The quality of police files is formally monitored and the standard of file quality is generally good across the Area. Performance in relation to persistent young offenders (PYOs) has been consistently good over the last five years, although there was a dip in performance at the start of 2005. Performance in relation to the ineffective trial rate, the rate of cases that are ineffective due to the prosecution and the rate of cracked trials is better than the national average. The Area is committed to the use of the casework management system (CMS) and the recording of full file reviews is better than the national average.*

**2A: The Area ensures that cases progress at each court appearance**

- Magistrates' courts cases are routinely reviewed and prepared promptly, follow-up work is undertaken where necessary, and most cases are ready to proceed at each court hearing. Multi-agency agreements ensure that interview tapes and, where applicable, close circuit television tapes are available to the defence at the outset. The guilty plea rates for all four quarters of 2004-05 were better than the national averages, although the number of cases dropped after the third and subsequent hearing is slightly worse than the national average (55.7% compared to 54.9%).
- There is liaison with criminal justice partners, with performance improving as a result. A two-stage trial management system is in place whereby a pre-trial review is undertaken on receipt of the full file and trial readiness checks undertaken prior to trial by the police, CPS administrative staff and lawyers. This has been incorporated into the ETMP which is currently being taken forward by a consultant funded by the CCJB. In the Criminal Justice Units (CJUs) the police case file co-ordinators undertake the case progression function. Although there are no formal case progression meetings with the magistrates' courts Case Progression Officers, there is regular informal liaison for the effective progression of cases. The timeliness figures for adult initial guilty pleas (87% compared to 83%) and adult trials (92% compared to 66%) are better than the national averages.

- Prosecutors complete monitoring forms on the quality of full files submitted by the police and police file case co-ordinators complete monitoring forms for expedited files. The police CJU managers compile and send monthly statistics to each police division. Particular divisions or officers who submit sub-standard files are identified and training can be provided by the case file co-ordinators in the co-located units where relevant. In addition, the Area Manual of Guidance Champion has provided training to key police staff. The standard of file quality is generally good across the Area and there has been a trend of improvement. However, the prosecution performance management arrangements have yet to be employed for pre-charge advice cases.
- There are specialists within each unit who review and prosecute youth cases. The timeliness figure for youth trials is better than the national average (97% compared to 87%). Cambridgeshire has been pro-active in tracking and progressing cases involving PYOs and has met the PYO target from arrest to sentence consistently for the last five years. However, there was a dip in performance at the start of 2005 due to a small number of cases, which had been identified; these cases proved to be intractable despite the managed processes. The rolling three-month average for PYO cases at February 2005 was 78 days.
- There were no wasted costs orders during 2004-05.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The timeliness figure for youth initial guilty pleas is worse than the national average (84% compared to 87%).

**2B: The Area contributes effectively to reducing cracked and ineffective trials**

- The ineffective trial rate in Cambridgeshire is 16.9% compared to the local target of 20% and performance is also better than both the national average (24.8%) and the national target (24.5%). The rate of cases that are ineffective due to the prosecution is better than the national figure (4.2% compared to 6.8%), as is the cracked trial rate (34.3% compared to 39.2%) and the rates for effective trials and vacated trials.
- There is regular and formal analysis of all cracked and ineffective trials by the Unit Heads. If trends are identified there is discussion at the AMT meetings and dissemination to staff either through discussion at team meetings, informal briefing or by e-mail. Individual feedback is provided on a case-by-case basis.

- Work has been undertaken with criminal justice partners and performance has improved. There is regular operational liaison between the police and CPS Unit Heads at monthly divisional meetings and, in addition, the AMT hold a strategic meeting with the police at two-month intervals. There are informal discussions between the Unit Heads and deputy clerks in the north and south of the county in relation to cracked and ineffective trial analysis. There are also plans to extend the Crown Court casework remit of the CCJB Joint Performance Management Sub-group to cover cases in the magistrates' courts.

**2C: The Area demonstrates that CMS contributes to the effective management of cases**

- CMS is routinely used to record key events in cases and attempts are being made to monitor outstanding tasks and chase them up where appropriate. CMS usage is generally monitored and appropriate action is taken to improve usage. The recording of full file reviews is better than the national average (59.6% compared to 27.1%) with a trend of improvement. Five files were examined as part of the reality check, two contained a full file review, one had an initial review, one had both and the other had no CMS review, but referred to the paper file.
- The local implementation team meets each month and is working to improve CMS usage, incorporate local templates and manage business change, for example the move to statutory charging.
- The Area has created a number of CMS and management information system (MIS) reports and is using them to assist in specific usage and monitoring issues. Ad hoc reports are used, for example, to analyse outcomes in cases involving domestic violence or to monitor file allocation. Local templates are also being added to the system, with a considerable number of template letters being tested and evaluated prior to roll-out across the Area.



**3. MANAGING CROWN COURT CASES**

**3 - GOOD**

*The Area performed well in relation to the management of Crown Court cases during the last inspection (published in March 2003) and the standard has been maintained. The timeliness of service of committal papers and service of briefs to counsel was better than the national averages during 2004-05. The Area did not achieve the challenging Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) target, although there is a comprehensive office pack and a stringent monitoring system in place. Performance in relation to the ineffective trial rate, the rate of cases that are ineffective due to the prosecution and the cracked trial rate are better than the national averages. Cambridgeshire is committed to the use of the case management system (CMS) and performs better than the national average in relation to recording indictments.*

**3A: The Area ensures that cases progress at each court appearance**

- Crown Court cases are routinely reviewed and prepared promptly, with follow-up work undertaken where necessary. Most cases are ready to proceed at each court hearing. Systems are in place to monitor and chase file upgrades. The last inspection report recognised the good quality of caseworker support and case ownership by caseworkers as a strength. The management of Crown Court files has been reviewed and a new system adopted to improve file housekeeping. This includes clearer sub-division of files and the use of case progression sheets, although the reality check of files revealed that the case progression sheets were not being fully utilised. The timeliness of service of committal papers was better than the national average (83.2% compared to 79.4%).
- Most instructions to counsel are delivered promptly; the Area performs better than the national average in relation to the timeliness of instructions to counsel (89.5% compared to 85%). A brief is prepared in all cases whether counsel or a Higher Court Advocate (HCA) conducts the case.
- A certificate of readiness is completed for each Crown Court case and a new system to ensure compliance with directions was introduced in June 2005 as part of the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP). In addition to Casework Quality Assurance checks, dip-sampling of performance is undertaken by lawyer and caseworker managers. The allocated caseworker undertakes the case progression function on individual cases and the Trial Unit Business Manager attends the liaison meeting with the Crown Court where trial readiness and case progression are discussed.

- The Area is monitoring POCA cases, with spreadsheets maintained for all relevant cases and details also recorded on the Crown Court results sheets. Cambridgeshire has produced a detailed office pack which includes process maps, office procedures and an annex of template orders, letters and instructions to counsel. There is a close relationship with the police economic crime unit. All lawyers and caseworkers allocated to cases with a possible restraint or confiscation element are trained.
- Although there is a very small number of youth cases in the Crown Court, they are regularly discussed at the fortnightly meetings with the Court and divisional performance meetings with the police. The timeliness of youth committals is better than the national average (100% compared to 91%). PYO cases are closely monitored on the Crown Court tracker.
- There were no wasted costs orders during 2004-05.

#### *Aspects for improvement*

- The last inspection report identified that instructions to counsel needed more detail about the offence and pleas. The reality check revealed that, of the two relevant cases where the brief was on CMS, neither contained a summary of the offence other than a reference to the police summary and only one had a passing reference to the acceptability of pleas. The reality check of paper files revealed that only one had a comprehensive summary of the case and full instructions about the acceptability of pleas.
- The Area did not meet the POCA target; 24 orders to a high value of £2,674,090 were achieved against a very challenging benchmark of 41.

### **3B: The Area contributes effectively to reducing cracked and ineffective trials**

- The ineffective trial rate is better than the national average (13.1% compared to 15.8%) exceeding the local and national targets (18% and 18.4% respectively). The rate of cases that are ineffective due to the prosecution is better than the national figure (5.1% compared to 6.6%). The cracked trial rate is also better than the national average (34.3% compared to 39.2%) as is the effective trial rate.
- There is regular and formal analysis of all cracked and ineffective trials, and appropriate action is taken in all cases where the prosecution has been at fault. Monthly Crown Court results sheets, which provide a comprehensive list of outcomes, are circulated to all lawyers, caseworkers, Witness Care Officers and the police; the sheets provide a trigger for discussions on performance between senior managers and individual performance of staff.

- There is analysis of cracked and ineffective trials at monthly meetings attended by the Crown Court list office, police and CPS Cambridgeshire, with occasional representation from the Witness Service. In addition, there is liaison and discussion of joint performance in relation to Crown Court casework at the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board Joint Performance Management Sub-group.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The rate of cases that are cracked due to the prosecution is worse than the national average (18.2% compared to 15.3%).

**3C: The Area demonstrates that CMS contributes to the effective management of cases**

- There is commitment to the use of CMS, which is routinely used to record key events in cases, and attempts are being made to monitor outstanding tasks and chase them up where appropriate. The usage for recording indictments is better than the national average (94.7% compared to 81.5%).
- The Area has created a number of CMS and management Information System (MIS) reports and is using them to assist in specific usage and monitoring issues. Local template letters are being added to the system and evaluated and the Crown Court Case Preparation Package will be added following the November 2005 CMS upgrade release.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Five files were examined on CMS as part of the reality check, one had an initial review, one had both an initial and a full file review and three had no CMS review, but referred to the paper file.

**4. ENSURING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES**
**3 - GOOD**

*Performance is better than the national average in relation to conviction rates in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. The Area performs better than the national average in relation to all unsuccessful outcomes except the judge ordered acquittal (JOA) rate which is the same as the national average. Mechanisms are in place to monitor and analyse performance on a regular basis within the Area and with other criminal justice agencies. CPS Cambridgeshire, in conjunction with its criminal justice partners, did not meet the Offences Brought to Justice (OBTJ) target for 2004-05; however, performance has been turned around through effective joint working and the agencies are above target for 2005-06.*

**4A: The Area is working to increase the number of successful outcomes and reduce the level of attrition after proceedings have commenced**

- There is regular and formal assessment of the quality of review and case handling, with appropriate action being taken when necessary. There is monthly monitoring of unsuccessful outcomes, adverse cases, discontinuances, and cracked and ineffective trials, in addition to Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) checks undertaken by the Unit Heads.
- Adverse outcome forms are completed in most appropriate cases and clearly set out the reasons for acquittal. When merited, action has been taken, both internally and with the police, on a case-by-case basis. If trends are identified there is discussion at the Area Management Team (AMT) meetings and dissemination to staff either through discussion at team meetings, informal briefing or by e-mail. The monthly Crown Court results sheets are circulated to all lawyers, caseworkers, Witness Care Officers and the police. This provides a mechanism for feedback to staff in the Criminal Justice Unit on cases where pre-charge advice has been provided or an initial review undertaken.
- The Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board Joint Performance Management group examines Crown Court performance and it is proposed that their remit will be extended to magistrates' courts performance. There is regular liaison at strategic and operational levels with the police, and at an operational level with the Crown Court and the magistrates' courts.
- The Area is performing better than the national averages and targets in relation to the pre-charge decision (PCD) benefits realisation figures for the attrition rate in the magistrates' courts and the discontinuance rate in the Crown Court. The guilty plea rate in the magistrates' courts is significantly above target, although slightly worse than the national average.

- The Area has exceeded the local and national targets (18% and 21% respectively) in relation to unsuccessful outcomes; its performance of 14.7% is better than the national average (19.6%) and shows a trend of improvement from the previous financial year.
- The conviction rates in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court are better than the national averages. As shown in the table below all categories of adverse cases are at least as good as, and many are better than, the national averages.

OUTCOME	AREA FIGURE	NATIONAL AVERAGE
<b>Magistrates' courts</b>		
Discontinuance & bindovers	9.5%	12.5%
No case to answer	0.2%	0.3%
Dismissed after trial	1.7%	1.5%
Discharged committals	0%	0.3%
Overall conviction rate	85.6%	80.8%
<b>Crown Court</b>		
Judge ordered acquittals	9.9%	14.2%
Judge directed acquittals	2.0%	2.0%
Acquittals after trial	6.2%	6.3%
Overall conviction rate	81.2%	75.8%

- The target for OBTJ is a shared one set by reference to the criminal justice agencies. The ability of the CPS to influence this particular target is limited because it includes offences dealt with by non-prosecution disposals. The CPS's contribution comes through managing cases to keep discontinuance and unsuccessful outcomes low, good decision-making and case management; the Area has been pro-active in relation to all of these factors. Although the OBTJ target for 2004-05 was not achieved, there has been extensive inter-agency work and implementation of new initiatives which has enabled the agencies to turn the performance around since April 2005; the OBTJ rate is now above target for 2005-06.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Cambridgeshire is performing worse than the national averages and targets in relation to the PCD benefits realisation figures for the discontinuance rate in the magistrates' courts and the guilty plea and attrition rates in the Crown Court.
- The OBTJ target for 2004-05 was not achieved despite an increased rate of sanction detections. The criminal justice agencies achieved joint performance of 12,854 (+18.7%) against a target of 13,520 (+24.9%).



**5. HANDLING SENSITIVE CASES AND HATE CRIMES**

**2 - FAIR**

*Area Champions are in place who disseminate information and provide guidance and training on sensitive and specialised casework. The Area endeavours to reflect CPS policies in its practices and tries to ensure that cases are allocated to appropriate specialists. Some analysis of hate crime cases is undertaken; further analysis will take place and lessons learned when the scrutiny panel of racially and religiously aggravated cases is established during 2006. Sensitive cases are not always flagged on the case management system (CMS).*

**5A: The Area identifies and manages sensitive cases effectively**

- The review and handling of sensitive cases are formally assessed through Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) checks and adverse case monitoring. The rape case co-ordinator reviews all cases post-trial and undertakes a periodic review of trends with the Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP). However, other than this analysis there are no other formal monitoring mechanisms of specific categories of sensitive cases. The co-ordinators for domestic violence, homophobic crime and the Racial Incident Monitoring Scheme collate monitoring forms, and where absent will complete them, to forward to CPS Headquarters. There is also a Service Level Agreement for serious sexual offences and a joint review was undertaken with the police, with input from advocacy workers in the Area, on cases involving domestic violence.
- Cambridgeshire has appointed Champions for all sensitive cases, who are responsible for disseminating relevant information and providing guidance to the Area Management Team and staff. Where possible training by the relevant Champions is provided locally at Area or unit training days. The Area has a small number of lawyers; most are experienced and many are trained in a variety of sensitive or specialist cases. Cambridgeshire tries to ensure that cases are allocated to appropriate specialists, but also relies upon the collegiate approach within the units and across the Area to ensure specialist and sensitive cases are appropriately handled and managed.
- The training records show that training has been provided on homophobic crime, racially and religiously aggravated offences, domestic violence offence updates, animal rights, hunting and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). A significant training programme on cases involving domestic violence was delivered to all lawyers and caseworkers in September 2005.

- Cambridgeshire endeavours to take CPS policies and HMCPsi thematic reviews into account when devising Area practice. The CCP circulates legal and policy updates and the Area Champions disseminate information by e-mail or at training days.
- The Area undertakes some analysis of hate crime cases in which a reduction or change of charge, or an agreed basis of plea, reduces or removes the 'hate element' from the offence. All Crown Court results and all unsuccessful outcomes in the magistrates' courts are collated and monitored enabling the CCP or Unit Heads to take action if required. The Area Business Manager (ABM) is leading the initiative to establish a scrutiny panel of racially and religiously aggravated cases. The initiative will provide a mechanism to learn lessons to improve the prosecution of cases and the ability to implement policy consistently.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Sensitive cases are not always flagged on CMS. The reality check of ten racially aggravated cases on CMS revealed that only six had been flagged electronically. The Area does not conduct audits or dip-sample flagging on CMS.

**6. CUSTODY TIME LIMITS**

**2 - FAIR**

*The Area written custody time limit (CTL) system complies for the most part with the national guidance. There was one failure during 2004-05 which resulted in a full review of the system and revision of the written guidance. The reality check revealed that there are instances where the system is not adhered to and poor practice in relation to endorsements which indicated a training need. There is an established practice in relation to agreeing CTLs in the Crown Court, although this has not been formalised. The Area is working towards a formal protocol with the magistrates' courts.*

**6A: Area custody time limit systems comply with current CPS guidance and case law**

- The Area has a written CTL scheme, which complies for the most part with national guidance and incorporates a few elements from the good practice guide. There is evidence that the system has been reviewed although this has not been systematic or at regular intervals. The system has undergone a full review resulting in the revised guidance dated June 2005, following a CTL failure in March 2005.
- The Area Champion is responsible for ensuring staff are kept up-to-date when new case law or procedures are brought in and is also available for training purposes if a need is identified. All staff were notified of the revised written guidance which has been made available as desk instructions.
- In all units there are daily checks of the CTL diary and case management system (CMS) reports, with monthly dip-sampling of CTL files by the Unit Heads and the caseworker's line manager. There is evidence of discussions of CTLs at team meetings in all the units. Additional ad hoc checks are undertaken by the Unit Heads when they are conducting courts and undertaking Casework Quality Assurance checks.
- In the Crown Court it is routine to agree the CTL with the court at the first hearing. This practice is well established although it has not been formalised in a protocol. There is no equivalent practice in the magistrates' courts; however, a protocol has been agreed but has not yet been signed.

*Aspects for improvement*

- There has been a CTL failure in the last financial year, although the system was reviewed and the written guidance revised in June 2005.

- A dual system is in place for the entering of CTLs review and expiry dates, which entails a manual diary system and back-up on CMS, which enables appropriate monitoring. However, there was no evidence of entries into the system being double-checked.
- No additional training was provided on the revised written guidance on the assumption that all staff were experienced and any new staff would receive desktop training as it was required. The Area should revisit this decision in view of the findings from the reality check.
- The reality check indicates that there is some poor practice in relation to endorsements and some confusion about the system which should be remedied through training and re-inforcement of the new written guidance.

**7. DISCLOSURE**

**3 - GOOD**

*CPS Cambridgeshire was a good performing Area on disclosure during the last inspection cycle. Performance is formally assessed through the Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) system with additional informal checks by the Unit Heads. There is an effective Area Champion who has provided extensive training both internally and to the police, which has resulted in improved performance. There is a long-standing third party protocol which was recently revised and re-launched to unify practice across the county.*

**7A: The Area takes steps to ensure that there is compliance with the prosecution's duties of disclosure**

- CPS Cambridgeshire was a good performing Area on disclosure during the last inspection cycle. The overall compliance with prosecution obligations in cases in the file sample was 82.8% compared to national performance of 70.3%. Prosecutors' performance in relation to disclosure is being formally assessed through the CQA system checks, and task lists on CMS are dip-sampled by Unit Heads to ensure there has been timely compliance by prosecutors. The Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) monitors adverse case outcomes which are the result of issues relating to unused material.
- All sensitive material schedules and any sensitive unused material are stored securely, although the material is usually inspected in conference with the police who retain custody. When sensitive material is in the charge of the CPS it is tracked on the disclosure record sheet. There is a long-standing third party protocol which is under multi-agency review, with a view to being re-launched to unify practices in the north and the south of the county.
- The Area has an effective Disclosure Champion, who disseminates information to prosecutors and caseworkers and provides guidance and mentoring; he has also provided extensive training internally and to the police.
- Most prosecutors and caseworkers have received training on the disclosure provisions of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) 2003 and the CPS/ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) Disclosure Manual. The Champion has provided training in-house and to the police case file co-ordinators in 2003 and 2005. There is evidence of discussion of handling of unused material at team meetings and particularly in terms of clarifying the role of administrative staff.

- Work has been undertaken with the police, including improving the quality of schedules and training, and there are indications that improved performance has resulted. The proxy measure used by the CCP is the rarity of adverse cases due to disclosure issues, which have declined significantly. In addition to the training provided to the case file co-ordinators, the Champion has trained a large number of Crime Investigation Department (CID) officers and supervisors in 2004, totalling more than 300.
- Steps have been taken to improve disclosure performance since the last inspection and there is evidence of resulting improvement. The Area has been concentrating on police training and supervision to improve performance, and senior managers are aware of the need not to be complacent about the performance of CPS staff.
- The reality check indicated generally good practice.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Although the reality check indicated generally good practice, senior managers will need to ensure that the new disclosure record sheet is used in all magistrates' courts cases.



**8. THE SERVICE TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES**

**3 - GOOD**

*Witness Care Units (WCUs) have recently been implemented throughout Cambridgeshire, with the final two going 'live' in October 2005. The identification of, and application for, Special Measures are timely, and witness warning procedures are effective. CPS staff at court are aware of their responsibilities in relation to victims and witnesses, although the Area is mainly reliant on exception reports from other agencies for monitoring. The timeliness of letters sent under the Direct Communications with Victims (DCV) scheme failed to meet the national target. Area performance in relation to cracked and ineffective trials which are attributable to witness issues in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court was better than the national averages.*

**8A: The needs of victims and witnesses are fully considered and there is timely and appropriate liaison, information and support throughout the prosecution process**

- Speaking Up for Justice (SUFJ) is generally embedded throughout the Area. Applications for Special Measures are timely and made in appropriate circumstances. Early identification of Special Measures occurs for relevant cases at the pre-charge stage, although identification by the police of witnesses with Special Measures requirements could be improved upon. WCUs are now in operation throughout Cambridgeshire which should enhance the identification of Special Measures requirements. The reality check of letters sent under the DCV scheme, when the charge is discontinued or substantially reduced, revealed that all letters were satisfactory and some were of a good quality.
- Witness warning procedures are systematic and effective; in the magistrates' courts pre-trial reviews, trial checks and trial readiness hearings ensure witness issues are addressed and in the Crown Court certificates of readiness for trial are completed. Rates for ineffective trials which are attributable to the absence of prosecution witnesses were better than national performance in both the magistrates' courts (3.5% compared to 4.5%) and the Crown Court (3.5% as against 3.7%).
- Relevant and useful information is provided to the Witness Service. A review of the first WCU, based at Huntingdon, identified an increase in the number of referrals to the Witness Service and the volume of pre-trial visits. Liaison with the Witness Service and Victim Support occurs on a regular basis, including representation on the No Witness No Justice (NWNJ) implementation team.

- Most prosecution advocates and staff introduce themselves to victims and witnesses at court and keep them informed of the progress of the case. Counsel have been provided with the national guidelines on the appropriate treatment of victims and witnesses and experienced agents are used. However, the Area does not have a formal monitoring system for the treatment of victims and witnesses.
- NWNJ is being implemented in accordance with the Delivery Plan and most of the deadlines are being met. Actions identified in the post-implementation review of the WCU based at Huntingdon are gradually being addressed. The reviews of the remaining units will be undertaken in January 2006. Whilst some qualitative benefits are being experienced, it is too early to say that all expected benefits are being realised throughout Cambridgeshire. Notwithstanding, this should be considered in the light of the already good performance of the Area in relation to ineffective and cracked trials overall, and those attributable to the absence of victims and witnesses at court.
- There is thorough analysis, within the Area and jointly with criminal justice partners, of cracked and ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court that are attributable to witness problems. Efforts are being made through NWNJ and case progression to secure a reduction in the number of cases where this occurs.

#### *Aspects for improvement*

- Compliance with the DCV scheme is inconsistent throughout the Area and monitoring systems are not fully effective. A recent proxy measure calculated by Headquarters indicated that Cambridgeshire is achieving 56% compliance against a target of 100%. The variable performance in the timeliness of letters resulted in the Area not achieving the national target of 70% within five days - its performance during 2004-05 was 58%.

**9. PRESENTING AND PROGRESSING CASES AT COURT 3 - GOOD**

*The Area is among those agencies leading the initiative to improve case progression at court. The standard of preparation for court is reflected in Cambridgeshire's good performance in relation to ineffective trials and unsuccessful outcomes. A high percentage of magistrates' courts sessions are covered by in-house prosecutors and designated caseworker (DCW) usage is better than the national average. The last inspection report recognised the good standard of service and Higher Court Advocate (HCA) coverage in the Crown Court. The selection of counsel is informed by a log detailing specialisms and skills. The national agent's pack is provided to newly instructed agents and pupil barristers are expected to undertake some work shadowing in the Area before receiving instructions. There is no formal systematic monitoring, although ad hoc monitoring is undertaken for performance appraisal purposes.*

**9A: The Area ensures that prosecution advocates and staff attend court promptly, are professional, well prepared and contribute to effective case progression**

- The Area is among those agencies leading the initiative to improve case progression in court. The southern CJU Head is leading the Effective Trial Management Programme on behalf of the CPS at the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB) Sub-group. The results in respect of cracked and ineffective trials in the Crown Court and the magistrates' courts, adverse cases and unsuccessful outcomes reflect the commitment of all agencies.
- A Listing Protocol between the Area and magistrates' courts has been in operation for a number of years; this was reviewed and updated in 2005. It includes, amongst other matters, provision for the transfer of certain cases at court and expected attendance times of prosecutors before court. Regular formal and informal contact between the CPS and representatives from other agencies provides a facility for feedback on the operation of the Protocol.
- Papers are provided to agents, counsel and all in-house prosecutors in advance to enable most advocates to prepare thoroughly for court. The last inspection report (March 2003) recommended that Unit Heads review the criteria for deployment of agents to avoid excessive usage in all types of magistrates' courts hearings. The follow-up inspection in October 2003 found that the Area was committed to addressing the issue. In-house prosecutors now cover a high percentage of courts (82.9% compared to the national average of 73.1%), and coverage has increased from the previous financial year. An established group of regular agents are used wherever possible and agents are not used in early administrative and early first hearings or remand courts unless unavoidable. DCW usage is also better than the national average (8.8% compared to 8.3% nationally).

- The Area attempts to ensure that the selection of prosecution advocates for courts is undertaken with full consideration of their experience and expertise. When selecting counsel, lawyers and caseworkers are informed by the log maintained by the Trial Unit Business Manager, which details specialisms and skills. The last inspection report recognised the good standard of service and HCA coverage in the Crown Court.
- Youth cases are generally reviewed and prosecuted by specialists, although there are also agents instructed in the youth court who have specialist skills. There are currently no other specialist courts in the Area; however, a specialist domestic violence court has been proposed for 2006 and planning is underway at the CCJB.
- Complaints about prosecutors from other agencies are investigated and action is taken if appropriate, although there have been no complaints about the quality of HCAs or prosecuting counsel in the Crown Court or prosecutors deployed in the magistrates' courts in recent years.
- The Area continues to work on improving the quality of court endorsements. The introduction of the case progression sheet in Crown Court files is aimed at improving clarity and completeness, and court endorsements are the subject of individual objectives. The quality of court endorsements is monitored during the monthly Casework Quality Assurance checks and there are audit trails of adverse cases.
- The training of new lawyers includes mentoring in the magistrates' courts and monitoring of advocacy. New counsel are monitored and caseworkers undertake exception reporting of all counsel, providing feedback on good or poor performance. Although there is no formal advocacy monitoring system for in-house prosecutors and agents, there are mechanisms which provide informal feedback to managers from other agencies and there are opportunities for Unit Heads to undertake ad hoc informal monitoring when they undertake court lists on a regular basis.
- Newly instructed agents receive the national agent's pack and there is an expectation that pupil barristers will undertake some work shadowing in the Area before they are instructed to prosecute. In addition, an invitation was extended to a regular agent to attend recent CPS training on bad character.

#### *Aspects for improvement*

- The last inspection report detailed structured and formal monitoring of all advocates as an aspect for improvement. There is no formal systematic monitoring of advocacy of in-house lawyers, although informal ad hoc monitoring is undertaken for performance appraisal purposes.

**10. DELIVERING CHANGE**

**3 - GOOD**

*The Area's approach to planning is sound. The Business Plan is in accordance with the main initiatives and CPS national priorities, and a Risk Register is in place. However, whilst some informal review may occur, the Area would benefit from a more formalised approach to ensure the plans are living documents used to progress and manage Area business. Cambridgeshire's priorities are reflected in staff objectives, which are linked to the Area's training needs. Since the last inspection the electronic case management system (CMS) and the No Witness No Justice (NWNJ) initiative have been introduced. The main concerns at present are the introduction of statutory charging, the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) and embedding the three Witness Care Units established by the NWNJ initiative. Other joint work is also being progressed including the use of secure e-mail and e-business. Planning for these initiatives has been via project methodology and inter-dependencies have been managed. In the main appropriate project documentation has been used and the work streams for the initiatives have been informally co-ordinated.*

**10A: The Area has a clear sense of purpose supported by relevant plans**

- Cambridgeshire has a clear sense of what it wants to achieve. Area objectives are linked to its principal drivers defined by the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Delivery Plan, Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, the CPS Vision and Strategy, and the current main three initiatives of ETMP, NWNJ and statutory charging. However, further work could be undertaken in the communication of the Area's purpose to all its staff.
- Relevant pertinent plans are in place and follow CPS Headquarters guidance in their content. There is evidence of management and informal review of the plans at the regular Area Management Team (AMT) meetings, although discussion tends to centre on specific performance issues rather than a systematic formal review of each individual objective. The Area would benefit from adopting a formalised approach to updating the Business Plan and Risk Register, ensuring impetus is maintained and facilitating a pro-active approach to risk analysis. This is also relevant in view of the general nature of some of the Area outcomes in the Business Plan.
- In view of the small number of staff, AMT has taken the decision not to have any individual unit plans, instead staff objectives link into the Area Business Plan which is circulated to staff for input prior to finalisation. There is clear evidence of the link between the Plan and staff objectives, although care should be taken to ensure that all staff objectives are 'SMART' and that staff understand how individual performance contributes to the overall performance of the Area.

- Joint plans have been developed with criminal justice partners including for the three main initiatives of ETMP, NWNJ and statutory charging. Planning for the initiatives has been effective and project methodology has been used, with active management of project inter-dependencies. Joint planning to improve performance by delivering change in a joined-up and effective manner is evident at the CCJB sub-groups.

**10B: A coherent and co-ordinated change management strategy exists**

- The approach to change has been successful and clear accountabilities exist for change management. Project leads are members of the AMT and accountable to the Team for the active management and successful implementation of their projects. There is an awareness of inter-dependencies between the change initiatives within the Area and these are managed effectively at AMT, although Cambridgeshire may benefit from a more formal approach by adopting a written strategy for all change initiatives.
- Project plans for shadow charging, NWNJ and statutory charging have been produced and updated. Formalised post-implementation reviews for shadow charging and NWNJ have taken place. However, the reviews undertaken for shadow charging would have benefited from a more consistent approach. The Area needs to ensure all actions identified in such reviews are actively managed and updated.

**10C: The Area ensures staff have the skills, knowledge and competences to meet the business need**

- Training has been linked to the Area business objective and the work strands identified in the CPS Vision and Strategy. Training needs are identified through the appraisal process and Forward Job Plans and are fed into the Area Training Plan. Relevant identified training has been delivered to legal and non-legal staff. The Area training group has recently been re-invigorated and has representatives of all staff grades.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Cambridgeshire needs to develop a systematic approach to evaluate training. Not all training is currently evaluated and consequently the value or potential improvements to training cannot be ascertained.



**11. MANAGING RESOURCES**

**3 - GOOD**

*There is a pro-active approach to achieving value for money and this principle is embedded throughout the Area. The budget is actively controlled, which is demonstrated by the Area outturn figures in both 2003-04 and 2004-05. The Area Management Team (AMT) is provided with sound financial reports and there is clear evidence of a systematic approach to resource management. Effective use is made of Higher Court Advocates (HCAs) and designated caseworkers (DCWs). Agent usage has reduced significantly and prosecution spend in 2004-05 compared favourably with national performance. Sickness absence is monitored and managed.*

**11A: The Area seeks to achieve value for money, and operates within budget**

- The need to achieve value for money is high on the Area's agenda and considered both when planning resources and on a day-to-day basis. Action taken includes a considerable reduction in agent spend by ensuring more effective in-house prosecutor usage and through negotiation to decrease the number of court sessions. HCAs were employed effectively during 2004-05 and exceeded target sessions (227 against a target of 200) thereby saving £273 notional counsel fees per session in comparison with the national performance of £224 for the final quarter of 2004-05.
- Systems are in place to actively control the Area budget. Senior managers are fully aware of the financial position, which is supported by comprehensive monthly budget reports that allow up-to-date assessments to be made. Budgets are not devolved, but Unit Heads are still accountable for demonstrating value for money and improving performance.
- The formal monitoring arrangements at Area level encompass monitoring the prosecution budget. In 2004-05 Cambridgeshire's prosecution spend compared favourably at 96.4% with the national average of 118%. The timeliness of the graduated fees scheme in 2004-05 (97.9%) exceeded national performance and the Area target (90%).
- The non-ring fenced budget outturn was 99.8% for 2003-04 and 99% for 2004-05 which is better than national average and consistently good performance.



## 11B: The Area has ensured that all staff are deployed efficiently

- There is clear evidence of a systematic approach to resource management, with resource needs reviewed on a regular basis (the most recent formal review was undertaken in February 2005). The reviews are supplemented by discussion at AMT meetings. To meet the Area's needs in terms of staff resources, consideration is given to the Activity Based Costing Model. Workload is linked to staff numbers and grades, along with team commitments, staff experience and the rotation policy adopted by the Area.
- There are set expectations in terms of the number of court starts; for Criminal Justice Unit lawyers this is equivalent to three full days a week, excluding any pre-charge advice commitments. These expectations need to be met to ensure the lowered usage of agents is maintained.
- The Area demonstrates value for money by making good use of its HCAs with consequent savings in counsel fees. It exceeded its target in 2004-05 and is on course to achieve this year's target of 230 sessions and savings of £87,000 of counsel fees.
- Agents prosecuted 17.1% of magistrates' courts sessions in 2004-05 which is significantly better than the national average of 26.9%.
- The Area has three DCWs who covered 363 sessions in 2004-05. This represents 8.8% of all magistrates' courts sessions and is higher than the national average of 8.3%. There is a challenging target for 2005-06 of 11.9%.
- The average sickness absence for 2004-05 of 8.3 days is slightly lower than the national average of 8.7 days per member of staff per year. Sickness absence is monitored and actively managed by senior managers. There is clear evidence of balancing individual and business needs when flexible working arrangements are being considered, for example, term-time working and reduced hours.

### *Aspects for improvement*

- There is unused DCW capacity, which has been recognised by the Area, with additional courts being negotiated.

**12. MANAGING PERFORMANCE TO IMPROVE**

**2 - FAIR**

*The Area Management Team (AMT) receives regular performance information on the Area's key targets. Monthly data informs the production of quarterly performance reports, which are compared with Cambridgeshire's historical performance and that of other CPS Areas. Further consideration could be given to the methods used in promulgating performance information to staff at all levels and, additionally, to more unit-specific performance information. The Area demonstrates some consideration of operational effectiveness. However, there is a need to ensure procedures for review and evaluation of new processes are systematic, so that they are fit for purpose and satisfactorily embedded. There is evidence of joint performance with other criminal justice agencies and the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB), with data being shared. The Casework Quality Assurance scheme is in operation, with results used to improve individual performance. Work has been undertaken to address problems experienced with timely completion and accurate recording of case outcomes.*

**12A: Managers are held accountable for performance**

- The Area considers a comprehensive range of performance data, including casework and strategic matters, which is collated on a monthly basis and produced into finalised quarterly performance reports. Performance is compared with other CPS Areas and with Cambridgeshire's previous performance. Regular discussions at the AMT meetings enhance the performance process.
- The quarterly performance reports are circulated and used to update staff on the overall Area performance. These are supplemented by ad hoc discussions during team meetings. It is clear that senior managers are committed to monitoring, evaluating and improving performance through pertinent data.
- Some actions have been taken by managers to improve performance across a range of aspects, such as action to improve budget management, staff utilisation and casework management system (CMS) usage. Additionally, the effectiveness of some operational systems is addressed through regular meetings, such as the CMS local implementation team and the Area Training Group; staff of all grades are involved in these meetings.
- Managers have used performance appraisal to improve performance. Individual objectives have been set, for example in relation to lawyer usage of CMS.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Some performance data is produced relating to the individual units, for example receipts and finalisations; however, there are no specific unit reports. In the absence of unit plans, it would still be possible to produce a more comprehensive range of data which would further demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency of individual units, such as magistrates' courts sessions data and sickness absence. However, it is accepted that the Area has limited staff resources.
- Performance data could be promulgated more effectively to staff, thereby encouraging a more performance-orientated culture at all levels.
- The Area needs to ensure that when new or amended systems are introduced, there is a systematic process of review and evaluation, which will verify that new processes are fit for purpose and satisfactorily embedded.

**12B: The Area is committed to managing performance jointly with CJS partners**

- There is evidence that joint performance management with criminal justice partners is being used to drive up performance. Members of the AMT are actively involved in the CCJB sub-groups and other joint performance groups, such as the sanction detection group, and the divisional criminal justice performance meetings. There is joint planning and work beyond the three main initiatives; this includes Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, persistent young offenders (PYOs), sanction detection rates, and persistent and prolific offenders. Regular performance appraisal is used to improve personal performance.
- The CPS provides and shares relevant data with the CCJB Performance Officer and other criminal justice agencies. Two of the four headline targets considered by the CCJB, namely public confidence and the time for dealing with PYOs from arrest to sentence were achieved for 2004-05, although the rolling three-month average for PYO cases at February 2005 was 78 days against a target of 71 days.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Cambridgeshire did not meet its asset recovery target in 2004-05, achieving 24 orders against a very challenging benchmark of 41. The CCJB did not meet the joint target for Offences Brought to Justice, achieving 12,854 against a target of 13,520, although performance has now been turned around and is above target for 2005-06, the target having been achieved by August 2005.

**12C: Performance information is accurate, timely, concise and user-friendly**

- The Area is beginning to use tailored Management Information System (MIS) reports from CMS to evaluate its performance. However, usage has been limited, for example, ad hoc reports on adverse cases and domestic violence casework. There have been difficulties with the authentication and validation of pre-charge data resulting from the absence of unique reference numbers (URNs). With the imminent introduction of police URNs, the CPS is hoping to utilise prosecution team performance management reports and increase the usage of MIS, thereby providing further relevant and accurate performance information.
- Unit Heads and the Area Office Manager validate monthly data to ensure accuracy.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The Area has experienced problems with finalisations. A backlog of pre-charge advice cases has recently been cleared, and in the Crown Court a number of incorrect finalisations occurred as a result of an error due to a misunderstanding. In both instances action has been taken to prevent re-occurrence.

**12D: Internal systems for ensuring the quality of casework are robust and founded on reliable and accurate analysis**

- Casework Quality Assurance (CQA) checks are undertaken, with forms completed by Unit Heads and feedback given to prosecutors if performance issues are identified. The Area states that any performance trends identified from the monitoring are fed back to the teams and across the Area where appropriate. There is evidence to indicate that the Area is robust in its CQA analysis and feedback.

**13. LEADERSHIP**
**3 - GOOD**

*The Area Management Team (AMT) has adopted the national vision and values which have been incorporated into the Area Business Plan (ABP) and linked to local service delivery, with the plan copied to all staff. There is a corporate approach to managing business and members of the AMT are active in leading cross-agency initiatives. An Action Plan was developed in response to the Staff Survey which detailed communication as an objective. Steps have been taken to increase the frequency and effectiveness of team meetings, and communication with staff has improved and generally occurs at the right time. Steps have also been taken to increase the recognition and feedback to staff. The Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) is the Area Equality and Diversity Champion, although there is no formally established local advisory group to support the role. The CPS workforce generally reflects the local community it serves.*

**13A: The management team communicates the vision, values and direction of the Area well**

- Vision and values are clear, focused and stated; the national vision and values are detailed in the ABP which has been copied to all staff. The vision and values are linked to the Public Service Agreement targets, the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB) Plan and local targets for service delivery. There are clear arrangements for the corporate management of the Area; the ABP details the accountability of the senior managers for specific actions. The AMT meets every three weeks and minutes of the meetings are published to all staff.
- The Area has considerable responsibility in leading criminal justice initiatives. The CCP became chair of the CCJB in April 2005 and chairs the Community Communications Sub-group. The Area Business Manager chairs the E-business Working Group and is a member of the Preventing Hate Crime Sub-group, and the Trial Unit (TU) Head jointly chairs, with the Witness Service, the Victim and Witness Sub-group. A number of managers are leading criminal justice cross-agency groups in key areas. The TU Head is jointly leading the No Witness No Justice initiative, the southern Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) Head is jointly leading the implementation of statutory charging and the northern CJU Head is actively involved in the Effective Trial Management Programme.
- The Area does not have a formal reward and recognition policy, but staff are involved in its work and good performance is rewarded and recognised through the performance appraisal process, with the special bonus scheme used to reward exceptional performance. Good performance by the Area or a team is recognised in the quarterly performance report which is circulated to all staff.

- Communication with staff generally occurs at the right time and is meaningful. Unit managers hold team meetings which are minuted, although the regularity of such meetings is at times interrupted by operational priorities and the availability of staff. The Area training events also provide an opportunity for the CCP to hold an open forum with participants. The AMT endeavours to attend the open fora to present a corporate front to staff.
- Cambridgeshire's result in the Staff Survey for communications was the same as the national average of 43%. Despite this comparable score, communications was one of the three objectives in the Staff Survey Action Plan. Action has been taken to improve communications through the increased provision of recognition and feedback and by increasing the frequency and effectiveness of team meetings; progress has been achieved.

**13B: 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**

- The Area's commitment to equality and diversity policies is evidenced in a number of ways, including the personal commitment and involvement of managers. The CCP is the Area Champion for equality and diversity issues and all members of the AMT are expected to take the initiative. Senior managers have trained nationally in discrimination law for the 'Transform' management programme. A number of examples of managers challenging inappropriate behaviour were provided. The result in the Staff Survey for dignity at work was 9% better than the national average.
- Staff reflect the population served by the Area's offices, with a slight under-representation in respect of disability. Cambridgeshire has 4.28% black and minority ethnic staff, compared to a local working population of 4.18%.
- Most of the outward-looking activity undertaken by the Area is carried out by the senior managers, although volunteers are sought from all levels of staff. Much of this activity is in partnership with other agencies or under the auspices of the CCJB due to the limited resources available.

*Aspects for improvement*

- Although the CCP is the Area Equality and Diversity Champion, and is accountable to the AMT for relevant action, there is no formally established local advisory group to undertake 'equality proofing' and take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of measurable equality and diversity objectives.
- The commitment of senior managers to outward-looking activity has been ad hoc, activities are considered as opportunities arise and limited by available resources. Participation has also been hindered by the absence of a Community Engagement Strategy and a named officer to marshal activity.



**14. SECURING COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE**

**2 - FAIR**

*The commitment of the Area Management Team (AMT) towards engaging the local community is limited by available resources. There is no Community Engagement Strategy and a limited objective in the Area Business Plan. Community engagement is not marshalled by a named officer thereby limiting the ability of the AMT to prioritise contact with the community. Notwithstanding, a community engagement log is maintained to record all activity and some good work has been undertaken by the members of AMT. Public confidence in the effectiveness of criminal justice agencies in bringing offenders to justice has increased by 8% against the baseline to 47%, which is above the national average of 43%.*

**14A: The Area is working pro-actively to secure the confidence of the community**

- Confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system to bring offenders to justice within Cambridgeshire stands at 47% for respondents, which has increased by 8% since 2003 and is both ahead of target and better than the national average of 43%.
- There is a community engagement log which records activity undertaken. However, the log is maintained by the Area Office Manager who also undertakes the role of Area Press Officer as well as many other wide-ranging duties. There is a comprehensive directory of national and local organisations and community buildings.
- Most of the community engagement is carried out by the senior managers although volunteers are sought, particularly when participating in events organised through the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB). The Area has provided training for a variety of voluntary groups.
- The Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) chairs the Community Communications Sub-group of the CCJB. This sub-group has strong links with the Community Safety Network which has made progress with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) work. Briefings are held twice yearly with the chairs of the six CDRPs and the CCJB newsletter is sent to each partnership group.
- Policy and outcomes are amended in light of consultation, but on a more limited range of consultation activity. For example, liaison with local representatives through the Anti-Social Behaviour Implementation Team and the Community Safety Network led to clarification and dissemination of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order policy and internal and external training. The Area Business Manager, as a member of the CCJB Preventing Hate Crimes

Sub-group, is leading the initiative to establish a scrutiny panel of racially and religiously aggravated cases which will meet for the first time in early 2006. The initiative will provide a mechanism to learn lessons to improve the prosecution of cases and the ability to implement policy consistently.

*Aspects for improvement*

- The commitment of senior managers to community engagement is limited by available resources. There is no Community Engagement Strategy and the action in the current Area Business Plan is to implement a local strategy once the national one has been tested and evaluated in a series of pilots which will run until April 2006.
- Community engagement is not marshalled by a named officer due to the limited resources within the Area Secretariat. Engagement activities are considered as opportunities arise, thereby limiting the ability of the Area to prioritise contacts for relevance, which in turn has resulted in an approach to engagement which is not diverse and based on a single focus. Notwithstanding this, CPS Cambridgeshire has undertaken some good work in relation to engagement with the community, such as a presentation and a question answering session on anti-social behaviour and the criminal justice system at an open meeting organised by one of the Parish Councils in the Area, and also from participation in a police community surgery.
- The Area has limited information on demographics, relying on available census information which is now out-of-date.
- The absence of a named officer to co-ordinate community engagement activity has also limited the Area's ability to consistently measure the success of its activity.

**ANNEX A**

**PERFORMANCE DATA**

**ASPECT 1: PRE-CHARGE DECISION-MAKING**

MAGISTRATES' COURTS CASES								
Discontinuance rate			Guilty plea rate			Attrition rate		
National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05
11%	16.3%	17.9%	52%	68.8%	68.4%	31%	22.7%	21.3%
CROWN COURT CASES								
Discontinuance rate			Guilty plea rate			Attrition rate		
National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	National Target March 2007	National Performance Quarter 4 2004-05	Area Performance Quarter 4 2004-05
11%	14.6%	9.6%	68%	66%	34.6%	23%	23.8%	32.7%

**ASPECT 2: MANAGING MAGISTRATES' COURTS CASES**

INEFFECTIVE TRIAL RATE			OVERALL PERSISTENT YOUNG OFFENDERS PERFORMANCE (ARREST TO SENTENCE)		
National Target	National Performance 2004-05	Area Performance 2004-05	National Target	National Performance (3-month rolling average Feb 05)	Area Performance (3-month rolling average Feb 05)
24.5%	24.8	16.9	71 days	67 days	78 days

<b>TIME INTERVALS/TARGETS FOR CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN MAGISTRATES' COURTS CHARGED CASES ONLY (MARCH 2005)</b>						
	<b>Initial Guilty Plea Target 59 days</b>		<b>Trials Target 143 days</b>		<b>Committals Target 176 days</b>	
	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)
National	83%	6,152	66%	2,698	89%	992
Area	88%	95	73%	52	89%	19

<b>TIME INTERVALS/TARGETS FOR CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN YOUTH COURTS CHARGED AND SUMMONSED CASES (MARCH 2005)</b>						
	<b>Initial Guilty Plea Target 59 days</b>		<b>Trials Target 176 days</b>		<b>Committals Target 101 days</b>	
	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)	Cases within target (%)	Sample size (no of defendants)
National	87%	5,185	87%	3,309	91%	190
Area	78%	74	91%	57	-	-

**ASPECT 3: MANAGING CROWN COURT CASES**

<b>INEFFECTIVE TRIAL RATE</b>		
National Target	National Performance 2004-05	Area Performance 2004-05
18.5%	15.8%	16.2%

### ASPECT 4: ENSURING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES (AS A PERCENTAGE OF COMPLETED MAGISTRATES' COURTS AND CROWN COURT CASES)		
National Target	National Performance 2004-05	Area Performance 2004-05
21%	19.6%	14.7%

OFFENCES BROUGHT TO JUSTICE		
	CJS Area Target 2004-05	CJS Area Performance 2004-05
Against 2001-02 baseline	+ 24.9%	+18.7%
Number	13,520	12,854

### ASPECT 7: DISCLOSURE

DISCLOSURE HANDLED PROPERLY IN MAGISTRATES' COURTS AND CROWN COURT CASES PERFORMANCE IN THE LAST INSPECTION CYCLE		
	National Performance	Area Performance
Primary test in magistrates' courts	71.6%	69.7%
Primary test in Crown Court	79.9%	92.9%
Secondary test in Crown Court	59.4%	85.7%
Overall average	70.3%	82.8%

**ASPECT 11: MANAGING RESOURCES**

<b>NON RING-FENCED ADMINISTRATION COSTS BUDGET OUTTURN PERFORMANCE (END OF YEAR RANGES)</b>	
2003-04	2004-05
99.8%	99%

<b>DCW DEPLOYMENT (AS % OF MAGISTRATES' COURTS SESSIONS)</b>			<b>HCA SAVINGS (PER SESSION)</b>		<b>SICKNESS ABSENCE (PER EMPLOYEE PER YEAR)</b>		
National Target 2005-06	National Performance 2004-05	Area Performance	National Performance 2004	Area Performance 2004	National Target	National Performance 2004	Area Performance 2004
11.6%	8.3%	8.8%	£224	£273	8 days	8.7 days	8.3 days

**ASPECT 14: SECURING COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE**

<b>PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN EFFECTIVENESS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES IN BRINGING OFFENDERS TO JUSTICE (BRITISH CRIME SURVEY)</b>	
CJS Area Baseline 2002-03	Most Recent CJS Area Figures In 2004-05
39%	47%



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