

Press Notice

Embargoed until 00:01 14 March 2006



CPS Leicestershire

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

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 Leicestershire was **Fair**.

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	Fair
Managing resources	Good
Other Defining Aspects	
Managing magistrates' courts cases	Poor
Managing Crown Court cases	Good
Handling sensitive cases and hate crimes	Excellent
Custody time limits	Fair
Disclosure	Good
Presenting and progressing cases at court	Fair
Delivering change	Good
Managing performance to improve	Fair
Securing community confidence	Excellent

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 Leicestershire performs well in all but one of the critical aspects. In 2004-05, the Area had an overall rate for unsuccessful outcomes which was better than the national average. Sensitive and hate crime cases are handled very well. Crown Court performance is sound. However in the magistrates' courts, poor file handling systems hamper effective case progression, and targets have not been met.

The Area is a key player in driving local criminal justice service priorities forward. And public confidence in the effectiveness of criminal justice service agencies in bringing offenders to justice is relatively high in Leicestershire. The Area is on course for the roll-out of statutory pre-charge advice to the police, although outcomes in pre charge advice cases are still mixed.

Improving the experience of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system has become embedded in the ethos of the Area and the introduction of the witness care unit under the No Witness No Justice Scheme is already demonstrating positive results. However, compliance with the Direct Communication with Victims initiative is poor and requires improvement.

The financial management of the Area is sound, with the need to achieve value for money being high on the Area's agenda. Performance management processes and outputs have improved since the last inspection.

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

“CPS Leicestershire has worked hard at securing the confidence of the community it serves. This is also reflected in its strong performance on hate crimes and sensitive cases. It now has a firm foundation to move forward and to drive through further improvements in some of its casework outcomes. It also needs to address its handling of cases in the magistrates' courts.”

The report is now available to journalists on an embargoed basis by visiting the Inspectorate's website (www.hmcpsi.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 Prag Gohil, Area Communications Manager, on 0116 248 6604

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 Leicestershire serves the area covered by the Leicestershire Constabulary. Its main office is based at Leicester. In the year ended March 2005 the Area employed 115 full time equivalent staff, and handled 31,726 cases, which included 6,782 (21.4%) where advice was given to the police before charge.

This press release and the report in relation to CPS Leicestershire 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.