

# Press Notice

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## CPS Inspectorate Overall Performance Assessment of CPS Northumbria

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published their Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of **CPS Northumbria**.

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in fourteen key aspects of work. 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 Northumbria** was **good**.

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

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

CPS Northumbria makes a valuable contribution to the smooth operation of the criminal justice system in Northumbria. The implementation of statutory charging (under which the CPS assumes responsibility for the decision on charge) has been managed well by both the CPS and the police and the scheme has had a positive impact on case outcomes. Even so, there is still scope to improve discontinuance rates. The effective trial management programme has seen improvements in progression of cases but, whilst there is still work to do in some aspects of case handling, there has been improvement in the service to victims and witnesses.

The CPS is undergoing a period of substantial change and this is being well managed on a structured basis in co-operation with other criminal justice agencies. There is a high level of commitment to performance management and monitoring systems are well developed. Financial controls are improving and managers have a clear vision of the Area's priorities, though a more corporate approach could be taken on some issues. A programme of community engagement is being further developed within the Local Criminal Justice Board.

The inspectorate has visited all 42 CPS Areas over a six month period in order 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.

Stephen Wooler, Chief Inspector of the CPS, said:

**“There is much in this report which is positive. CPS Northumbria makes a strong contribution to the local criminal justice system and has continued to do so during a period of substantial change. The Area has worked well with its criminal justice partners to implement major initiatives such as statutory charging and the enhancement of witness care under the No Witness No Justice project and is good at handling sensitive cases, such as rape and domestic violence. It also ensures fairness to defendants by dealing appropriately with disclosure issues.”**

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