

# Press Notice

Embargoed until 00:01 14 March 2006



## CPS West Yorkshire

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published its Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of CPS West Yorkshire.

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 West Yorkshire 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	Fair
Leadership	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good
Resource management	Good
<b>Other Defining Aspects</b>	
Managing magistrates' courts cases	Fair
Managing Crown Court cases	Fair
Handling sensitive cases and hate crimes	Excellent
Custody time limits	Good
Disclosure	Good
Presenting and progressing cases at court	Good
Delivering change	Excellent
Managing performance to improve	Good
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 West Yorkshire manages cases in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court soundly, with the handling of sensitive cases and hate crime excellent. Other aspects of casework which were good included compliance with the prosecution's obligation of disclosure of unused material and the management of custody time limits. Despite this, the Area's casework results were not as strong as they might have been.

The Area introduced statutory charging in June 2004 which has produced some positive results, although the expected benefits are not always resulting. Witness care units are in place across the Area and the service to victims and witnesses across West Yorkshire is generally good.

CPS West Yorkshire has put in place mechanisms to improve case management and case progression which are just beginning to reap benefits. However, although there was a trend of improvement during 2004-05, the average annual figures remain weak with particularly high levels of discontinuance in the magistrates' courts and the combined unsuccessful outcome rate worse than the national average.

The Area has a corporate approach to managing its business and the senior team are active in leading cross-agency initiatives. Planning for and implementing change is managed systematically, and the change programme has delivered a trend of improvement in performance throughout 2004-05. Performance management is well embedded and processes are in place to manage the budget effectively. The Area is committed to engaging with the local community and is able to show a number of service improvements as a result of activity undertaken.

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

**“The quality of the Area’s casework is overall sound, with a number of aspects being good or excellent. However, this is not at present matched by case outcomes. With the Area’s strengths in delivering change, the restructuring of the Area provides an opportunity to further improve casework delivery and outcomes to reflect the well established management systems.”**

The report is now available to journalists on an embargoed basis by visiting the Inspectorate’s website ([www.hmcpsi.gov.uk](http://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 Trudy Green, Area Communications Manager, on 0113 290 2839.

## **Notes to Editors**

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI) 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 HMCPISI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPISI 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 West Yorkshire serves the area covered by the West Yorkshire Police. Its main office is based at Leeds. In the year ended March 2005 the Area employed 290.7 full time equivalent staff, and handled 91,916 cases, which included 26,905 (29.3%) where advice was given to the police before charge.

This press release and the report in relation to CPS West Yorkshire should be read in conjunction with HMCPISI'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 HMCPISI'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.