



## HMCPSP thematic report on assurance and performance

### CPS approach to performance proportionate but inconsistent

Although the Crown Prosecution Service tracks its own performance with a good variety of systems, their effectiveness is more questionable, inspectors have found.

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate found good assurance systems in place at CPS headquarters in London to challenge and hold the 13 regional Areas to account. However systems at operational level for risk are more variable and need improving.

Whilst all Areas had checks for day to day casework, others for quality and compliance were less systematic and not always robustly tackled. Productivity and performance measures of some units or functions, such as case progression, were weak which made it difficult to gauge improvements or identify gaps in performance of units or individuals.

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

*"The inspection found that the CPS assurance regime is generally sound. However we have highlighted a number of areas where the assurance framework could be improved, in particular the need for managers to make better use of data to inform decision making and highlight risks. There is also the need for a more collaborative approach with criminal justice partners in sharing information and improving performance overall."*

Other findings include:

- The certificate of assurance used by Areas provided little real value and there was no evidence that it was referred to at CPS board level.
- Because of a 50% reduction in HQ staff, reduced oversight of assurance and performance activity has led to some significant gaps in central quality assurance.
- All of the Areas visited expressed concerns that performance measures and close working with criminal justice partners had declined in the last two years.

The report has made four key recommendations which should build on existing CPS work.

**ends**

#### Notes to editors

1. Media enquiries: 020 7271 2484 or [russell.hayes@attorneygeneral.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:russell.hayes@attorneygeneral.gsi.gov.uk)
2. The full report can be found at [www.hmcpsti.gov.uk](http://www.hmcpsti.gov.uk)
3. The CPS word for its regional divisions is spelt Area, with a capital 'A'

4. During the last inspection on performance in 2005, the CPS was in the early stages of developing a more comprehensive performance management system [http://www.hmcpsi.gov.uk/inspections/inspection\\_no/249/](http://www.hmcpsi.gov.uk/inspections/inspection_no/249/)
5. This inspection consisted of:
  - Field visits to three CPS Areas; Wessex, North East, West Midlands one casework division Special Crime and the Counter Terrorism Division and headquarters in March 2013.
  - Interviews with a range of staff including senior managers, performance managers, lawyers and support staff.
  - A national survey of all Area performance managers.
  - An analysis of all documentation supplied and reviewed a number of operational systems.
6. HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate is an independent statutory body established by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000, which came into force on 1 October 2000. The Chief Inspector is appointed by, and reports to, the Attorney General.