



Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Annual Report 2012-2013

Inspectors give CPS an annual health check

The quality of prosecutors' decision-making is improving, inspectors have found in their largest ever sampling exercise. However, they need to do more to ensure cases go through court quicker and more efficiently.

The Code for Crown Prosecutors was applied correctly in respect of each charge directed at the charging stage in 93.5 per cent of all cases, compared with 90.9 per cent in 2011-12. Whilst this is better, the proportion of correct decisions still needs to improve further.

Prosecutors only had an effective oversight of cases as they went through the court process in just over half the cases examined (53.7 per cent).

The figures come from the annual report of Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPsi), bringing together its 2012-13 inspection activity. It includes an examination of over 2,800 CPS cases.

In this first Annual Casework Examination Programme (ACEP), inspectors assessed over 2000 cases where prosecutors had directed the charge to assess whether they were getting it right at the charging stage. They found performance was improving, including in Crown Court cases where the Code was applied correctly in 94.0 per cent of cases, an improvement on the previous year (92.6 per cent).

The findings also show that overall the quality of decision-making is better in cases involving allegations of rape, with the Code applied correctly at the charging stage in 98.0 per cent of cases compared with 93.5 per cent for all cases.

The report acknowledges that all this is taking place against a continuing background of reducing budgets and resources, although overall caseload continues to fall. In 2012-13 the number of staff employed by the CPS reduced overall from 7,087 to 6,816 (total full time staff number).

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

"The CPS continues to face major challenges to the efficient and effective delivery of its service. The scale of these challenges should not be underestimated and will need to be carefully managed to retain the support of staff, criminal justice partners and local communities."

Highlights of the year

In 2012-2013 nine Inspection reports (including joint inspection reports), reviews and audits were published including, at the request of the Attorney General, an inspection of case handling in the Serious Fraud Office. Six more inspections are underway or to be published shortly, including a joint review with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on the quality of police files which should address many of the issues identified when examining CPS files.

The joint inspection, with Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Constabulary and Probation, of disability hate crime was a major piece of work and ensured that a focus rightly remains on protecting the more vulnerable in society.

Future work

Full details of our inspection programme are set out in our [business plan for 2013-2014](#).

This includes a full inspection of CPS London; inspection of the CPS Welfare and Rural and Health Prosecution Division; the quality of CPS project planning and implementation; and follow up inspection work.

We again plan to undertake further inspection work in respect of the Serious Fraud Office including considering the progress made against the recommendations made in this years' report on its casework handling.

ends

Notes to editors

- 1 Media enquiries: 020 7271 2484/2465/2440
- 2 The report covers the financial year April 2012 – 31 March 2013.
- 3 The full report is available at on the HMCPSI website: www.hmcpsi.gov.uk
- 4 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.