



## Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate inspection of the Service Prosecuting Authority

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) has today published its report on the Service Prosecuting Authority (SPA).

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

*"SPA senior managers have made good progress in establishing the SPA as a credible organisation within the Service justice system since the merger of the three Service prosecuting authorities in January 2009.*

*Decision-making is sound and cases are prepared to a high standard.*

*Management procedures reflect the continuing development of the SPA, although there needs to be a focus on more strategic business planning and risk management. A more structured approach should be taken towards monitoring casework performance and communications.*

*The allocation of prosecutors to the SPA is understandably affected by the wider requirements of the three legal services. The development of a cadre of more experienced prosecuting officers would be assisted by longer tours of duty with the SPA that were less susceptible to change.*

*Our findings acknowledge the developing nature of the SPA but we make a number of recommendations to help the SPA address the weaknesses identified in the report. I am sure that, given the commitment of the management team, the SPA will view these as positive steps in their continuing development."*

Summary of main inspection findings:

- Decision-making is sound and cases are prepared to a high standard.
- Specialist rape prosecutors are now in place.
- Disclosure of unused material is becoming more embedded as an aspect of SPA casework following its recent application to Service prosecutions.
- The quality of advocacy varies but is affected by the length of assignment of individual prosecuting officers.
- The creation of the single Service authority provided an impetus to the development of more sophisticated management systems, but a more consistent approach needs to be applied to some aspects including performance management and communications.
- The changing nature of casework and casework processes is imposing greater demands on the SPA, which need to be properly evaluated, so that the SPA can evidence its staffing needs, especially in light of proposed cuts in expenditure.

This press release should be read in conjunction with the report itself.

For any queries or interviews please call Anisha Visram on 020 7210 1187 or mobile: 07901 856 348.

## **Notes to editors**

- 1 HMCPSI 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.
- 2 The SPA was created by the Armed Forces Act 2006 which combined the three single Service prosecuting authorities in one. It commenced operations as the SPA in November 2009 although the three authorities had been working together under the superintendence of the Director of Service Prosecutions since January 2009. The SPA is responsible for the review and prosecution of cases referred to it for trial by Court Martial in respect of persons subject to Service law or discipline who are accused of a criminal offence. Its territorial jurisdiction is worldwide. The SPA Headquarters is based at RAF Northolt which is also location of the UK unit. A second unit is based in Bielefeld, Germany.
- 3 The inspection included detailed scrutiny of finalised and current case files as well as observations of cases being prosecuted in the Court Martial in the UK and in Germany. Inspectors considered a wide range of casework aspects including decision-making and casework handling together with the systems, management and structured monitoring of performance which underpin good casework.
- 4 The inspection team, which comprised legal inspectors, spoke to representatives of other agencies involved in the Service justice system as well officers in the chain of command of each Service and representatives of the Ministry of Defence.