

THE INSPECTORATE'S REPORT

on

THE MARYLEBONE &
WEST LONDON BRANCH

of

CPS LONDON

Marylebone & West London Branch



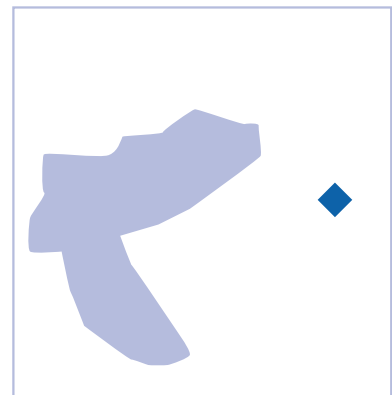
BRANCH OFFICE

◆ Ludgate Hill

COURTS COVERED

Magistrates' Courts
Marylebone
West London

Crown Court
Central Criminal Court
Knightsbridge, sitting at Borough



REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF THE CPS MARYLEBONE & WEST LONDON BRANCH

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's report about the quality of casework in the Marylebone and West London Branch of CPS London.
- 1.2 A good casework decision is one which results in the right defendant being charged with the right offence in the right tier of court at the right time, thereby enabling the right decision to be taken by the court. The decision must also be taken at the right level within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and be prosecuted by the right prosecutor.
- 1.3 The purpose and aims of the Inspectorate are set out on the inside back cover of this report. The inspection process focuses on the core business of the Service: providing advice; reviewing cases; preparing cases; and presenting cases in court.
- 1.4 The Marylebone and West London Branch is in the CPS London Area and has its offices at Ludgate Hill, London EC4. On 28 September 1998, it employed 56.9 staff (the Branch Crown Prosecutor (BCP) and 19 other prosecutors; two senior caseworkers and 32.9 other caseworkers; and two administrative staff). It shares the services of a Special Casework Lawyer with other Branches, and typing facilities with Area headquarters and two other Branches situated in the same building.
- 1.5 The Branch comprises two teams. The Marylebone team (12 prosecutors, a senior caseworker and 20.6 other caseworkers) is responsible for prosecutions in Marylebone Magistrates' Court. The West London team (seven prosecutors, a senior caseworker and 12.3 caseworkers) is responsible for prosecutions in West London Magistrates' Court. Each team is also responsible for Crown Court cases originating from its magistrates' court.
- 1.6 The team of three inspectors visited the Branch between 28 September and 9 October 1998. During this period, we observed nine CPS advocates prosecuting cases in the two magistrates' courts. We also observed counsel in the Crown Court at Knightsbridge, sitting at Borough, London SE1.
- 1.7 The Branch was previously visited by a team of CPS inspectors in 1997, as part of an inspection of CPS London. A report on CPS London, containing 15 recommendations, was published in December 1997. We refer to the report as 'the CPS London report' at various points in the sections which follow. Although it contained a profile of each Branch, including Marylebone and West London Branch, the conclusions and recommendations were addressed to CPS London as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The standard of decision-making in the Branch is good. The great majority of casework decisions are correct. We were pleased to find that the Branch has made improvements in the quality of its decision-making and case preparation since our visit in 1997. Some of the recommendations in the CPS London report have been incorporated into the Branch Management Plan, but not all have been effectively implemented. Some recommendations, therefore, are repeated in this report.
- 2.2 The Branch has recently moved from premises at Artillery Row, London SW1. Its new accommodation has limited space for staff and storage, giving the impression that it might be a difficult place in which to work.
- 2.3 The Branch continues to deal with a relatively high number of serious and complex cases. The proportion of indictable only cases, which must be tried in the Crown Court, is higher than the national average. The proportion of contested

trials in the Crown Court is nearly twice the national average; and in the magistrates' courts, the proportion is well above the national figure. These factors, along with the tight timescales imposed by the courts, result in Branch prosecutors and caseworkers often working under considerable pressure.

2.4 We noted substantial improvements in the quality of casework decision-making, and in the coverage of the magistrates' courts, but there are areas which still require attention. In particular, we found that effective review did not take place at the earliest opportunity in all cases. This can lead to problems at summary trial, or, after committal, in the Crown Court. There has been progress in improving the decision-making in, and preparation of, Crown Court cases, but the level of involvement in the Crown Court itself remains too low. We also have concerns about the timeliness and effectiveness of some of the Branch's casework processes.

- 2.5 To assist the Branch in improving its casework, we recommend that:
- i the BCP should ensure that a formal agreement is reached with the police about the submission of files for pre-charge advice (paragraph 4.5);
 - ii the BCP should ensure that effective monitoring is carried out, so that pre-charge advice is given to the police within 14 days (paragraph 4.13);
 - iii in cases involving disputed identification evidence, prosecutors should include in their review endorsement an analysis of the quality of the identification evidence (paragraph 5.6);
 - iv the BCP should ensure that timely and effective review is carried out in all cases (paragraph 5.13);
 - v the BCP should ensure that the court and defence are notified of additional, amended or substituted charges at the earliest opportunity (paragraph 5.15);
 - vi in cases where a defendant is remanded in custody, prosecutors should endorse fully the grounds for opposing bail, and the reasons

given by the court for refusing bail (paragraph 5.24);

- vii the BCP should ensure that adequate systems are in place to enable learning points from the Branch's cases, both successful and otherwise, to be identified and disseminated (paragraph 5.49);
- viii the BCP should ensure a consistent approach to the provision of advance information in cases where the law does not require it (paragraph 6.4);
- ix the BCP and Prosecution Team Leaders (PTLs) should ensure that effective monitoring is carried out of the handling of unused and sensitive material, to ensure that such material is properly and timeously considered and dealt with by prosecutors (paragraph 6.10);
- x the BCP should introduce a system for monitoring the progress of summary trial preparation, to ensure that all outstanding work is properly completed (paragraph 6.17);
- xi the BCP should discuss with the police, through the mechanism of Joint Performance Management (JPM), how the quality and timeliness of committal files might be improved (paragraph 6.20);
- xii the BCP should ensure that committal papers are checked by the reviewing prosecutor before committal (paragraph 6.22);
- xiii prosecutors and caseworkers should ensure that instructions to counsel:
 - comment on the acceptability of potential pleas, where this is relevant; and
 - are delivered within the agreed timescale in all cases (paragraph 6.26);
- xiv the BCP should introduce a system for monitoring the quality of indictments, in order to:
 - eradicate minor typing inaccuracies;
 - ensure that the substantive content of each indictment is correct; and
 - improve the drafting skills of prosecutors and caseworkers (paragraph 6.32);

- xv the BCP should take steps to provide more effective and comprehensive coverage of the Crown Court by caseworkers (paragraph 6.36);
- xvi the BCP should make arrangements for prosecutors to attend the Crown Court more frequently, particularly to undertake bail applications and attend plea and directions hearings (PDHs) (paragraph 6.39);
- xvii the BCP should introduce a system to ensure compliance with directions made at PDHs (paragraph 6.42);
- xviii the Branch Management Team (BMT) should ensure that complete pre-sentence report packages are provided to the Probation Service within the agreed timescale in all cases, and that the date of service is endorsed on the file (paragraph 6.51);
- xix the BCP should liaise with representatives of chambers, in order to improve the percentage of cases in which counsel originally instructed attends the PDH and the trial (paragraph 7.6).

THE INSPECTION

- 3.1 In the twelve months to 30 September 1998, the Branch dealt with 14,524 defendants in the magistrates' courts and 1,802 defendants in the Crown Court. In a further 791 cases, advice was given to the police before charge.
- 3.2 The inspection team examined a total of 274 cases, ranging from those where an acquittal was directed by the judge, through those where the prosecution terminated proceedings, to those where the defendant pleaded guilty. The team interviewed members of staff in the Branch and local representatives of the criminal justice agencies that directly affect, or are directly affected by, the quality of casework decisions taken in the Branch. A list of those representatives from whom we received comments is at the end of this report.

PROVIDING ADVICE

Appropriateness of requests for advice

- 4.1 In the year ending 30 September 1998, advice cases constituted 5.2% of the Branch's total caseload, compared with 4.2% nationally. In addition to advice cases from its local police divisions, the Branch deals with a substantial number of advice files relating to complaints against police which arise in areas covered by some other CPS London Branches. These files require careful consideration and the BCP deals with them himself. He handles approximately 35 - 40 such cases each quarter.
- 4.2 As a result of a recommendation in the CPS London report, the Area Operations Group drafted guidelines, setting out the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to give advice to the police. It was intended that these guidelines should form the basis of local agreements, or protocols, with the police. The guidelines have been circulated to police divisions, but formal agreement has not yet been reached with the police on the submission of advice files.
- 4.3 The police themselves have implemented procedures to reduce the number of inappropriate requests for advice that they submit to the Branch. An officer, usually of Detective Sergeant rank, considers requests for advice before they are submitted.
- 4.4 Despite this positive action by the police, we were told in the Branch that some cases are still submitted for advice, when it would be more appropriate for the police to take the decision themselves. We examined ten files in which advice had been given, and found that nine of them had been appropriately submitted.
- 4.5 **We recommend that the BCP should ensure that a formal agreement is reached with the police about the submission of files for pre-charge advice.**
- 4.6 When a prosecutor advises against proceedings being instituted, the file is returned to the

police, and the CPS papers are stored off-Branch. When a prosecutor advises the police to commence proceedings, the file is retained in the Branch, and is easily accessible. This helps Branch staff to link the advice file to the subsequent prosecution file.

- 4.7 Prosecutors also provide advice to the police over the telephone. Following a recommendation in the CPS London report, they record this advice on forms which are stored by each team. This enables the advice to be linked with any subsequent files, and to be incorporated into the Branch's performance indicators (PIs).

Quality of advice

- 4.8 We agreed with the advice in all ten cases that we examined. The advice was typed in all cases, and was well reasoned and explained. The police told us that they valued the advice received from the Branch.
- 4.9 We examined one case, however, in which the prosecutor correctly advised the police to prefer two charges, but on subsequently reviewing the case for court, decided to drop one of them. In our view, that charge was fully supported by the evidence. It was more appropriate than the other charge, and should have been retained. In the event, the defendant was acquitted.
- 4.10 Advice files are allocated by the PTLs. They take into account the workload and experience of their prosecutors, but also keep in mind the need to ensure that all prosecutors develop experience of dealing with different types of case. In one team, the PTL sees all advices prepared by prosecutors. In the other team, the PTL examines a sample of advices. We were told that the PTLs occasionally find cases where the advice was incorrect. When this occurs, the case is discussed with the individual prosecutor and appropriate action is taken.

Timeliness of advice

- 4.11 The CPS has set a target of providing advice within 14 days of the receipt of the file. The police raised concerns about the timeliness of advice provided by the Branch. In our file sample,

we found that advice had been given within 14 days in eight of the ten cases. Branch records show that only 52.6% of advices were timely in the quarter ending 30 June 1998.

- 4.12 The timeliness of advices is monitored by caseworkers in the teams. They bring outstanding files to the attention of the prosecutor after 12 days. The concerns raised by the police, and the Branch's own figures, suggest that neither this system of action-dating, nor the monitoring by the PTLs, is fully effective.

4.13 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that effective monitoring is carried out, so that pre-charge advice is given to the police within 14 days.

Advice from counsel

- 4.14 It is very rare for counsel to be asked to advise on cases before charge or committal. Occasionally, counsel may be instructed at an early stage in complex fraud cases, or where there is a contested committal hearing. Although there is no formal system for approving such requests, in practice the PTLs or BCP are consulted. We did not see any examples in the files that we examined.
- 4.15 We were told that counsel is rarely asked to advise after committal. When issues arise, the PTLs encourage prosecutors and caseworkers to resolve them in the team. Case conferences are held on occasions with counsel, and prosecutors decide whether to seek a conference.
- 4.16 We examined two cases where advice had been requested. We considered that, in one case, the request was inappropriate. The BCP and PTLs will want to ensure that conferences are arranged, and formal advice sought, only in appropriate cases.

REVIEWING CASES

Quality of review decisions

- 5.1 Under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, the CPS is required to review every case it deals

with in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors (the Code). It must establish whether there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, and whether it is in the public interest to prosecute the matter.

- 5.2 We specifically examined the quality of the review decision in 80 files, covering cases in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. We agreed with the review decision on the evidential test in 79 cases (98.6%). In the one case where we disagreed, the defendant was charged with possessing a bladed instrument. The reviewing prosecutor identified that there was a weakness in the case, in relation to establishing possession by the defendant, but still allowed it to proceed to trial. The defendant was acquitted.
- 5.3 We agreed with the public interest decision in all relevant cases.
- 5.4 The overall quality of decision-making is good. Nevertheless, we considered that some cases where the magistrates found that there was no case to answer, or where the judge ordered or directed an acquittal, should have been more carefully reviewed (see paragraphs 5.32 - 5.45).
- 5.5 We were told that cases involving weak identification evidence are sometimes committed to the Crown Court. The Branch PIs show that problems with identification evidence accounted for nine of the 33 judge directed acquittals (27.3%) and seven of the 173 cases not proceeded with in the Crown Court (4%) in the year ending 30 June 1998. In the file sample, we saw several cases where the analysis of the identification evidence was inadequate. In three of these cases, the prosecution had to offer no evidence in the Crown Court. In two others, the case was lost on a submission of no case to answer.
- 5.6 We recommend that, in cases involving disputed identification evidence, prosecutors should include in their review endorsement an analysis of the quality of the identification evidence.**
- 5.7 The BCP may also wish to liaise with the police about the quality of identification evidence, and the handling of informal street identifications

and formal procedures under the relevant Code of Practice of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984.

- 5.8 We found that cases were generally dealt with at the appropriate level. Cases are usually allocated according to the day of the defendant's first court appearance. This results in all prosecutors receiving similar numbers of cases of varying types. PTLs told us that, in more complex and sensitive cases, they allocate in accordance with the experience and expertise of individual prosecutors. However, there was some evidence that difficult cases are sometimes retained by prosecutors of insufficient experience. The PTLs will want to ensure that all complex and sensitive cases are allocated to prosecutors of appropriate experience.

Review endorsements

- 5.9 Effective review must be supported by good review endorsements. Such endorsements ensure that other prosecutors and caseworkers who deal with the file are aware of the relevant factors taken into consideration by the reviewing prosecutor. Subject to our comments at paragraphs 5.5 - 5.6, we were impressed by the quality of endorsements about the sufficiency of evidence. In the sample of 80 cases, we found that the reviewing prosecutor had made an appropriately full note of the evidential issues in 73 cases (91.3%).
- 5.10 Public interest factors were fully endorsed in 52 of the 80 cases (65%). In some cases, where detailed consideration of the relevant public interest factors was required, the reviewing prosecutor's endorsement was inadequate, or absent from the file. In one case, for example, a defendant with a history of psychiatric illness was charged with burglary. The decision to proceed was correct, but the reviewing prosecutor had not commented on the reasons why prosecution was in the public interest. The BCP will wish to achieve equally high standards of file endorsements in relation to both criteria.

Timeliness of review

5.11 We were concerned about the timeliness of review. The Branch's own monitoring figures show that, in the quarter ending 30 June 1998, 80.2% of new files were reviewed within seven days of receipt. In a sample of 80 files, we found that 55 (68.8%) had been reviewed within seven days. However, 35 of these files were delivered to the prosecutor at court, and so almost inevitably were reviewed promptly before the hearing. In the 45 cases where the defendant had been bailed for an extended period after charge, timely review had been carried out in only 22 (48.9%).

5.12 We found several cases which did not carry any evidence of review before the first, or even the second, hearing. Late review leaves prosecutors little time to consult the police over further evidence or amended charges, or to discuss possible discontinuance. It can also delay the service of advance information.

5.13 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that timely and effective review is carried out in all cases.

5.14 In order to assist the efficient listing of cases in the magistrates' courts, the Branch has agreed to provide the court with details of additional, amended or substituted charges at least three working days before the hearing. We were told that the Branch often fails to comply with this agreement, and prosecutors often hand new charges to the clerk in court. This can give the impression to other agencies that timely and effective review is not always carried out.

5.15 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that the court and defence are notified of additional, amended or substituted charges at the earliest opportunity.

5.16 The quality and timeliness of the files submitted by the police can affect the Branch's ability to carry out timely review. The Branch and the police collect and assess data on the timeliness and quality of police files through JPM.

5.17 The police told us that the Branch's performance in returning completed JPM forms has improved,

although the quality of the information provided is variable. It is important that full and accurate data is produced, if the police and Branch managers are to seek improvements in the quality of police files. This is particularly relevant in view of our comments about committal files at paragraph 6.19. The BCP and PTLs will want to ensure that the improved rate of returns is maintained, that full and accurate information is endorsed on the forms, and that the joint efforts to improve standards are continued and developed.

Selection of the appropriate charge and charging standards

5.18 In 15 out of 80 cases (18.8%), we found that the original police charges required amendment or substitution. The reviewing prosecutor amended the charge in 11. In two cases where amendment was not made, the police had made errors in the wording of the offence. In the third case, too many charges were allowed to proceed; in contrast, in the fourth, there were too few charges to reflect the defendant's course of conduct.

5.19 The CPS and the police nationally have agreed charging standards for assaults, public order offences and some driving offences. In the file sample, the police applied the relevant charging standard in 25 out of 27 cases (92.6%). The prosecutors in the Branch are fully aware of these standards, and generally apply them properly. In the file sample, we agreed with the main charge selected by the reviewing prosecutor in all 27 cases where the charging standards applied.

5.20 We were told that, in some cases, particularly in the Crown Court, affray is inappropriately included with substantive assault charges. We found evidence to support this in the file sample. In one case, for example, the defendant was committed to the Crown Court on a charge of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. The police also charged affray, and this was included on the indictment. We considered that its inclusion was superfluous.

Mode of trial

- 5.21 We agreed with the reviewing prosecutor's decision about mode of trial in all 46 relevant cases in the sample. Appropriate endorsements of the factors taken into account were made in 37 (80.4%). Prosecutors will wish to ensure that such endorsements are made in all cases, in order to assist colleagues when dealing with cases in court.
- 5.22 Representatives of other agencies told us that prosecutors make appropriate representations about whether cases are suitable to be dealt with in the magistrates' courts. Occasionally, we were told, prosecutors do not provide the court with sufficient information when making mode of trial representations. We observed one such instance, which concerned the factors of particular seriousness in offences of theft and false accounting committed by an employee. Prosecutors will wish to ensure that they provide sufficient information to the court in all cases.

Bail

- 5.23 We were told that prosecutors opposed bail in appropriate cases and dealt effectively with bail applications in the magistrates' courts. We examined 21 cases where the defendant appeared in custody, and an appropriate decision whether to oppose bail was made in each case. We did note, however, that the reasons for opposing bail were endorsed in the file in only 13 of the 17 relevant cases; and the reasons for refusing bail were endorsed in only eight of the 13 cases where the defendant was remanded in custody.
- 5.24 We recommend that, in cases where a defendant is remanded in custody, prosecutors should endorse fully the grounds for opposing bail, and the reasons given by the court for refusing bail.**
- 5.25 Branch prosecutors are fully aware of the law and policy in relation to appeals against the grant of bail under the Bail (Amendment) Act 1993. We saw two files in the sample where the prosecution had appealed successfully, and we saw one case at court where the prosecutor indicated his

intention to appeal against the grant of bail. It was clear that the correct procedures had been followed

Discontinuance

- 5.26 The Branch's discontinuance rate is lower than the national figure (9.9%, against 12% nationally, for the year ending 30 September 1998). We examined a sample of 106 cases stopped by the prosecution in the magistrates' courts, to look at the reason for the termination and to find out whether the police were consulted about, and agreed with, the decision. Formal discontinuance by written notice was used in 40 cases (37.8%), and 41 (38.7%) were withdrawn at court. In the remaining 25 cases (23.6%), no evidence was offered by the prosecution.
- 5.27 Fifty-one cases (48.1%) were terminated because there was insufficient evidence and 18 (17%) because it was not in the public interest to prosecute. Nine cases (8.5%) were terminated because the defendant produced the necessary driving documents.
- 5.28 In the remaining 28 cases (26.4%), the prosecution was unable to proceed. In 16 of these, witnesses failed to attend court, or refused to give evidence. This is a significant proportion of the total number of cases (15.1%). At paragraphs 5.39 - 5.40, we examine the steps taken by the Branch to reduce the proportion of Crown Court cases that fail because of witness problems. The BCP will want to consider extending those measures to summary trials.
- 5.29 In 98 of the 106 cases (92.5%), prosecutors notified the police of the intention to discontinue. In the eight cases where notice was not given, the case was terminated because of events at court. The police did not object to the proposed discontinuance in any of the cases in the sample. We were told by the police, and by Branch staff, that cases where the police do object to discontinuance are dealt with properly. Full discussion takes place and, if new evidence or information is disclosed, the prosecutor will reconsider his decision.

- 5.30 We examined ten terminated files in order to assess whether the Code tests had been correctly applied. We agreed with the decision about the sufficiency of the evidence and the public interest in each case.
- 5.31 The magistrates' courts and the police raised concerns, however, about the timeliness of notification. Discontinuance close to the hearing date causes difficulties for court listing and late notification gives the police little time to respond. We found that the decision to terminate was not taken at the earliest opportunity in one of the ten cases in the sample. Timely and effective review would reduce the number of cases which are discontinued close to the hearing date.

Cases lost on a submission of no case to answer in the magistrates' courts and discharged committals

- 5.32 We examined six summary trials which the magistrates had stopped at the close of the prosecution case. In four, the decision to prosecute was correct, based on the strength of the evidence on the file. However, we disagreed with the decision to prosecute two cases.
- 5.33 In one of these, the defendant was charged with an offence of kerb-crawling. Although his actions were suspicious, the evidence did not firmly establish that he was soliciting women for the purpose of prostitution, and we did not consider that there was a realistic prospect of conviction. In the second case, the defendant faced an allegation of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour. There was insufficient evidence to prove that his conduct was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. In both cases, the reviewing prosecutor had failed to analyse the evidence in detail. Careful review would have identified the problems, and should have led to the cases being discontinued.
- 5.34 We examined one case where a defendant had been discharged, following a contested committal hearing. The case involved eight defendants, who had been charged with conspiracy to supply drugs. The file had been reviewed very carefully, and a decision to terminate proceedings against one defendant had been taken before committal. Two defendants contested the committal proceedings. One was committed and the other discharged, but we make no criticism of the decision to prosecute the defendant who was discharged.

Judge ordered acquittals

- 5.35 In the 12 months to 30 September 1998, 169 cases were not proceeded with in the Crown Court. This represents 13% of the Branch's Crown Court caseload, which is substantially above the national average of 8.8%. The great majority were stopped by the judge at the request of the prosecution before the trial started (judge ordered acquittals).
- 5.36 We examined 35 such cases, involving 46 defendants. We agreed with the decision to prosecute in 33 cases. In one case where we disagreed, the evidence of identification was weak. Counsel advised that there was not a realistic prospect of conviction. The prosecutor accepted counsel's advice, and no evidence was offered. In the second case, the defendant had been charged with handling stolen goods, and with possessing a controlled drug. The prosecutor had not analysed the evidence to prove that the defendant knew or believed that the goods were stolen, and secondly, had failed to consider adequately the law relating to possession of minute quantities of a controlled drug.
- 5.37 In two further cases, although we agreed with the initial decision to prosecute, more enquiries should have been made before the case was committed, to ensure that key witnesses could be traced and were willing to attend court.
- 5.38 Evidential difficulties led to the prosecution being stopped in eight cases (22.9%). In a further four (11.4%), information came to light after committal which cast doubt on the credibility of a key prosecution witness. One case (2.9%) was stopped because the police had lost an exhibit. Six cases

(17.1%) were stopped because it was no longer in the public interest to proceed. In three of these cases, the defendant had been sentenced to a substantial period of imprisonment for other offences.

- 5.39 In 16 cases (45.7%), prosecution witnesses failed to attend court or declined to give evidence. The Branch has already identified this as the largest single cause of failed cases in the Crown Court and, in conjunction with the police, a procedure has been adopted to reduce the number of cases which fail for this reason. In cases involving allegations of assault or public disorder, and in any other case where the prosecutor doubts whether a witness will attend, the police are asked to check before committal that key civilian witnesses are still available and prepared to attend court. It is too soon to tell whether this procedure has had an impact, but we were told that the most recent PIs suggest that there has been a reduction in cases failing because of witness problems. This is encouraging, but in the light of our comments at paragraph 5.37, the BCP will want to ensure that the procedure is followed in all appropriate cases.
- 5.40 Further analysis of cases which fail because of witness problems is required, and we were pleased to note that the BCP and the Chief Clerk of the Crown Court at Knightsbridge are to undertake this jointly. An improved information package for witnesses was designed some time ago, and is to be introduced. Some witnesses may be vulnerable, or the subject of intimidation, and a variety of measures and support may be needed to address the totality of the problem. We commend the steps that are being taken.

Judge directed acquittals

- 5.41 During the same 12 month period, there were 27 cases in which the judge directed an acquittal after the trial had started. This represents 2.5% of the Branch's Crown Court caseload, which is slightly higher than the national average of 2.2%.

5.42 We examined three of these cases. Two revealed the need for more careful analysis of the evidence. In the first case, we disagreed with the decision to prosecute. Two defendants had been charged with robbery and blackmail. The case against one was reasonably strong. The second defendant was prosecuted on the basis of joint enterprise, but the evidence of her involvement was minimal; even the victim said that she had not taken any active part in the offence. A careful analysis of the evidence would have resulted in the case against the second defendant being discontinued in the magistrates' court.

- 5.43 In the second case, we agreed with the decision to prosecute for an offence of witness intimidation. However, the prosecutor had amended the original police charge when drafting the indictment, and the wrong limb of the offence had been selected. This was not noticed at committal, nor by prosecuting counsel in the Crown Court. The defence successfully argued that the offence alleged in the indictment was not made out. Again, careful review and analysis would have avoided this unfortunate outcome.
- 5.44 We agreed with the decision to prosecute in the third case, which failed because key witnesses did not give evidence in accordance with their written statements.
- 5.45 The most recent PIs disclose a reducing number of such cases over the year, and we hope that this is a result of the initiatives taken and priorities set within the Branch.

Learning from experience

- 5.46 More can be done within the Branch to identify and disseminate learning points from its casework. We were told that casework issues are not always discussed at team meetings. Failed case reports are completed for cases which do not result in a conviction in the Crown Court, and the PTLs discuss these cases with the reviewing prosecutor, if appropriate. However, learning points are not usually shared with other team members.

5.47 There is no formal system for identifying or disseminating appropriate information about cases which do not result in conviction in the magistrates' courts, or about successful cases in the magistrates' courts or Crown Court. There is a perception in the Branch that only failed cases are examined for learning points. Whilst this focuses the attention of the individual on the problem, it can sometimes be too negative an approach.

5.48 The results of Crown Court cases are no longer relayed back to the prosecutor and caseworker who had the conduct of the case. Consequently, prosecutors and caseworkers do not gain full experience from their handling of cases. We consider that a system of providing feedback should be reinstated immediately. This is particularly important at present, because prosecutors are not attending the Crown Court on a regular basis (see paragraph 6.37).

5.49 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that adequate systems are in place to enable learning points from the Branch's cases, both successful and otherwise, to be identified and disseminated.

PREPARING CASES

Advance information

6.1 National guidelines require advance information to be provided within five working days of the Branch being in possession of the file from the police and knowing the identity of the defence solicitor. We found that advance information had been provided within the guidelines in 34 of the 39 relevant cases (87.2%) in the file sample. The Branch's own monitoring shows timely service of advance information in 71.4% of cases in June 1998.

6.2 We were told that, in practice, prosecutors usually serve advance information at court on the first hearing, even if the defence solicitor has requested the information in writing beforehand. This can contribute to cases being adjourned, and it prevents prosecutors from being able to press at court for progress to be made. The BCP will

wish to ensure that advance information is sent out before the first hearing whenever possible.

6.3 In summary cases, the law does not require the disclosure of the prosecution case. Prosecutors generally provide the information, if the defence solicitor requests it and the prosecutor considers that it may help the progress of the case. However, the Branch does not have a formal policy for providing information in these circumstances, and this can lead to an inconsistent approach being taken by individual prosecutors. In some cases, the prosecutor shows the relevant parts of the prosecution file to the defence solicitor at court. This is not a good practice, as it can lead to inappropriate disclosure of parts of the prosecution file, or, on the other hand, to insufficient disclosure of all the evidence when this is proper.

6.4 We recommend that the BCP should ensure a consistent approach to the provision of advance information in cases where the law does not require it.

Unused and sensitive material

6.5 All prosecutors and caseworkers have received training on the disclosure provisions in the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996. Joint training was held with the police, although we were told that some officers are still making errors in the completion of disclosure schedules. This can cause delay in the assessment and disclosure to the defence of unused material.

6.6 Prosecutors usually deal effectively and timeously with unused material in Crown Court cases. In the file sample, the unused material disclosure schedule had been completed correctly in 27 out of 30 Crown Court cases (90%). Timely disclosure was made in 25 of the 26 cases (96.2%) where we could ascertain the date of service.

6.7 However, the prosecutor should undertake primary disclosure immediately after committal, and should endorse the file to this effect. The date of primary disclosure is significant, because

it activates various statutory time limits relating to disclosure. Delay can reduce the effectiveness of PDHs. We saw some cases, in the file sample and at court, where primary disclosure was not made until well after committal. Some of these delays were caused by late, or incomplete, provision of the disclosure schedules by the police, but others were apparently the result of late action in the Branch.

- 6.8 We were concerned to find poor compliance with the requirement to disclose unused material in summary trials. The disclosure schedule had been completed correctly in only 12 of the 20 relevant cases (60%). It had been served on the defence in ten cases (50%), and service was timely in only eight (40%). In our experience, these figures are poor.
- 6.9 We examined two cases involving sensitive material. The appropriate action was taken in each case. We also examined the procedures in the Branch for dealing with sensitive material. Decisions on sensitivity and materiality are considered by the reviewing prosecutor and the PTL. In complex, or highly sensitive, cases, the BCP is consulted. Each PTL operates a system for ensuring that sensitive material is handled appropriately, and that endorsements are made of the review decisions taken. In practice, review endorsements are not always properly made, and completed cases are not weeded from the system.

6.10 We recommend that the BCP and PTLs should ensure that effective monitoring is carried out of the handling of unused and sensitive material, to ensure that such material is properly and timeously considered and dealt with by prosecutors.

Summary trial preparation

- 6.11 When a case is adjourned for trial in the magistrates' court, the file is returned to the reviewing prosecutor. This enables prompt decisions to be taken about witness requirements, service of statements on the defence, and the need for any further evidence.

The system appears to work well: in all 30 cases in the file sample, the police were notified at an early stage of the witnesses who were required to attend court. We were told, however, that, in some cases, the police were notified of witness requirements close to the trial date. This may not be the fault of Branch staff. Trial dates are sometimes fixed at short notice, particularly when defendants have been remanded in custody. On occasion, the defence may require the attendance of witnesses whose evidence has been served.

- 6.12 Formal pre-trial reviews (PTRs) are not usually held in either magistrates' court, save in particularly long or complex cases. Instead, shortly before the trial date, the court contacts the prosecution and defence, either by telephone or in writing, to check that the trial is still effective. We were told that neither party is good at responding. The BCP will want to address this specifically.
- 6.13 Additional evidence had been requested in all cases where it was needed, and had been served on the defence, where appropriate. In all cases in our sample, appropriate use was made of section 9, Criminal Justice Act 1967, to agree evidence and save witnesses from attending court unnecessarily. Service of the statements was timely in all cases.
- 6.14 Prosecutors are aware of the procedure for agreeing admissions of fact under section 10, Criminal Justice Act 1967, but we were told that it is rarely used because of unsuccessful attempts in the past. The lack of a PTR in many cases removes the opportunity to utilise these provisions. We did not see any cases in the file sample where the use of the provisions would have been appropriate.
- 6.15 Prosecutors are also familiar with the provisions of section 23, Criminal Justice Act 1988, which enable a witness' statement to be read if the witness is too ill or too frightened to attend court, or is out of the country. We saw one case in the sample where the prosecutor had considered

using these provisions, but had properly decided against making an application.

6.16 We noted that the Branch does not have any system for checking that all outstanding work has been carried out in summary trial cases. In conjunction with a comprehensive check-list, such a system could be used to ensure, for example, that witnesses had been warned, and that unused material had been dealt with properly. It would enable staff to deal more effectively with enquiries from the court about whether trials remain effective. We consider this particularly important because of the high rate of contested summary trials, to which we refer in paragraph 2.3, and because of the small number of PTRs.

6.17 We recommend that the BCP should introduce a system for monitoring the progress of summary trial preparation, to ensure that all outstanding work is properly completed.

Committal preparation

6.18 Marylebone and West London Magistrates' Courts usually adjourn cases for six weeks for committal when the defendant is on bail. Guidelines issued nationally by the Trials Issues Group suggest that an eight week period is appropriate to allow the police to submit a file to the CPS; the CPS to prepare and serve the papers; and the defence to consider the papers before committal. We recognise the way in which the magistrates seek to manage the progress of cases through to committal. However, the effect on the prosecution of the magistrates' approach is that committal papers will usually be ready for service only on the date set for committal.

6.19 If the police fail to provide a complete committal file punctually, the preparation and service of committal papers are delayed. JPM figures show that, in the quarter ending 30 June 1998, the proportion of committal files received by the Branch within the agreed timescale varied between police divisions from 55% to 78.2%. However, the proportion of files that were both

timely and fully satisfactory varied from 0% to 26.9%. These are very low figures.

6.20 We recommend that the BCP should discuss with the police, through the mechanism of JPM, how the quality and timeliness of committal files might be improved.

6.21 Committal papers are usually prepared by caseworkers, who work under the supervision of the reviewing prosecutor. The papers should be reviewed by the prosecutor in the case. We found, however, that often the reviewing prosecutor is unavailable, through court commitments, and another prosecutor, with no knowledge of the case, checks the papers when the committal date is imminent. This can result in only a cursory examination of the papers. We found several cases in the file sample where the reviewing prosecutor had not signed the committal papers, and where problems arose at the Crown Court which could have been avoided by a thorough pre-committal check.

6.22 We recommend that the BCP should ensure that committal papers are checked by the reviewing prosecutor before committal.

6.23 The CPS Crown Court Case Preparation Package is used to prepare cases for committal. This is a pro-forma package, which contains standard paragraphs to be included in the instructions to counsel, with free-text options to incorporate specific instructions relevant to each case.

6.24 The instructions to counsel contained a summary of the case, prepared by Branch staff, in 25 of the 30 relevant cases (83.3%). In our experience, this is a relatively high proportion of cases. However, we were told that the summaries did not always contain an appropriate analysis of the issues in the case, and the BCP will wish to ensure that this is done in the future. The acceptability of pleas, or possible alternative offences, had been addressed in only three of the 11 relevant cases (27.3%). PTLs monitor compliance with the requirement to complete these key sections, and prosecutors have been set appropriate objectives in their forward job plans.

6.25 Instructions to counsel were delivered within the agreed timescales set out in the CPS/Bar Standard in only 21 of the 30 cases (70%) that we examined. This figure is consistent with the Branch's own monitoring, which shows that timely instructions were delivered in 69.7% of cases in the quarter ending on 30 June 1998.

6.26 We recommend that prosecutors and caseworkers should ensure that instructions to counsel:

- **comment on the acceptability of potential pleas, where this is relevant; and**
- **are delivered within the agreed timescale in all cases.**

6.27 An initiative to improve the quality of instructions to counsel is being developed in the Highbury Branch of CPS London. We refer to this initiative in our report on that Branch (number 21/98) at paragraphs 6.36 - 6.40. The BCP will no doubt wish to follow the pilot scheme closely, and consider whether it would help to raise standards in the Marylebone and West London Branch.

Quality of indictments

6.28 Indictments are usually drafted by Branch staff. Occasionally, counsel is asked to draft the indictment in complex fraud cases. We saw one such example, and the decision to involve counsel was appropriate.

6.29 Following preparation by a caseworker, the draft indictment should be checked by the prosecutor before typing. However, as we have outlined in paragraph 6.21, the reviewing prosecutor is often not available. The prosecutor does not examine the indictment subsequently, before it is lodged with the Crown Court. A check is carried out by a senior caseworker, but this is only to identify obvious errors, varying from typing mistakes to improperly joined counts. The substantive content of the indictment is not considered against the evidence.

6.30 The Branch does not have a system for monitoring the quality of indictments. In a sample of 30 Crown Court cases, we found that

five indictments had been amended. In one case, the amendment was to accommodate acceptable guilty pleas offered by the defendant. In three cases, careless mistakes had been made about the relevant dates, or the names of the defendant or victim. In the fifth case, further counts were added to the indictment by counsel. We saw other cases, in other categories in the file sample and at court, where both careless and substantive mistakes had been made in counts on the indictment.

6.31 We were told by local judges that the standard of drafting indictments is variable. In some cases, usually involving allegations of deception and conspiracy to defraud, the particulars of offence are poorly drafted.

6.32 We recommend that the BCP should introduce a system for monitoring the quality of indictments, in order to:

- **eradicate minor typing inaccuracies;**
- **ensure that the substantive content of each indictment is correct; and**
- **improve the drafting skills of prosecutors and caseworkers.**

6.33 In the sample, 29 of the 30 indictments had been lodged with the Crown Court within 28 days of committal.

The CPS in the Crown Court

6.34 The majority of caseworkers at the Crown Court usually cover more than one courtroom. We were told that coverage is generally one caseworker for two or three courtrooms. Our observations at court suggested that, on some days, coverage is one caseworker for three or four courtrooms. This can cause difficulties with witness liaison and with providing support and instructions to counsel during lengthy trials. A Branch caseworker attends the Central Criminal Court, where the most serious cases are heard.

6.35 We observed that the caseworkers at court are capable and experienced. Our view was confirmed by counsel. However, the level of coverage at the Crown Court at Knightsbridge

often results in the caseworkers basing themselves in the CPS room, rather than in court. We consider that the caseworkers could be more effective if the level of coverage were increased, thereby allowing them to spend more time in their allocated courtrooms. The BCP may also wish to consider equipping the CPS room more comprehensively, to enable pre-committal or other out-of-court work to be undertaken when courts are not sitting.

6.36 We recommend that the BCP should take steps to provide more effective and comprehensive coverage of the Crown Court by caseworkers.

6.37 Branch prosecutors from the Marylebone team are listed to attend the Crown Court on Wednesdays and Thursdays. These are the days when the majority of the Branch's PDHs are heard. However, the nominated prosecutor is not always able to attend, because of commitments in the magistrates' court, or other pressing work. Prosecutors told us that they recognise the importance of attending the Crown Court on a more regular basis. It would enable them to take a more effective part in decision-making at court, and provide them with the opportunity to liaise with counsel and gain experience of the Crown Court generally.

6.38 Counsel is usually instructed to handle bail applications in chambers in the Crown Court. Local judges told us that when Branch prosecutors handle these applications, they do so competently. Regular attendance at the Crown Court would give the prosecutors more opportunities to present bail applications before judges.

6.39 We recommend that the BCP should make arrangements for prosecutors to attend the Crown Court more frequently, particularly to undertake bail applications and attend PDHs.

6.40 The police now send a representative to the PDHs to liaise with the caseworker and counsel, and to note orders made by the judge. We were told that one of the reasons for having a police presence was that the staff failed to notify the

police promptly of orders made at PDHs. We did not see any evidence of an action-dating system in the Branch, so that orders could be monitored and action taken to ensure timely compliance. We were concerned to find that, in five of the nine relevant cases in the file sample, the prosecution had not complied with orders within the time period set by the judge. In four of these cases, the Branch was at least partly responsible for the inaction. All four instances occurred recently, after the police had established their system.

6.41 Branch managers should only be satisfied with 100% compliance with orders of the court, or, at the very least, with a clear explanation about why an order has not been complied with by the prosecution.

6.42 We recommend that the BCP should introduce a system to ensure compliance with directions made at PDHs.

Custody time limits

6.43 Custody time limit provisions regulate the length of time during which an accused person may be remanded in custody in the preliminary stages of a case.

6.44 In the past 12 months, the Branch has had two cases where defendants were released on bail, because of a failure to apply for an extension of the time limit. Both cases occurred at the end of 1997. Following these failures, the BCP reinforced the need for accurate and effective monitoring to be carried out. He now receives from the senior caseworkers a weekly list of all custody cases which are approaching the expiry date.

6.45 We examined ten files which were subject to custody time limits. The correct review and expiry dates had been calculated and endorsed appropriately on the file jackets and in the monitoring diaries, in all ten cases. The two teams used varying review periods for Crown Court cases, but we were told that this was to be standardised. Subject to this, we are satisfied that the Branch now has in place satisfactory systems to monitor cases to which the custody time limits apply.

File endorsements

- 6.46 We have commented on the quality of review endorsements at paragraphs 5.9 - 5.10. We found that court endorsements in magistrates' court files were generally good; in 77 of the 80 files in the sample, the court endorsements were clear and legible, and showed a comprehensive record of the case's progress. We were told by some Branch staff, however, that the legibility and content of some court endorsements were poor. The PTLs monitor file endorsements, and they will want to ensure that poor endorsements are addressed with the individuals concerned. Out-of-court work was properly endorsed in 63 of the 65 relevant files.
- 6.47 The standard of endorsements in Crown Court files was generally good. Satisfactory court endorsements were made in 28 of the 30 files in the sample. Out-of-court work was properly endorsed in all relevant files. Effective use is made of minute sheets, kept in chronological order, to record details of hearings and further action.
- 6.48 In our experience, the standard of file endorsements in the Branch is high. The importance of full and accurate endorsements has been emphasised, and effective monitoring is carried out. We commend the actions taken by Branch managers to bring about improvements.

Providing information for pre-sentence reports

- 6.49 Branch staff do not always provide the Probation Service with sufficient information about offences. The information is required to enable probation officers to assess the seriousness of the offence when they prepare pre-sentence reports. Insufficient information can have an adverse impact on the ability of the courts to sentence offenders appropriately.
- 6.50 In our file sample, information had been served timeously in 29 of the 48 relevant cases (60.4%). It had not been served in seven cases (14.6%). We could not tell when, or

if, the information had been provided in 12 cases (25%).

- 6.51 We recommend that the BMT should ensure that complete pre-sentence report packages are provided to the Probation Service within the agreed timescale in all cases, and that the date of service is endorsed on the file.**

PRESENTING CASES IN COURT

- 7.1 Representatives of other criminal justice agencies told us that the standard of advocacy of Branch prosecutors was generally (but not always) good. We observed nine CPS advocates presenting cases in the magistrates' courts. The overall standard of advocacy was satisfactory, and some of it was good. However, we also saw one instance of poor advocacy. The BCP will wish to take steps to address this.
- 7.2 PTLs should monitor the advocacy of their prosecutors at least twice a year. Some formal advocacy assessment had been carried out during the preceding year, but not to the extent required. PTLs have little opportunity to observe their prosecutors on an informal basis, because they prosecute in court infrequently. The BCP attends the magistrates' courts, but does not prosecute cases himself. The BCP will no doubt wish to consider the balance of the work undertaken by senior prosecutors in due course.
- 7.3 Prosecutors attended court promptly and were usually well prepared. Each of the magistrates' courts has a CPS room, where prosecutors can read files, make telephone calls about their cases, and hold discussions with defence solicitors or police officers. We saw effective pre-hearing liaison take place between prosecutors and defence solicitors. We were pleased to note that a caseworker attends each magistrates' court to support the prosecutors during the morning, which helps the progress of cases through the courts.

- 7.4 During our visits to the Crown Court, we observed eight counsel prosecuting cases on behalf of the CPS. We considered the overall level of experience of counsel to be appropriate to the cases. However, judges expressed some concern about the level of experience of counsel instructed in standard fee cases. Branch prosecutors echoed this concern, but despite this, the Branch does not carry out formal monitoring of counsel's performance. The BCP will wish to consider whether to introduce selective monitoring, to ensure that counsel of appropriate experience are instructed in all cases.
- 7.5 Counsel who were originally instructed attended the PDH in 16 out of 30 cases (53.3%), and the trial in only one out of 19 cases (5.3%). This high level of returns, particularly in contested cases, is a cause of concern.
- 7.6 We recommend that the BCP should liaise with representatives of chambers, in order to improve the percentage of cases in which counsel originally instructed attends the PDH and the trial.**

THE BRANCH AND OTHER AGENCIES

- 8.1 The Branch has developed effective working relationships with other agencies. Issues of concern are addressed through informal discussion, or through formal multi-agency meetings which are held on a regular basis. Branch managers are respected by the representatives of other agencies with whom they have dealings.
- 8.2 We were pleased to note that the Branch has been involved in multi-agency discussions about the treatment of victims and witnesses in the local criminal justice system. These discussions have led to service level agreements at the Crown Court at Knightsbridge and at Marylebone Magistrates' Court being signed by all relevant agencies. The BCP is keen to reach a similar agreement at West London Magistrates' Court.

KEY STATISTICS

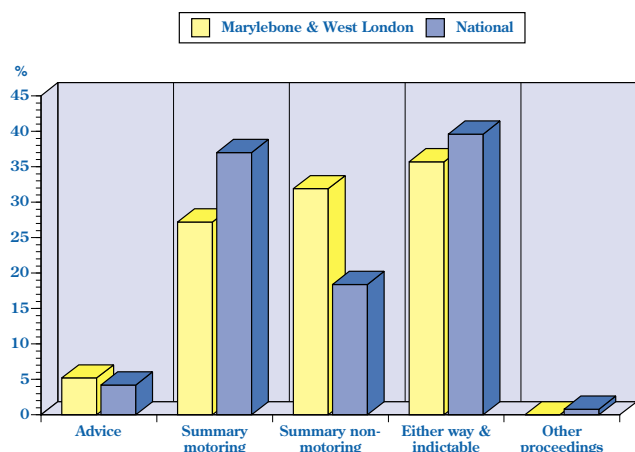
- 9.1 The charts which follow this page set out the key statistics about the Branch's casework in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court for the year ending 30 September 1998.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 On page 20, there is a list of the local representatives of criminal justice agencies who assisted in our inspection.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS

1 - Types of case



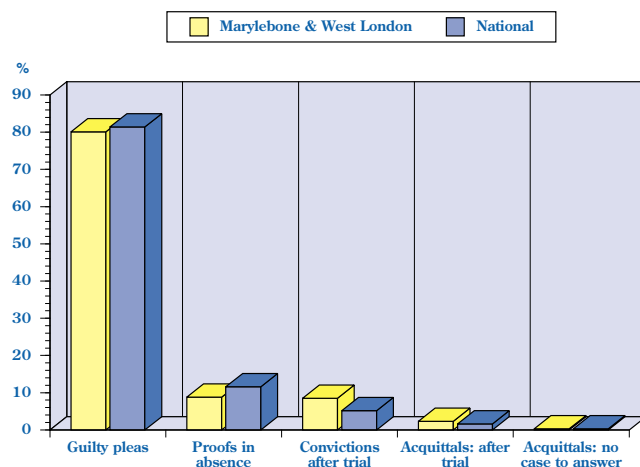
	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Advice	791	5.2	60,220	4.2
Summary motoring	4,168	27.2	530,379	37.0
Summary non-motoring	4,885	31.9	263,469	18.4
Either way & indictable	5,470	35.7	567,549	39.6
Other proceedings	1	0.0	11,512	0.8
Total	15,315	100	1,433,129	100

2 - Completed cases

	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Hearings	9,939	68.4	983,826	72.3
Discontinuances	1,432	9.9	163,707	12.0
Committals	1,163	8.0	97,335	7.1
Other disposals	1,990	13.7	116,529	8.6
Total	14,524	100	1,361,397	100



3 - Case results

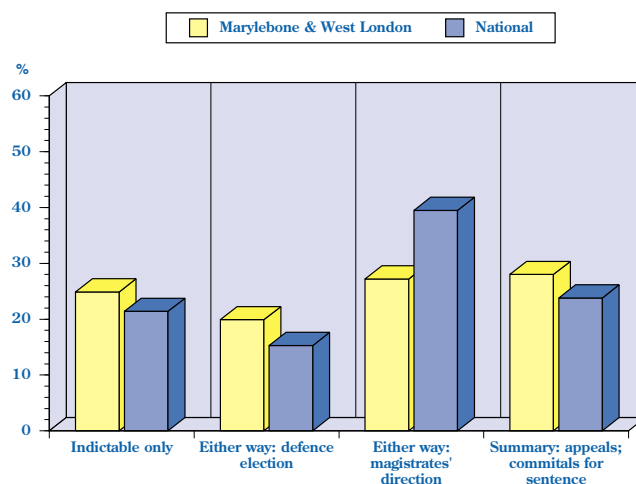


	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Guilty pleas	8,006	80.1	804,174	81.4
Proofs in absence	879	8.8	115,102	11.6
Convictions after trial	848	8.5	50,910	5.2
Acquittals: after trial	227	2.3	15,609	1.6
Acquittals: no case to answer	31	0.3	2,557	0.3
Total	9,991	100	988,352	100

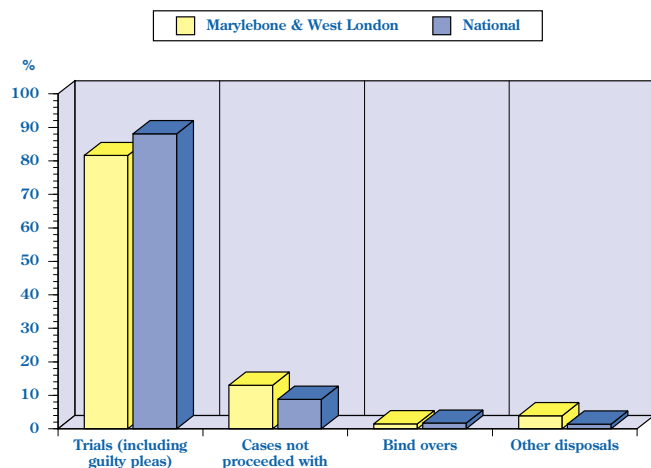
CROWN COURT

4 - Types of case

	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Indictable only	448	24.9	27,122	21.4
Either way: defence election	359	19.9	19,354	15.3
Either way: magistrates' direction	490	27.2	50,075	39.5
Summary: appeals; committals for sentence	505	28.0	30,203	23.8
Total	1,802	100	126,754	100



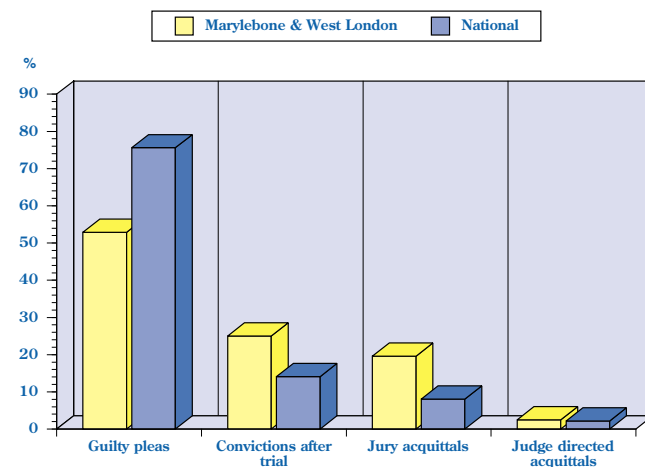
5 - Completed cases



	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Trials (including guilty pleas)	1,059	81.6	85,158	88.1
Cases not proceeded with	169	13.0	8,526	8.8
Bind overs	19	1.5	1,596	1.7
Other disposals	50	3.9	1,351	1.4
Total	1,297	100	96,631	100

6 - Case results

	Marylebone & West London		National	
	No.	%	No.	%
Guilty pleas	583	52.9	65,701	75.6
Convictions after trial	276	25.0	12,226	14.1
Jury acquittals	216	19.6	7,083	8.1
Judge directed acquittals	27	2.5	1,924	2.2
Total	1,102	100	86,934	100



LIST OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES WHO ASSISTED IN OUR INSPECTION

Judges	<p>His Honour Judge Hordern QC His Honour Judge Munro Davies QC His Honour Judge Pontius QC His Honour Judge Samuels QC</p>
Crown Court	<p>Mrs C Read, Chief Clerk, The Crown Court at Knightsbridge</p>
Magistrates' courts	<p>Miss G Babbington-Brown, Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate Mr A Baldwin, Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate Mr K Maitland-Davies, Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate Mrs M Goodhart, Justice of the Peace and Chair of the Marylebone Bench Mr T MacAndrews, Justice of the Peace and Chair of the West London Bench Mr E Houghton, Justices' Chief Clerk, Marylebone Magistrates' Court Ms M H Parry, Justices' Chief Clerk, West London Magistrates' Court</p>
Police	<p>Chief Superintendent C Cerroni Superintendent S Otter Chief Inspector J Beverley Chief Inspector I Chappell Chief Inspector M Moody Chief Inspector G Stokes Detective Sergeant P Attfield Acting Detective Sergeant J Lumley Detective Constable M James Ms V O'Gorman, Case Clerk</p>
Defence solicitor	<p>Mr N Baxter Mr M Duxbury</p>
Counsel	<p>Mr I Darling Mr M Gadsden Mr S Hamblin Mr B Kelleher</p>
Counsel's clerk	<p>Mr M Watts</p>
Probation Service	<p>Mr M Connolly, Senior Probation Officer</p>
Victim support	<p>Mr B Daly</p>

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE INSPECTORATE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the Crown Prosecution Service through a process of inspection and evaluation; the provision of advice; and the identification and promotion of good practice.

AIMS

- 1** To inspect and evaluate the quality of casework decisions and the quality of casework decision-making processes in the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 2** To report on how casework is dealt with in the Crown Prosecution Service in a way which encourages improvements in the quality of that casework.
- 3** To carry out separate reviews of particular topics which affect casework or the casework process. We call these thematic reviews.
- 4** To give advice to the Director of Public Prosecutions on the quality of casework decisions and casework decision-making processes of the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 5** To recommend how to improve the quality of casework in the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 6** To identify and promote good practice.
- 7** To work with other inspectorates to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.
- 8** To promote people's awareness of us throughout the criminal justice system so they can trust our findings.



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