



Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
inspection of CPS Bedfordshire

## CPS Bedfordshire rated as GOOD by inspectors

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI) has today published its report on the inspection of CPS Bedfordshire

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

*"I am pleased that this inspection has found that overall CPS Bedfordshire's casework is dealt with to a good standard. The handling of Crown Court casework is particularly encouraging; there has been a marked improvement since our last assessment in the handling of the disclosure of unused material and the application of the custody time limit regime which we found to be excellent.*

*Overall we found that the Area was GOOD. Aspects of performance which have attracted critical comment for some time, particularly the Area's approach to community engagement are now being addressed.*

*The primary challenge in this and future years will be to achieve the necessary savings to make up its projected budget shortfall. The Area needs to review its current structure and identify options for making substantive cost savings.*

*Our recommendations should result in budgetary savings, which is a key CPS national priority."*

Summary of main inspection findings:

- The Area was rated as GOOD.
- Many aspects of performance were better than the national average.
- Serious casework is handled well.
- The effective trial rate is good.
- Appropriate care and attention is given to the treatment of victims and witnesses.
- Progress is being achieved with the Area's community engagement strategy and its rating has improved from red to amber/green.
- There are good working relationships with criminal justice partners.
- The Area faces significant budgetary challenges and needs to review a number of aspects including its structure.
- There is a high degree of corporacy at Area level, but staff did not identify to the same extent with the Group.

A table of the detailed scores for each aspect of the inspection framework can be found at annex A.

This press release should be read in conjunction with the report itself and the executive summary which is integral to it and also available separately.

## Notes to editors

1 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.

2 CPS Bedfordshire was the subject of an overall performance assessment in June 2007 which rated performance as fair. This inspection included detailed scrutiny of finalised case files and some current cases were observed at court. Inspectors considered a wide aspect of casework including decision-making and casework handling together with the systems, management and structured monitoring of performance which underpin good casework.

3 The inspection team comprised legal and business management inspectors working closely together, with a lay inspector who helped examine the way in which the CPS relates to the public with dealing with witnesses and victims, its engagement with the community including minority groups, its handling of complaints and the application of the public interest test contained in the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

4 CPS Bedfordshire is one of 42 CPS Areas, each of which has a chief crown prosecutor, and serves the area covered by Bedfordshire Police.

## Annex A

### Summary of ratings from inspection report

Critical aspects	OPA June 2007	AEI May 2010	Direction of travel
Pre-charge advice and decisions	Good	Fair	Declined
Decision-making, preparation and progression in magistrates' courts cases	Fair	Fair	Stable
Decision-making, preparation and progression in Crown Court cases	Fair	Good	Improved
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Good	Improved
Leadership and management	Fair	Good	Improved
<b>Overall critical assessment level</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improved</b>
The prosecution of cases at court	Good	Good	Stable
Serious violent and sexual offences and hate crime	Fair	Good	Improved
Disclosure of unused material	Fair	Good	Improved
Custody time limits	Fair	Excellent	Improved
Managing performance to improve	Good	Good	Stable
Managing resources	Good	Fair	Declined
Partnership working and community confidence	Fair	Good	Improved
<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>IMPROVED</b>