

## **HM CPS INSPECTORATE OVERALL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF CPS CLEVELAND**

**HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published their Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of CPS Cleveland.**

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in thirteen key aspects of work. Each of the aspects is assessed as being excellent, good, fair or poor. The Area is then assessed on its overall performance in the light of these markings.

**The overall performance assessment of CPS Cleveland was GOOD.**

The table below provides a breakdown of the assessed level of performance against the thirteen aspects and provides a comparison with the 2005 exercise:

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>		<b>GOOD</b>		
<b>Critical aspects</b>	<b>Assessment level</b>			
	<b>OPA 2005</b>	<b>OPA 2007</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>	
Pre-charge decision-making	Good	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Good	<b>Good</b>	<b>Stable</b>	
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
The service to victims and witnesses	Good	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improved<sup>1</sup></b>	
Leadership	Good	<b>Good</b>	<b>Stable</b>	
<b>Overall critical assessment level</b>		<b>Good</b>		
Progressing cases at court	Good	<b>Good</b>	<b>Stable</b>	
Sensitive cases and hate crime	Fair	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improved</b>	
Disclosure	Excellent	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
Custody time limits	Good	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
Delivering change	Excellent	<b>Good</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
Managing resources	Good	<b>Good</b>	<b>Stable</b>	
Managing performance to improve	Good	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Declined</b>	
Securing community confidence	Fair	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improved</b>	
<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>	Good	<b>GOOD</b>		

Some aspects have been categorised as critical; this is due to the significant impact that these aspects have on the overall performance of a CPS Area and the service it delivers to the public.

CPS Cleveland overall has maintained its good performance rating since the last OPA in 2005. There has been improvement in three aspects and four remained stable. However, there has been fall-off in six aspects.

<sup>1</sup> Although the assessment for this aspect remains unchanged there has been a significant improvement within the range of performance covered by the band.

Overall, the proportion of convictions in magistrates' court cases has improved and in 2006-07 the Area had a higher number of successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts than national performance although performance in the Crown Court declined and was worse than national performance. The conviction rate in sensitive cases and hate crime cases has improved and these cases are well handled.

The quality of prosecutor's decision making at the pre-charge stage is generally sound and although the statutory charging scheme (under which the CPS has now assumed from the police the responsibility for the initial decision whether to prosecute in the more serious and contested cases) is now well embedded in the Area, not all the expected benefits are being realised, with outcomes in Crown Court cases being worse than magistrates' court cases.

Inspectors found the quality of case preparation and decision making in the Area is generally good.

The proportion of effective trials (i.e. contested cases which proceed on the day fixed for trial) is better in the magistrates' courts than the Crown Court and there is scope to improve joint case progression systems in the Crown Court. The Area has demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving the service to victims and witnesses although the main reason for ineffective trials remains witness difficulties.

The Area's performance against the timeliness target for persistent young offenders (71 days from arrest to sentence) has declined since the last OPA, but remains within the national target.

There has been a noticeable decline in the Area's performance in relation to its duties of disclosure of unused material to the defence; the Area has identified this and action was being taken to address weaknesses.

The Area now has a sound community engagement strategy and Area staff have met with a wide range of community groups in order to improve public confidence.

Stephen Wooler CB, HM Chief Inspector of HMCPSP, said:

*"CPS Cleveland has maintained its overall good performance although some aspects have declined. I am confident CPS Cleveland has the capacity to build on its underlying strengths in order to improve those aspects which have declined"*

The inspectorate has visited all 42 CPS Areas over a six month period in order to provide a benchmark from which future work can be informed. This summative report sets out on a comparative basis the assessments for all 42 Areas. It uses the outcomes of these assessments to determine where best the CPS should focus its resources in order to promote improvement within the CPS and the criminal justice system as a whole. It is also hoped that the CPS Areas, and CPS HQ, will use this information to address issues at local and national level where this is necessary.

This press release should be read in conjunction with the report itself (which contains an integral summary).

## **Notes to Editors**

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI) was established as an independent statutory body by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000, on 1 October 2000. The Chief Inspector is appointed by, and reports to, the Attorney General.

The Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) report is based on assessments and judgements that have been made by HMCPPI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPPI assessments and by assessment under the criteria and indicators of good performance set out in the OPA framework. The exercise included visits to all 42 CPS Areas over a seven month period, between June and December 2007. Each Area is rated excellent, good, fair or poor.

The Inspectorate uses an assessment model which is designed to give pre-eminence to the ratings for 'critical' aspects of work as drivers for the final overall performance level. Assessments for the critical aspects are overlaid by ratings in relation to the other defining aspects, in order to arrive at the OPA. This assessment model is included in the framework and is available to all Areas.

This exercise is not a full inspection and differs from traditional inspection activity. While it is designed to set out comprehensively the positive aspects of performance and those requiring improvement, it intentionally avoids being a detailed analysis of the processes underpinning performance. However, it is designed to provide a benchmark from which future work can be informed. The Inspectorate will use this information to determine where best to focus its resources in order to promote improvement within the CPS and the criminal justice system as a whole. It is also hoped that the CPS Areas, and CPS HQ, will use this information to address issues at local and national level where this is necessary.

CPS Cleveland serves the area covered by the Cleveland Police. Its main office is based at Middlesbrough. In the year ended March 2007 the Area employed 102.1 full time equivalent staff, and handled 12187 cases before the magistrates' courts and 2093 in the Crown Court. It also gave advice to the police in 2319 cases which did not result in proceedings

This news release and the report in relation to CPS Cleveland are part of a block of 13 individual reports published today together with a summative report drawing together the common themes and presenting the assessment for all 42 Areas on a comparative basis.