

# Press Release

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Tuesday 16 March 2010



## Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

### CPS London Borough Performance Assessments

#### Ealing Borough

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published their performance assessment of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) London, Ealing borough. It should be read in conjunction with the London-wide report also published today.

This is one of a planned series of borough performance assessments of the units in CPS London.

The overall performance assessment of CPS London, Ealing borough was **FAIR**.

The table below provides a breakdown of the assessed level of performance against the ten aspects:

Aspect	Score	Assessment
Pre-charge advice and decisions	2	Fair
Decision-making, preparation and progression in magistrates' court cases	0	Poor
Decision-making, preparation and progression in Crown Court cases	0	Poor
The prosecution of cases at court	2	Fair
Serious violent and sexual offences, and hate crimes	2	Fair
Disclosure	2	Fair
Custody time limits	3	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	2	Fair
Managing performance to improve	3	Good
Managing resources	Not scored	
Management and partnership working	3	Good
<b>Overall assessment</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Fair</b>

Borough arrangements for dealing with pre-charge advice to the police are currently satisfactory, the overall quality of decision-making is variable.

The proportion of cases that resulted in a successful outcome (conviction) was 84% in the magistrates' court compared to 86.1% across CPS London and 87.1% nationally. In the Crown Court cases the successful outcome rate was 69.8%, compared to 72.7% across CPS London and 80.7% nationally.

In the majority of cases prosecutors endeavoured to assist the building of a stronger case by identifying where further evidence needed to be gathered or other steps taken.

Case preparation in the magistrates' court is poor with a failure to meet deadlines for the service of documents, particularly in respect of compliance with the prosecution's duty to disclose unused material and court directions. Cases are frequently prepared at the last minute and reasons for decisions and actions taken are not recorded properly. Although some serious and sensitive cases were well handled, many Crown Court cases also had aspects of poor case preparation, with little analysis of cases in the instructions to advocates.

Case presentation in the magistrates' court and the Crown Court was generally sound. There is a good awareness of the need to monitor custody time limits both in court and by administrators.

The overall service to victims and witnesses is fair and the number and quality of letters sent to victims is sound. Improvement is needed in some respects, particularly the timeliness of applications for special measures to assist vulnerable and/or intimidated witnesses. There is a failure by CPS representatives to engage with witnesses at the Crown Court mainly because of a lack of caseworkers.

Despite an increase in workload, there has recently been a significant reduction in the numbers and experience of staff. Nevertheless, managers have a solid grasp of what needs to be delivered and have worked to identify improvement and address issues with the resources they have available. They have been proactive in seeking to forge good relationships with other agencies. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated.

A number of recent system and process changes are showing some early benefits but will need more time to embed.

Stephen Wooler, HM Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, said:

**“The casework performance of CPS Ealing is a matter of concern even allowing for the difficulties presented by reduced staffing and the disruption caused by organisational change. The “fair” assessment indicates that the borough has the capacity to progress. There are encouraging signs of modest improvement which must be sustained. Staff and managers are supportive of each other with team spirit being good. However, the standard of case**

**preparation must be strengthened substantially if the unit is to deliver a satisfactory service to the courts and people of Ealing.”**

This press release should be read in conjunction with the executive summary which is attached.

For further information please contact Anisha Visram, HMCPSP's media contact, on 020 7210 1187/07901 856 348.

### **Notes to editors**

1. HMCPSP was established as an independent statutory body on 1 October 2000 by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000. The Chief Inspector is appointed by, and reports to, the Attorney General.
2. The pilot performance assessment of Croydon borough, published in May 2009, was the first of a planned series of performance assessments of the individual borough units in CPS London.
3. There are 33 geographical units based on London boroughs and the cities of London and Westminster. CPS London also has a dedicated traffic unit and a complex casework centre which handles serious and complex cases and those at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey). CPS London provides advice to police and charging decisions through a telephone service, CPS London Direct, or where a face-to-face meeting is needed through the local borough units. The units are gathered into six districts based on Crown Court centres.
4. The borough performance assessment (BPA) process provides a benchmark for the performance of the boroughs in ten key aspects of work, each of which is assessed as being Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. The unit is then assessed on its overall performance in the light of these markings. The process also evaluates the management of resources at borough level.
5. The scoring mechanism is described in annex C of the report. This provides some limiters that apply in addition to the total of points scored. This is because of the significant impact that some aspects will have on the delivery of the borough's core business, or because of the impact of a number of Poor aspects.
6. The performance assessment included examination of finalised case files; interviews with representatives of partner criminal justice agencies and the judiciary; discussions with borough staff; observations at the office; and observations at the magistrates' court and the Crown Court.

7. The findings from the borough performance assessments undertaken have been drawn together in a pan-CPS London report which addresses the significant issues that have emerged as the assessments have progressed in order to provide an overall picture of the performance of the area. The report has also been published today along with nine other boroughs and the report relating to the traffic unit.