



Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate report of the performance of CPS East of England

CPS East of England: Good performing area

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) has today published its report on the performance of CPS East of England Area, which comprises Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. Inspectors assessed the Area's performance as 'good' against all the inspection criteria.

The report found the Area has effective leadership, sound financial management, good community engagement and predominantly constructive working relationships with its criminal justice partners. There are also a number of other important factors which support its strong performance. These include staff with very high levels of commitment, and local defence practitioners and counsel who are prepared to work collaboratively with the CPS and other agencies to progress cases. These benefits are reflected in the high level of successful outcomes the Area achieves across the key aspects of its casework, which are supported by effective case progression at court.

Inspectors also reported that the area saw a smaller increase in its Crown Court caseload than found nationally and the case mix contains a smaller proportion of the more serious, and resource intensive, cases which can only be tried on indictment.

This follow up inspection, conducted in June 2012, found that:

- Over the three year period from 2009-10 to 2011-12 the East of England Area has continually improved its key outcomes, all of which are substantially better than the national average. Quarterly Performance Review meetings take place between unit and county managers and the Chief Crown Prosecutor and Area Business Manager;
- The Area has suffered fewer staff reductions than the national average over the last two years, and the changes in its caseload, together with its case mix, are more favourable.
- The Area has effective leadership, overall constructive working relationships with criminal justice partners, and a good approach to case progression which encourages guilty pleas, but above all a committed staff who are aware of what contributes to sound casework performance.
- In the last two years the Area has managed to work well within its allocated budget, and the average unit cost for each case is lower than found nationally.

However, the inspectors also found that:

- The majority of Area staff surveyed or interviewed did not believe that the individual performance appraisal system was working effectively or was worthwhile;
- The quality of the record of charging decisions and subsequent case reviews could be improved

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

"The inspection has rated the Area as 'Good' in each of the three aspects of the inspection framework, namely Governance, Casework Quality and Value for Money.

With such a good level of performance in CPS East of England, I wanted to see if there were specific factors contributing to this level of accomplishment, which could be shared across the CPS.

One such factor is high staff engagement and motivation. CPS East of England staff understand what they need to do to achieve successful outcomes, and managers are realistic about what needs to be improved. My inspectors also found a commitment by staff at all levels to do what is necessary to ensure work is progressed.

The Area's effective partnership working was another key factor. There was strong community engagement and constructive working relationships with criminal justice partners and with defence representatives.

This inspection shows that where there is an effective review and case analysis process, the overall efficiency and results are improved."

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Notes to editors

- 1 Media enquiries: please call 020 7271 2484/2465/2440
- 2 The full report is available at www.hmcpsi.gov.uk
- 3 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.
- 4 Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire became CPS East of England Area in April 2011
- 5 The inspection involved an examination of 220 finalised files, comprising 55 from each unit (including a small sample of cases where either an out of court disposal or no further action was directed). Inspectors examined a range of performance data and other material. Observations of the Daytime Direct charging process and case progression at court were also undertaken. The views of CPS staff, the judiciary, criminal justice partners, independent counsel, defence solicitors and community groups were sought either by questionnaire or interview.