

Press Notice

Embargoed until 00:01 14 March 2006



CPS Hampshire and Isle of Wight

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published its Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of CPS Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in fourteen aspects of work, five of which are categorised as critical. 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 Hampshire and Isle of Wight was **Good**.

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

Critical Aspects	Assessment
Pre-charge decision-making	Fair
Ensuring successful outcomes	Good
Leadership	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair
Managing resources	Good
Other Defining Aspects	
Managing magistrates' courts cases	Fair
Managing Crown Court cases	Fair
Handling sensitive cases and hate crimes	Good
Custody time limits	Fair
Disclosure	Good
Presenting and progressing cases at court	Fair
Delivering change	Good
Managing performance to improve	Fair
Securing community confidence	Good

The critical aspects are those which have a particularly significant impact on the overall performance of a CPS Area. They are weighted differently from the other aspects in determining the overall performance of an Area.

Case preparation and management is generally satisfactory, with reductions in the rate of ineffective trials (i.e. cases listed for a contested hearing which do not proceed on the day fixed but are postponed) resulting from better case progression.

Obstacles that have prevented realisation of the benefits expected from the CPS taking over pre-charge decision-making are being addressed. The Area has consistently performed better than the national average in avoiding unsuccessful outcomes, although there has been a decline in the last two years against a trend of improvement nationally. The Area is committed to providing a good service for victims and witnesses, although non-compliance with procedures for explaining decisions to victims is a concern.

The Area has been proactive in its delivery of change and has improved its capacity to implement change successfully. Generally, performance has improved, despite the demands associated with maintaining extensive statutory charging coverage. Managers are developing the skills and experience of their prosecutors to support the CPS vision to increase the level of in-house advocacy, and now need to monitor its quality more systematically to maintain high standards.

Stephen Wooler, HM Chief Inspector of the CPS, said:

“The Area has sought to progress initiatives aimed at improving the criminal justice system expeditiously, in order to begin reaping the benefits at the earliest appropriate opportunity. It has also been active in increasing the CPS influence through extending in-house advocacy, in line with national aspirations. The Area’s commitment to improvement is demonstrable in its efforts to embed performance management techniques. ”

The report is now available to journalists on an embargoed basis by visiting the Inspectorate’s website (www.hmcpai.gov.uk) which contains an embargoed section for the media. It may be accessed by using the following details:

- Username: MEDIA
- Password: OPAS2

For further information, please contact HMCPAI Communications Section, on 020 7210 1143. If the query relates to the CPS, contact Cate Sussex, Area Communications Officer, on 01983 538601.

Notes to Editors

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI) 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 judgments that have been made by HMCPISI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPISI 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 2005.

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 Hampshire and Isle of Wight serves the area covered by the Hampshire Constabulary. Its main office is based at Eastleigh. In the year ended March 2005 the Area employed 193.7 full time equivalent staff, and handled 51,428 cases, which included 11,194 (21.8%) where advice was given to the police before charge.

This press release and the report in relation to CPS Hampshire and Isle of Wight should be read in conjunction with HMCPISI's national press release and the summative report which provides an overall performance assessment in relation to all 42 CPS Areas. These are also available on HMCPISI's website in the embargoed sections. Twenty-two of the reports were published in December 2005 to avoid an unacceptably long lapse between assessment and publication. Those relating to the remaining twenty Areas are published today.