

Press Release

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HM CPSI overall performance assessment of CPS Humberside

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published the overall performance assessment (OPA) of CPS Humberside (the Area).

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in 13 key aspects of work, each of which 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 Humberside was Excellent.

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

CRITICAL ASPECTS	Assessment Level		
	OPA 2005	OPA 2007	Direction of Travel
Pre-charge decision-making	Excellent	Excellent	Stable
Ensuring successful outcomes in the magistrates' courts	Excellent	Good	Declined
Ensuring successful outcomes in the Crown Court	Good	Good	Stable
The service to victims and witnesses	Fair	Excellent	Improved
Leadership	Fair	Good	Improved
Overall Critical Assessment Level		GOOD	
Progressing cases at court	Good	Good	Stable
Sensitive cases and hate crime	Good	Excellent	Improved
Disclosure	Excellent	Good	Declined
Custody time limits	Good	Fair	Declined
Delivering change	Good	Good	Stable
Managing resources	Good	Good	Stable
Managing performance to improve	Good	Excellent	Improved
Securing community confidence	Good	Good	Stable
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	

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

CPS Humberside continues to perform extremely well and maintains its overall rating as 'Excellent'. Four of the aspects assessed have an improved rating compared to the last OPA whereas three others have declined. This is a positive outcome, particularly as two of the improvements are in critical aspects and two of those in which performance has declined are nevertheless still good. We have seen evidence of recent or planned actions that should enable even further improvement in the future.

Performance against internal CPS targets is very encouraging in Humberside and most outcomes are among the best of the 42 Areas and are continuing to improve. There is a strong performance culture, and managers have access to comprehensive information which is used to drive up performance where necessary.

There is scope to improve results in respect of some multi-agency targets, such as public confidence in bringing offenders to justice, effective trial rates and the timeliness of dealing with persistent young offenders.

There are good working relationships between the agencies, enabling initiatives to be implemented in a timely and efficient manner. There is strong leadership in the Area and priorities are identified and understood by staff. The service provided to victims and witnesses has improved considerably since the last OPA. Pre-charge¹ decision-making continues to progress well and performance against the anticipated benefits targets is excellent. Sensitive cases, particularly those involving domestic violence, are handled very well. The deployment of Higher Court Advocates in the Crown Court has increased significantly.

There is a need to improve the management of custody time limits in complex cases involving multiple defendants and/or offences. There is also a need to improve the preparation of committals to the Crown Court in Hull.

Stephen Wooler CB, HM Chief Inspector, said:

"This is a very encouraging report and maintains the position of Humberside as one of the most effective Areas in the CPS. It is particularly pleasing to see the good case results combined with the improvement in the service provided to victims and witnesses. It has also been effective in taking forward the Service's national priorities including the Area's advocacy strategy and provision of pre-charge decisions."

The Inspectorate is visiting all 42 CPS Areas over a six month period in order to provide a benchmark from which future work can be informed. A summative report will be published in early 2008 which will set out on a comparative basis the assessments for all the Areas. The outcomes of these assessments will be used to determine where best to focus Inspectorate resources in order to promote improvement within the CPS and the criminal justice system as a whole. It is also hoped that the Areas, and CPS Headquarters, will use this information to address issues at local and national level where this is necessary.

¹ A statutory scheme under which the CPS has assumed responsibility for the initial decision whether to charge (previously a police responsibility) in all except minor cases.

This Press Release should be read in conjunction with the Report itself (which contains an integral summary).

For further information, please contact Andreas Harding, HMCPSI Communications Manager, on 020 7210 1143 or 07901 856 346.

Notes to Editors

- 1 HMCPSI 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 OPA report is based on judgements that have been made by HMCPSI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPSI findings and by measurement under the criteria and indicators of good performance set out in the OPA framework. The exercise will include visits to all 42 CPS Areas over a six month period, between June-December 2007. Each Area is rated 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Fair' or 'Poor'.
- 3 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 ones, in order to arrive at the OPA. This assessment model is included in the framework and is available to all Areas.
- 4 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.
- 5 CPS Humberside serves the area covered by the Humberside Police. Its main office is based at Hull. In the year ended March 2007 it employed 110.9 full-time equivalent staff, and handled 14,906 cases before the magistrates' courts and 2,455 in the Crown Court. Advice was also given to the police in 2,215 cases which did not result in proceedings.
- 6 This Press Release and the Report in relation to CPS Humberside are part of a block of 12 reports published today. HMCPSI will publish three further tranches of reports covering the remaining 30 Areas.