



Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Inspection of CPS Mersey-Cheshire

Decision-making needs to improve

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI) has today published its report on the inspection of CPS Mersey-Cheshire.

HM Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller QPM, said:

"Achieving consistently good standards of casework across the new enhanced Area must be a priority for senior managers. Some of the structural changes that the Area has made are beginning to address some of the issues we identified, but there is room for significant improvement in the quality of casework and decision-making. Improving quality assurance systems and improving performance outcomes will allow the Area to build on some of the innovative work that they are doing with criminal justice partners. I am confident that the recent structural changes that have been implemented provide a good platform for the Area to build on, as long as senior managers are able to win the hearts and minds of all staff in the combined Area."

Summary of main inspection findings:

- The quality of work for the most serious cases dealt with by the complex casework unit is of a high standard.
- The quality of decision-making and casework handling for volume crime types was very mixed. Pre-charge decision-making was particularly weak.
- Performance management structures and processes need to be enhanced. Standards and expectations must be set and applied consistently. Managers must be held to account for improving casework standards and quality outcomes.
- Recent structural changes have led to some improvement in case progression systems, but there is still some way to go.
- More work needs to be done to bring the two CPS Areas together in partnership with staff accepting that this will lead to improved results and better outcomes.
- There were some good examples of victim care. The involvement of the Merseyside CPS in the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre and partnership work with the police on the handling of rape cases is producing good outcomes for users.

For any queries or interviews please call Anisha Visram on 020 7210 1187 or mobile 07901 856 348.

Notes to editors

- 1 HMCPSI 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.
- 2 This inspection included detailed scrutiny of finalised case files and some current cases were observed at court. Inspectors considered a wide aspect of casework including decision-making and casework handling together with the systems, management and structured monitoring of performance which underpin good casework. The inspection team comprised legal and business management inspectors.
- 3 This is the first inspection report in which inspectors have specifically looked at the performance of a CPS Group, which comprises a number of Areas. This inspection considered both CPS Merseyside and CPS Cheshire as well as a set of Group functions. The inspection report sets out an assessment of performance against specific criteria and scores individual aspects of performance for both Group and Area functions.