

Press Notice

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CPS Inspectorate Overall Performance Assessment of CPS Cheshire

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published their Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of **CPS Cheshire**.

The OPA process provides a benchmark for each CPS Area's performance in fourteen key aspects of work. 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 Cheshire** was **Good**.

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

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

Some aspects have been categorised as critical, and these aspects are weighted differently to the other aspects in determining the overall performance of an Area. This is due to the significant impact that these aspects will have on the overall performance of a CPS Area.

2004-05 was a period of change for CPS Cheshire including at the Chief Crown Prosecutor level. During that period, CPS Cheshire has restructured and the Cheshire Constabulary are also undergoing organisational restructure. Despite these changes the management of the Area has remained effective and, through continuous monitoring and awareness of

performance, it has maintained a high standard in nearly all aspects of its work.

The Area has a corporate approach to business and senior managers are active in cross criminal justice initiatives. There is a sound approach to planning. At the time of our visit the Area had implemented the shadow charging scheme which was realising some of the anticipated benefits, although the initiative would benefit from the development of full implementation plans in the run up to the move to statutory charging planned for February 2006. The witness care units have been established under No Witness No Justice and the early signs are that they will not only improve the treatment of victims and witnesses but also contribute to better case outcomes.

Value for money underpins most of the decision-making in the Area and jointly with criminal justice partners. The Area is prudent when managing its finances enabling it to remain within budget for the last two years despite a reducing budget. The Area adds substantial value to the local criminal justice system by taking good quality decisions and for the most part efficient progression of its casework.

The inspectorate has visited all 42 CPS Areas over a six month period in order 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.

Stephen Wooler, Chief Inspector of the CPS, said:

“CPS Cheshire has continued to produce good results in its casework and offer a professional service. Performance has been maintained since the last inspection. The staff in the Area have worked hard to maintain their good results and the sound management processes which support casework delivery. The Area can now focus its attention on engaging more fully with the community and develop service improvements from a user perspective.”

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