

# Press Notice

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## CPS Inspectorate Overall Performance Assessment of CPS Durham

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

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 Durham** was **Good**.

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

<b>Critical Aspects</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Pre-charge decision-making	Good
Ensuring successful outcomes	Good
Leadership	Good
The service to victims and witnesses	Good
Resource management	Good
<b>Other Defining Aspects</b>	
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	Good
Delivering change	Good
Managing performance to improve	Fair
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.

CPS Durham has made significant progress following a fundamental review of its structure, procedures and managerial approach. Area performance has strengthened and this achievement is founded on an ethos of continuous improvement. Since our last inspection many of the systems and processes supporting casework have been significantly enhanced.

The Area has the capacity to manage and review the implementation of new initiatives. The Area's restructuring has included a move to co-location with the police in the south of the county. At the time of our visit a full shadow charging scheme had been introduced and the Area was on track to deliver statutory charging in August 2005; the shadow scheme has produced some good performance figures in both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. In addition, two witness care units had recently been established. The feedback from victims and witnesses has been very positive and suggests that the expected benefits are being realised.

Value for money underpins most decision-making in the Area and jointly with criminal justice partners. The Area contributes substantially to the smooth running of the local criminal justice system by taking good quality decisions, and, for the most part, progressing casework efficiently.

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:

**“It is pleasing to see that CPS Durham has made considerable progress since our last inspection and has improved its performance across a wide range of its business. It now has a firm foundation to move forward and to drive through further improvements in some of its casework outcomes”**

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