

# Press Notice

Embargoed until 00:01 14 March 2006



## CPS Surrey

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HM CPSI) has today published its Overall Performance Assessment (OPA) of CPS Surrey.

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 Surrey was **Fair**.

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

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

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.

CPS Surrey has worked well with local criminal justice system partners to meet joint public service agreement targets. Casework outcomes have been encouraging and are for the most part in line with or better than national averages.

The Area has struggled to balance the requirement to implement change with the need to improve levels of performance, whilst at the same time operating within its allocated budget. The quality of casework needs attention across a wide range of aspects. Although casework outcomes have remained satisfactory, case preparation, compliance with the prosecution duty of disclosure, the management of custody time limits and the handling of sensitive cases, all require greater consistency and improvement, particularly with regard to magistrates' courts cases.

There is a need to improve the operation of the pre-charge advice scheme in order to realise the anticipated benefits. Similarly, the witness care unit had yet to meet the expected standards and improvements are required in relation to the Area's commitment to communicate with victims in cases where charges are materially altered or dropped.

Some progress has been made in recent months in developing management systems and managers are beginning to address some of the bigger issues in a more robust manner.

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

**“CPS Surrey has gone through a difficult period although changes have taken place recently that offer hope for greater optimism about the future. However, there is still much to do to bring the standard of casework and management to a good standard.”**

The report is now available to journalists on an embargoed basis by visiting the Inspectorate's website ([www.hmcpsi.gov.uk](http://www.hmcpsi.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 HMCPSI Communications Section, on 020 7210 1143. If the query relates to the CPS, contact Martyn Wray, Area Business Manager, on 01483 468206.

## **Notes to Editors**

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI) 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 HMCPPI using a combination of absolute and comparative assessments of performance. These came from national data, CPS self-assessment, HMCPPI 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 Surrey serves the area covered by the Surrey Constabulary. Its main office is based at Guildford. In the year ended March 2005 the Area employed 62.2 full time equivalent staff, and handled 15,538 cases, which included 3,239 (20.8%) where advice was given to the police before charge.

This press release and the report in relation to CPS Surrey should be read in conjunction with HMCPPI'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 HMCPPI'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.