

**Press Notice**

**Embargoed until 00:01 Thursday  
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**Report calls for improvement of police and CPS charging decisions**

A report which scrutinises how well the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) make decisions around charging suspects indicates that there has been improvement in how they both make charging decisions. Pre-charge bail is now better managed by the police, and the digital transfer of information has speeded up some parts of the process.

Inspectors found that there was now a renewed emphasis at a senior level in both organisations to make the process work better.

The Joint Inspection report, the Provision of Charging Decisions, by inspectors at Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) closely scrutinises how the police and CPS are performing and how well they ensure quality charging in all offences.

The inspectors identified a number of areas where the quality of police and CPS charging decisions needed to improve and made 10 recommendations, designed to help both organisations progress their performance in charging decisions.

The report also found that police officers have, in some cases, to wait too long for CPS charging decisions, either via phone with CPS Direct, or when seeking written advice.

CPS Direct is in the process of implementing a digital charging process, which enables officers to go back on the beat, rather than have to wait in police stations for the charging decision. The success of this will, however, also depend on the quality of the files the police send. Inadequate files will require more work and lead to delays.

Although inspectors found that some police forces were investing in training up their decision makers, the report calls for better training for all police decision-makers. They need to be clear on their roles and remit especially in instances of domestic abuse where inspectors found examples of cases being sent to the CPS when the police should be taking the decision and vice-versa

HMCPPI Chief Inspector Kevin McGinty, said:

“The quality of both police and CPS charging decisions has improved somewhat since the last report in 2008, for example pre-charge bail is now better managed by police and the digital transfer of information has speeded up parts of the charging process. However, this report has thrown up a number of inconsistencies.

“Charging responsibility is a vital arm of the criminal justice system and I know that both organisations acknowledge the need to look closely at their training and processes to ensure there is a significant improvement in the way charging decisions are made.”

The full report is attached and further information about HMCPPI and the other Criminal Justice Inspectorates can be found at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/)

HMI Drusilla Sharpling said:

“We are pleased to see that the police service has made improvements in some important areas, however there are a number of these which need to be addressed. We were concerned to find that there was inconsistency across police forces in charging decisions, in particular when domestic abuse cases should be referred to the CPS.

We have recommended that police forces ensure there are sufficiently trained decision makers to make high-quality decisions in accordance with national guidance.”

This report was completed under the previous Chief Inspector, Michael Fuller. Publication was delayed due to the pre-election prohibition period.

**Ends**