

Business Plan

2018-19

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Contents

Foreword	2
1 Introduction	4
Who we are.....	4
Our purpose.....	4
Strategic objectives.....	5
Our Values.....	5
2 Our programme	6
3 Planned inspections	7
Area Assurance Programme.....	7
Central Casework Divisions.....	7
Serious Fraud Office.....	8
Thematic inspections.....	8
Joint inspections.....	9
Short notice inspections.....	9
4 HMCPST internal work programme 2018-19	10
Inspection strategy development work.....	10
5 HMCPST supporting processes	11
Resources.....	11
Managing risk.....	12
The Equality Act 2010.....	12
Annex A: HMCPST’s policy on inspection	13
Annex B: Organisation chart as at April 2018	14

Foreword

The statutory remit of the Inspectorate is to report to the Attorney General on the operation of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). On taking up my appointment I was concerned that the inspections that had been undertaken in recent years did not fulfil this remit for the CPS as a whole.

My aim, therefore, was to have inspected all the CPS Areas, as well as some (if not all) of the Central Casework Divisions by the end of this business year. We are on track to achieve this aim which will provide assurance for CPS performance overall and will act as a benchmark for future work.

HMCSI agreed to make a saving of 15% in our budget over four years in the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review. Satisfying our remit on a significantly reduced budget continues to be challenging. However we are maintaining the number of inspections carried out by developing more efficient ways of inspecting. The Area Assurance Programme (AAP) provides us with a more efficient way of inspecting Areas. It began in 2016-17 and since then all CPS Areas except London have been inspected. The London Areas are somewhat different to the rest of the Service and underwent a significant restructuring exercise in 2017, splitting CPS London into CPS London North and CPS London South, so were left to the end of the programme. We will begin 2018-19 by inspecting these two Areas followed by inspections of the Central Casework Divisions later in the year.

Achieving my aim of inspecting the whole of the CPS in a relatively short space of time will take up much of HMCSI's resource for this year but we will undertake some thematic inspections. Apart from the value of the findings regarding the topics inspected, it means that we will still have an overview of the Areas' performance, albeit in specific aspects of their work.

As well as the CPS, the statutory remit of HMCSI includes the SFO. They are very different prosecuting agencies requiring different approaches to inspection. This year we will undertake an inspection of the SFO based on case progression, but I want to work closely with the SFO and others to develop a strategy for inspection to ensure we can fulfil our remit for both organisations.

I remain committed to working with the other criminal justice inspectorates as much as possible, since looking at complete processes often adds more value than concentrating on a particular part of the process carried out by a single agency. However we are the smallest criminal justice inspectorate and our natural partner in joint inspections is Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the largest of the criminal justice inspectorates. In 2017-18, we trialled a new modular way of working with HMICFRS to enable us to overcome the issues caused by the difference in our resources. This was successful and we will continue to use this method to increase the number of joint inspections we are able to undertake.

I will continue to engage with stakeholders and gather feedback. I will try to accommodate requests to examine aspects of CPS performance, if appropriate. Some resilience has been built into the plan to respond to short notice requests.

Although fewer in number than last year, the inspections planned for 2018-19 will be more complex than the relatively straightforward AAP inspections. The Central Casework Divisions are very different from a CPS Area, the usual focus of HMCPST inspections. Consequently it will be a challenge to carry out inspections that are of value and produce reports that are useful to the CPS, SFO, Law Officers and others that hold the CPS and SFO to account. Achieving this with a further reduced budget will be the measure of our success in 2018-19.



Kevin McGinty CBE
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

1 Introduction

Who we are

Her Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPST) is an independent inspectorate. The statutory remit of HMCPST is to inspect the operation of the CPS and the SFO, to submit an annual report on the operation of these organisations to the Attorney General and to undertake any inspection requested by the Attorney General, as set out in Section 2 of the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000 and amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. We also inspect other prosecuting services by invitation. We are committed to the ten principles of public inspection, which can be found in annex A.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to fulfil our statutory function to inspect the operation of the CPS and SFO and produce evidence based assessments of their performance that promote improvement and allow others to hold these organisations to account. HMCPST also has a statutory duty to collaborate with other inspectorates to the benefit of the criminal justice system.

Our inspections examine aspects of casework quality, public confidence, governance and value for money, with the results published in our reports. Inspection activity looks for efficiency savings whilst ensuring that a quality service is maintained. There is also an important role for the Inspectorate in identifying good practice found during inspections. In this way HMCPST adds value.

Strategic objectives

- To deliver high quality, evidence based assessments on the CPS and SFO to inform them and those who hold them to account.
- To work collaboratively with other inspectorates and develop effective working relationships in order to achieve the first objective.
- To promote HMCPPI to targeted stakeholder and media audiences to widen and maintain the interest in the work of the Inspectorate.
- To deliver reports to our target audience which are understandable and convey the message effectively.
- To recruit and develop the best people so HMCPPI has a high performing workforce with the right skills and values for the job.
- To run an efficient and effective organisation that meets the best standards of a government department in order to provide value for money.

Our Values

- **Integrity:** Act professionally to build confidence and trust.
- **Respect:** Treat others as you would expect to be treated.
- **Transparency:** Be open and honest in all dealings with colleagues.
- **Equality:** Value the diversity of our colleagues and provide equal opportunities for development of skills and capabilities.

2 Our programme

This plan provides details of the key inspections that HMCSI will carry out between April 2018 and March 2019. To develop the plan for 2018-19, we sought feedback from our stakeholders. Consultation on a list of potential inspection topics took place during January 2018. Although independent, we give weight to the views of our stakeholders and incorporate, as far as possible, those issues which we consider most in need of addressing when planning our programme.

Our purpose is to provide evidence by which others can hold the organisations we inspect to account. The difficulty has always been how to provide comprehensive assurance on the performance of the CPS as a whole. In addition, in common with most government departments, savings had to be found and HMCSI is subject to a 15% reduction in its budget over the period of the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review. Consequently, we reviewed our approach to inspection and developed the Area Assurance Programme, aligning the framework to the CPS national priorities and 2020 vision as far as is practicable. So far, all the CPS Areas apart from London have undergone AAP inspections. Following the recent major restructure, London North and London South will be inspected early in 2018-19 to complete the AAP.

Completing the AAP will mean that all the CPS Areas have been inspected but my aim was to give a comprehensive report to the Attorney General on the performance of the CPS. We will therefore be examining the Central Casework Divisions this year.

We continue to be committed to undertaking joint inspections with other criminal justice inspectorates on those topics which benefit from a cross-agency approach. Details of joint inspections in which HMCSI are involved can be found in this plan but Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (CJJI) produces its own business plan¹ which includes information on all joint inspections.

In keeping with the theme of focussing on the handling of the most serious crime in the Central Casework Divisions in 2018-19, and to satisfy our statutory remit, we will inspect aspects of the SFO.

¹ *Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Business Plan 2018-19*; CJJI; September 2018.
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/cjji-business-plan-2018-19/

3 Planned inspections

Area Assurance Programme

In the past, HMCPST has used a number of approaches to provide assurance as to the performance of the CPS. This has included a rolling programme of Area inspections, Overall Performance Assessments (OPAs), Area Effectiveness Inspections (AEIs) and an Annual Casework Examination Programme (ACEP). Each had benefits and drawbacks, usually in terms of the resources required, the burden on CPS Areas, the depth and breadth of information it gave us regarding CPS performance, and the degree to which risk was used to determine inspection activity. The latest development in these approaches is the Area Assurance Programme. We will carry out AAP inspections in London North and London South in order to complete the programme. All the CPS Areas would then have been inspected in just over two years, enabling us to provide a comprehensive assessment of CPS Area performance over this time.

The AAP was very intensive, both for the CPS and HMCPST. We will therefore not be undertaking any further Area inspections in 2018-19 once the London inspections are complete. There will be work carried out to evaluate the AAPs to enable us to improve methodology for future Area inspections.

Central Casework Divisions

To provide assurance on the performance of the CPS overall, we are looking outside the Areas this year and inspecting two of the Central Casework Divisions – International Justice and Organised Crime, and Special Crime and Counter Terrorism – and will be concentrating on their governance. The third Division, Specialist Fraud, is undergoing significant change so will be inspected once the changes are embedded, which will probably be in 2019-20.

Serious Fraud Office

Inspection work in the SFO this year will concentrate on case progression. We will work with the SFO in the third quarter of 2018-19 to determine the scope of the inspection. Once this is determined, the inspection will take place in the fourth quarter.

Thematic inspections

Although specific Area inspections will not be carried out this year (apart from the London AAPs), we will still evaluate CPS performance in the Areas in the form of thematic inspections. These will include:

i Victim Liaison Units

The quality of communications with victims, for which the Victim Liaison Units (VLUs) are responsible, has been an issue for concern raised in many of the AAP reports. The inspection will look specifically at the value added by the VLUs to the process delivering the CPS obligation to provide timely and good quality letters; if the VLUs contribute to the effective and efficient delivery of good quality local resolution responses to Victims' Right to Review (VRR) queries; and if the units are a key driver in providing timely, effective and good quality responses to complaints.

ii CPS handling of correspondence

How the CPS handles correspondence is considered an integral part of file examination during HMCSI inspections. Efficient and effective handling of correspondence should contribute to a reduction in the number of unnecessary court hearings and an improved service to victims and witnesses. Feedback from stakeholders suggested that the topic would benefit from a thematic review. The inspection will assess how effectively the CPS handles

correspondence, focussing on the effectiveness of the systems in place; the timeliness and quality of responses; and the effectiveness of compliance work and management oversight.

Other topics will be scoped during the year for inspection work in 2018-19 or 2019-20.

Joint inspections

The CJI Joint Business Plan 2018-19 contains full details of the proposed joint inspection programme for this year. HMCPST will undertake inspections of evidence led prosecutions of domestic abuse (which we will lead) and crimes against older people. Both inspections will be undertaken jointly with HMICFRS.

Short notice inspections

As has happened in previous years, HMCPST may be asked to undertake short notice inspections. By their very nature it is difficult to plan for these ad hoc requests so there is flexibility in the 2018-19 programme and we will continue to try to ensure we can assist with requests, as far as available resources allow.

4 HMCPST internal work programme 2018-19

Inspection strategy development work

Considerable work takes place within HMCPST to support the planned inspections for the current year and to develop our future inspection programmes. It is also important that findings from inspections are incorporated into our methodology for use in determining future strategy.

In the past, HMCPST has planned inspection programmes year by year. I want the future approach of HMCPST to inspection planning to be much more strategic. In 2016 I introduced a partial strategy with the aim of examining the whole of the CPS over three business years, which I will have achieved, but the strategy did not include thematic or joint inspections and did not cover the SFO at all. My priority for 2018-19 therefore will be to develop a full inspection strategy to cover at least three years and which will fully satisfy the statutory remit of HMCPST.

Other objectives for the HMCPST development team in 2018-19 are:

- Maintenance and development of HMCPST's risk model.
- Integration of information from the AAP inspections into the risk model and inspection strategy.

5 HMCPST supporting processes

Resources

The costs of HMCPST are met from the Estimate of the Government Legal Department (GLD).

Financial year	Budget (£)	Reduction from previous year	Reduction from 2013-14
2013-14	3,146,000	–	–
2014-15	2,950,000	6.2%	6.2%
2015-16	2,950,000	0%	6.2%
2016-17	2,765,000	6.3%	12.1%
2017-18	2,683,000	3.0%	14.7%

In the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2015, HMCPST agreed to reduce its budget by 15% over four years. As a result the budget for 2018-19 is now set at £2,532,000 (a reduction of 5.6% since last year and 19.5% since 2013-14). It will be deployed as follows:

Staff costs	£1,957,205
Accommodation	£241,045
Publications (including website)	£40,000
Travel and subsistence	£100,000
Other costs	£193,750
Full year budget	£2,532,000

Managing risk

It is important to have a robust risk management process in place as it provides a framework for anticipating potential problems and allows them to be dealt with in a systematic way. HMCPST manages its internal risks in line with the approach commonly adopted in the public sector.

The Inspectorate Executive Board undertook a major re-assessment of risk in 2015 which informed the risk register. A full review will be carried out in 2018-19.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Objectives for HMCPST ensure that we meet our General Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The first objectives were set in 2011-12. Progress on the objectives will continue to be reviewed regularly and the action plan will be refreshed for implementing the updated objectives.

Annex A: HMCPST's policy on inspection

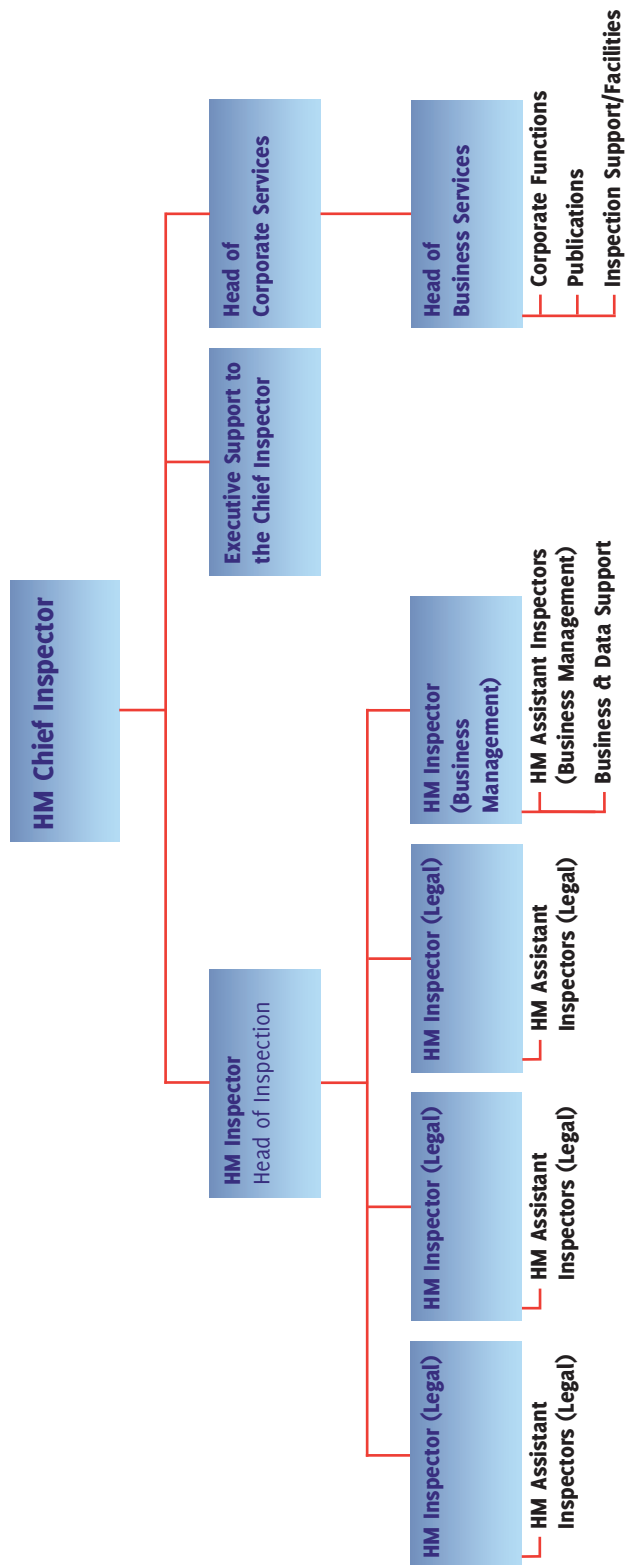
In 2003 the Government introduced ten principles of public sector inspection which were included in the Office of Public Service Reform's report *Inspecting for improvement*. These place clear requirements on inspection providers and the departments sponsoring them. HMCPST is fully committed to upholding these values and expectations and takes them into account in our strategy and planning programme.

The ten principles state that public service inspection should:

- pursue the purpose of improvement;
- focus on outcomes;
- take a user perspective;
- be proportionate to risk;
- encourage self-assessment by managers;
- use impartial evidence wherever possible;
- disclose the criteria used for judgements;
- be open about the processes involved;
- have regard to value for money including that of the inspecting body; and
- continually learn from experience.

We continually seek feedback on our reports and the interviews undertaken with staff of inspected bodies. We track the implementation of the recommendations we make and are conscious of the need to keep the burden of work on the inspected organisations to a minimum. The form of our inspections and practices are kept under regular review.

Annex B: Organisation chart as at April 2018



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