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**Scoping Document – Induction Inspection 2022/23**

1. **Introduction**

In 2020, the CPS set itself a target to recruit nearly 400 new prosecutors by the end of June 2020[[1]](#footnote-2). Within a few weeks, the global COVID-19 pandemic started and forced the CPS and other government agencies to quickly adapt to new ways of working. This new ways of working also impacted induction, which had to take place digitally.

For the past three years, newly recruited legal staff will have spent a significant time working remotely, perhaps unable to meet managers or colleagues face to face, which would also potentially prevent learning by osmosis. This will have presented both managers and new starters with challenges in how new legal staff are inducted and integrated in the Area. This was a concern also fed back to us from Areas during the Area inspection programme (AIP).

We are aware from the AIP and our ‘CPS response to COVID-19: dealing with backlog’[[2]](#footnote-3) inspection that the increase in backlogs has resulted in additional pressure on resources. Early in the pandemic, the CPS decided to continue its recruitment strategy to appoint new prosecutors. Given the move to virtual working and the extra pressures brought about by the crisis, a programme of induction and training was developed nationally for local delivery. However, we were told by Areas during the AIP that to deal with backlogs, the staff move between teams had to be accelerated, to ensure there are enough resources to address backlogs. We were also told that while there are long-term gains from recruiting new staff, in short term there are added pressures on existing staff to induct, train and mentor these new starters. These factors, together with the remote training, may have resulted in some training gaps for some of the legal staff.

At the same time, our document examination during the AIP indicated the presence of some good local practices aiming to assist induction and continuous training. Amongst others, some of these practices included bespoke training plans, local training and induction evaluation, assigning legal managers to specifically assist with induction. These if explored further can provide a valuable learning that other Areas can use to further improve their legal induction.

Some of the Areas inspected during the AIP reported that during the pandemic some members of staff have reassessed their priorities, and this resulted in some staff choosing to retire earlier than expected. The age profile is a risk with some Areas reporting 30% or more of staff over the age of 55. Therefore, ensuring that quality legal induction that builds quickly the necessary experience is crucial.

As we and fellow inspectorates recently reported[[3]](#footnote-4), the criminal justice system has yet to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and this recovery will take a significant amount of time. We will reflect the context of the pandemic in the way we plan and carry out our work, so as to reduce the burden of the inspection on the CPS and other criminal justice agencies, and in understanding and reporting on our findings.

It is recognised that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt in the criminal justice system for some time and as such methods of working that may have appeared to be temporary at the beginning of the pandemic have developed and are now the “new normal”. Whilst staff are returning to office working, it is unlikely that this will be to the same extent as pre-pandemic and a method of hybrid working (where some days are spent in an office environment and others working from home) is more commonplace. Such ways of working present continued challenges to the induction process of new starters, to ensure that they receive the necessary training and continued support by managers and mentors to enable them to work effectively and deliver the aims and objectives of the CPS.

1. **Inspection Question**

How effective is the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) legal induction process in equipping new legal staff to successfully deliver the aims and objectives of the service?

**Objective**

The assess the effectiveness of the legal induction process, particularly in light of new ways of hybrid working brought about from the pandemic and during the period of recovery, which is on-going.

We will be assessing how effective new starters found the 12-week core induction programme in preparing them for starting a career with the CPS. We will not be assessing the full course material itself but considering how useful and accessible those on the programme found it. We will be assessing local practice and support provided to new starters beyond the 12-week core programme. We will be assessing the support provided to those managing new starters to enable them to provide an effective induction to those they manage.

We will identify areas of good practice and make recommendations where further work may be required.

It is proposed that the inspection focuses on new legal staff that have joined the CPS within the past year. Should there not be a large enough sample of new starters, we would extend this to those that have joined within the past 18 months - two years. The impact of the pandemic will naturally form part of the inspection given the need to assess how legal staff have been supported through the period. This will enable a focus on the recovery and new ways of working which are likely to be a feature within the criminal justice system on an on-going basis. This will enable recommendations and identification of good practice to be focused and relevant to the on-going and future ways of working.

1. **Inspection Criteria**

The aim of the inspection is to answer the following questions:

1. What is the national induction strategy, guidance, and what central support is provided to the Areas?
2. What local training and initiatives are in place beyond the 12-week core induction programme to support legal induction?
3. What support was received by the legal managers responsible for inducting the new starters?
4. How was the legal induction assessed to ensure the new starters are successfully developing their casework understanding to fully deliver on their responsibilities?
5. **Methodology**

It is recognised and was raised within initial discussions with ABMs in developing the scope, that there may be some difficulty in obtaining data that would be able to be used to form judgments. The 12-week national induction programme should be consistent across the CPS, as well as compliance with induction checklists and probation reviews. Surveys, interviews and document reads will provide evidence of compliance in this regard. However, the method, level and quality of individual continued induction is likely to vary between individual managers, including managers within the same Areas and even within the same teams. To that extent, the inspection is likely to focus on identifying areas of individual good practice rather than findings based on quantitative data.

Surveys

It is proposed that surveys are sent to all new legal staff (who joined the CPS within the past year) and their line managers at the time of their induction across all CPS Areas.

The survey to new starters would consist of questions about how the induction was carried out (i.e., online, in the office or hybrid), whether key aspects of the induction were completed and identification of things that worked well and things that could be improved.

The survey to managers would focus on the support provided to them to ensure effective induction of the new starters they were managing.

The survey results would provide some data relating to induction/probation processes and may identify areas of good practice or issues that could be explored further.

Whilst our interviews will largely take place with CPS colleagues in the three agreed Areas for on-site work, we may wish to speak further with individuals completing the surveys for further detail and/or clarification where specific issues are identified within the survey results.

Interviews

The on-site phase would include interviews with:

* New starters (within the past year) who have been inducted or are in the induction process
* Managers who have been or are involved in the inducting of new starters
* Mentors/coaches of new starters.

These may be individual interviews or focus groups.

Interviews would also include HR managers, Learning Development managers and Area Business Managers where appropriate.

Nationally, it is proposed that interviews are conducted with Headquarter HR advisors and/or HR staff that are responsible for exit interviews.

Exit interviews

If possible, the inspection would look at the exit interviews of new starters (started and left within the past two years) who left the CPS within 12 months of starting. It appears that some data is held centrally as to those that have left the CPS, but more detailed exit interviews may only be held by Area.

1. **Document request from the offices/ Areas and Division selected for the on-site visit.**

* The most recent People Strategy that covers the period 2022 – 2023
* Any analysis and details of action taken following the latest People Survey results regarding Learning and Development
* For five new starters (individuals appointed within the last 12 months)
  + Training plans
  + No more than three examples of one to ones held during the first 12 months
  + No more than three examples of Individual quality assessment (IQA) assurance records
  + Initial probation assessment reports
  + Final probation assessment reports
  + Induction checklists
* Agenda and minutes for the last two training boards/Area training committee or similar meetings that were focused on the legal induction and continuous training
* Agenda and minutes from last two Casework Quality Board (CQB) meetings where induction and continuous training has been discussed.
* No more than three examples of where induction feedback has led to actions to improve the legal induction training/ process locally.
* Any documented process for mentors and coaches, with any expectation document
* Attendance with Purpose document
* Exit interviews of any new starters appointed post 2021 that left the CPS within 12 months of appointment (if held locally)

1. **Document request from CPS Headquarters**
   * Details of attendees of the central legal induction programme over the past 12 months, to include dates of attendance and dates of completion
   * Mentoring and coaching policies and details around set expectations for the Areas from Headquarters
   * Exit interviews, data from exit interviews and analysis for any new starters appointed post 2021 that left the CPS within 12 months of appointment (if held centrally)
   * No more than three examples of where induction feedback has led to actions to improve the central legal induction training/ process.
   * Attendance with Purpose document
2. **Information request from CPS Headquarters**
   * Details of all new legal starters from the past 12 months
   * Details of all line managers of the above, who managed the new starters at the time of their induction

Choice of Areas

It is anticipated that three Areas will be selected for the documents’ examination and on-site work; the proposed Areas are detailed below. However, if the initial surveys that are intended to be sent to new starters and their managers in all CPS Areas provide data or evidence where it is felt that a different Area would be better for on-site work, this may be subject to change.

* **CPS North East**
* **CPS West Midlands**
* **CPS Wessex**

1. **Proposed timescales**

* 27 April 2023 - Scope agreed and finalised with CPS
* 27 April 2023 - Completion of methodology work
* 2 May 2023 - Commissioning letters to Areas and Headquarters
* 2 May 2023 – Completion of development of surveys for new starters and their managers
* 19 May 2023 - Document read commences, to include the analysis of returned surveys
* 9 June 2023 - Document read and survey analysis complete
* Week commencing 12 June 2023 – pre-on-site emerging findings meeting (internal)
* 19 June 2023 – Interviews commence
* 7 July 2023 - Interviews completed and all evidence gathered
* 21 July 2023 - Emerging findings report completed
* 25 August 2023 - Report writing complete and quality assured
* October 2023 – Report published

1. **Resources required**

It is estimated that 3 to 4 inspectors would be required to complete the inspection within proposed timescales. It is estimated that there will be at least 300 documents to be read. Whilst potential Areas for the on-site phase have been detailed above, these may be subject to change if returned surveys identify particular issues or areas of good practice in a different Area that would assist the evidence gathering by holding focus groups or conducting interviews in that Area.

It is estimated that each Area visited in the on-site phase would be for a period of 1-2 days, with an estimated maximum of 6 days on-site (across the whole inspection). It is considered that 3 to 4 inspectors would be sufficient to carry out this work over a 2–3-week period.

1. **Any risk to the project**

* Nationally in the CPS, there has been a shift from local-led training to training being carried out remotely by the central operational and legal training teams and external providers. The Oracle platform is used to host and manage training, and, in the inspectorate, we do not have access to Oracle, which can lead to us potentially missing some vital training information. We will mitigate this by making requests for access to Oracle for the inspection team or if not possible, asking for Oracle reports for the inspected Areas.
* There is a risk that completion of the initial surveys will be limited and not provide enough data to enable findings and judgments to be made.
* There may be some concerns regarding confidentiality as the surveys will not be anonymous. To mitigate this risk, we will provide a clear explanation when the surveys are sent out to explain how the data will be used and that any use of the data will be anonymous/non-attributable.

1. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Screening template attached.

1. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-hire-hundreds-new-criminal-lawyers-across-england-and-wales> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/04/2021-03-05-COVID-pressures-accessible.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/inspections/the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-the-criminal-justice-system-a-progress-report/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)