

HMCPsi INSPECTION STRATEGY – April 2024 to March 2027

The purpose of HMCPsi is to inspect the CPS and SFO and produce an evidence-based assessment of their performance that promotes improvement and allows others to hold these organisations to account. To support this HMCPsi develops a series of principles to support an inspection strategy.

Victim engagement is critical to the criminal justice system and any inspections will include, as part of the scoping phase, consideration of impact on victims and gathering victim experience.

The following list sets out the types and frequency of inspection that we aim to undertake within the three-year period to enable HMCPsi to provide a level of assurance on the performance of the CPS and SFO.

- Undertake a cycle of inspection of CPS Areas to assess core delivery, casework quality and an assessment of the value added to the CJS by the CPS.
- To carry out at least one inspection of CPS HQ Divisions (SEOCID, SCCTD, POC) to assess core delivery, casework quality and an assessment of the value added to the CJS.
- To carry out at least one joint inspection with criminal justice partners in the three-year cycle. This is likely to be a thematic inspection.
- To carry out at least one single agency (CPS or SFO) thematic inspection each year.
- To undertake at least one significant inspection of the SFO annually.
- To deploy the powers to inspect court administration.¹

Inspections by invitation/request

We inspect other prosecuting agencies by invitation. We will continue to respond to requests for work outside our statutory remit in line with available resource and giving due consideration to the benefit of extending our competencies and abilities.

¹ * When HMICA was abolished in 2012, powers to inspect court administration were transferred to the remaining criminal justice inspectorates, but only to be used in conjunction with an inspection of that inspectorate's own agency. There is thus an expectation that the criminal justice inspectorates will use these powers to inspect the courts' administration

HMCPsi INSPECTION STRATEGY – April 2024 to March 2027

PURPOSE

The purpose of HMCPsi is to inspect the CPS and SFO and produce an evidence-based assessment of their performance that promotes improvement and allows others to hold these organisations to account.

It is **not** the purpose of HMCPsi to regulate the CPS or SFO.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To deliver high quality, evidence-based assessments of the CPS and SFO to inform them and those who hold them to account.
2. To work collaboratively with other inspectorates and develop effective working relationships with them in order to carry out inspections which address systemic problems in the criminal justice system as a whole.
3. To promote HMCPsi to targeted stakeholder and media audiences to widen and maintain the interest in the work of the inspectorate.
4. To deliver reports to our target audience(s) that are understandable and convey our message effectively.
5. To recruit and develop the most qualified people so HMCPsi has a high performing workforce with the right skills and values for the job.
6. To run an efficient and high functioning organisation that complies with the best standards of a government department and provides excellent value for money for the taxpayer.
7. To have process, policies and procedures that deliver an excellent inspection strategy.

Under the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000, HMCPsi has a statutory remit to inspect the CPS and, under an amendment in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the SFO.

HMCPsi also has a statutory remit to report to the Attorney General on any matter connected with the operation of the CPS or the SFO which they refer to the inspectorate.

The Act stipulates that a joint inspection programme with HMI Prisons, HMICFRS and HMI Probation must be prepared from time to time.

When HMICA was abolished in 2012, powers to inspect court administration were transferred to the remaining criminal justice inspectorates, but only to be used in conjunction with an inspection of that inspectorate's own agency. There is thus a ministerial expectation that the criminal justice inspectorates will use these powers to inspect the courts.

In the past, HMCPsi has been invited to inspect the Service Prosecuting Authority (SPA) and to work with the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland. In this three-year period we will be inspecting by invitation the quality of casework in the Service Prosecuting Authority. It is possible that HMCPsi could receive invitations from other prosecuting agencies for inspection.

In view of these responsibilities and in order to achieve our strategic objectives (in particular 1 and 2 above), HMCPsi resource will be allocated to inspections of the CPS, the SFO, joint inspection and other inspections by invitation/request.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Chief Inspector has invited senior representatives from the organisation's three major stakeholders (the CPS, the SFO and the AGO) to sit on a strategy board created to advise him on future inspection programmes.

Currently other stakeholders (both statutory and non-statutory) are consulted on the annual business plan, as stipulated in the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000. The strategy board is not intended to replace this consultation but is in addition to it. It will allow our major stakeholders more direct input into inspection programmes.

INVOLVING OTHERS IN INSPECTION

To extend the usefulness and value of inspection it is the intention that HMCPsi may from time to time and depending on the subject matter of the inspection involve experts or interested parties in the development and undertaking of inspection.

This Inspection strategy ensures that HMCPsi achieves its strategic objectives and satisfies its responsibilities under the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000.