

**CPS Response to HMCPsi Area Assurance Inspection of CPS
London South**
25/10/2018



Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPsi) has today 25 October 2018 issued a report following its inspection of the performance of CPS London South. The Area was assessed as follows:

Success of CPS People – Excellent
Continuously Improving – Good
Casework Quality – Fair
Public Confidence – Fair

Following an internal review in 2016–17, a decision was taken to split the single London operational Area into two: London North and London South. Inspectors found the staff felt that the new area works well and the movement to one single location was seamless. Senior managers in the Area are commended for their leadership, their culture of support and the work done to increase staff engagement. Senior manager's commitment to CPS values, fostering learning and development, and ensuring staff well-being and morale is also particularly commended.

The Area was found to have strong working relationships with its criminal justice partners, enabling progress to be made on longstanding issues around police file quality and disclosure.

Performance is regularly reviewed, data is shared and actions for improvement are identified and monitored. Staff leads have been appointed to champion key areas of performance and the use of posters to share that information was identified as good practice. Inspectors found that the Area had robust systems in place for monitoring its budget and ensuring financial probity.

The two London Areas have an effective joint strategy for community engagement with monthly reports provided to the Area Strategy Board on work undertaken with key community groups. Feedback from Local Scrutiny and Involvement Panels is used to improve casework outcomes, but more needs to be done to improve the timeliness and quality of communications to victims.

Although the Area has taken steps to improve casework quality (including through the robust use of IQA and extended use of case management panels), more needs to be done to ensure that all cases are reviewed in a timely manner and that cases are effectively progressed towards trial. The Area remains committed to working with the police to improve file quality.

Inspectorate's Issues to Address and CPS Area response (including joint issues for both London Areas)

1. The Area needs to ensure the members of staff based in Leicester feel they are an integral part of London South.

CPS response: Senior Managers will continue to make regular visits to the Leicester office to engage with staff to improve integration in the Area. These visits will be complemented by

monthly visits from HR Business Partners to provide support and guidance to managers and staff and to deal with issues as they arise.

2. The Area should ensure that the Operational Delivery profession benefit from regular formal team meetings to discuss specific matters related to their work.

CPS response: Meetings with Operational Delivery staff will take place at least once a month in every Unit. Dates will be published in advance and a summary of items discussed and any action to be taken will be circulated to staff after each meeting.

3. The Area needs to review the functions of the pan-London Business Centre and those of dedicated Area staff to identify any duplication.

CPS response (joint with CPS London North): Both ABMs will undertake a joint review of the roles of the staff in the pan-London Business Centre to ensure compliance with the national model.

4. The Area should continue to influence the police to improve the quality of police files by having an effective mechanism to hold the police to account, monitor file quality, share data and escalate issues

CPS response: (joint with CPS London North): File quality is a matter for the police. However, The Chief Crown Prosecutors will continue to work with senior managers to assist the police to deliver the commitments in the pan-London joint CPS/Police File Quality Improvement Plan.

5. The Area needs to ensure that cases are reviewed in accordance with Transforming Summary Justice timeliness to ensure that the Area can alert the police about file quality issues in a timely manner and ensure that there is effective progression at the first hearing.

CPS response: Requirements concerning the quality and timeliness of reviews will be reinforced by all legal managers. The NFQ process will continue to be used to monitor and report on police file quality. The use of IQAs will continue to be used to identify quality and timeliness issues that need addressing.

6. The importance of constructive defence engagement should be emphasised and clear instructions given that reviews must include engagement with the defence when details are known.

CPS response (joint with CPS London North): The CCP, DCCPs and legal managers will reiterate to prosecutors the importance of constructive defence engagement where details are known. This will be monitored through IQA. Barriers to effective engagement will be explored with the defence at regular liaison meetings and solutions identified.

7. The Area must ensure that quality reviews in Crown Court cases are undertaken in a timely manner, set out a clear case analysis and trial strategy, and facilitate effective grip.

CPS response (joint with CPS London North): Requirements concerning the quality and timeliness of Crown Court reviews will be reinforced by all legal managers. Compliance will be monitored through IQA and individual feedback provided. Any emerging themes will be escalated to the Area Casework Quality Committee.

8. The Area should ensure that the work to identify the letters that should be sent to victims, the number of letters and their actions drive measurable improvement in both

CPS response (joint with CPS London North): Managers will work with staff to improve timing, content and tone of letters sent to victims. They will continue to monitor compliance through regular dip sampling. In addition CPS has introduced a new national quality assurance scheme and the Area will ensure compliance. Feedback will be provided to individuals and emerging themes will be escalated to the Area Casework Quality Committee.