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Foreword



Home Secretary



Lord Chancellor



Attorney General



**President of the
Association of
Chief Police
Officers**

Bringing offenders to justice is the best way of demonstrating to criminals that their crimes will not go unpunished, and to victims that the criminal justice system is acting effectively on their behalf. But there is a justice gap. Only a fifth of crimes recorded by the police result in their perpetrator being brought to justice. We can and must do better.

This document describes some of the obstacles in bringing crimes to justice and what can be done to overcome them. We recommend that everyone who works in the criminal justice system and has a stake in narrowing the justice gap reads it, learns from it and acts on it.

What is the purpose of this document?

The justice gap – the difference between the number of crimes which are recorded and the number which result in their perpetrator being brought to justice – is the key measure of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, and a crucial indicator of success in reducing crime. This is why the Government has set a new target to bring 1.2 million offences to justice by 2005-06.

Every criminal justice agency has a complex set of priorities. Bringing more offences to justice is not the only vital task each agency must perform. The police, for example, have a key role to play in crime prevention. But narrowing the justice gap is at the heart of much of what the criminal justice system does, and will require a contribution from everyone who works in the CJS.

The purpose of this document is to:

- explain what the justice gap is and why it is important
- look at some of the reasons why cases fall out of the system
- describe what action is being taken nationally and what can be done locally to narrow the justice gap
- explain what steps we want CJS practitioners to take now to narrow the gap

Identifying the causes of the widening justice gap and ways of addressing them is a difficult and complex subject. This framework document is simply intended to be an introduction to narrowing the justice gap. As the chart overleaf demonstrates, this document is the first of four. The three companion documents give more detailed guidance on how to tackle weaknesses in the criminal justice process and on how to tackle persistent offending. All these documents will be issued in October 2002, and will set out clearly what needs to be done by when to start to deliver, and what support the Government will provide. On pages 23-24 we set out the key deadlines.

What is the purpose of this document?

Narrowing the Justice Gap documents

Narrowing the Justice Gap

1. Framework

**Tackling weaknesses in the
criminal justice process**

**2. Guidance on tackling weaknesses
in the criminal justice process**

Targeting types of offender

3. Guidance on tackling persistent offending

**4. Good practice guide for the Persistent
Offender Scheme**

See <http://www.cjsonline.org/njg>
for more details

This document has been produced for all CJS practitioners by the Justice Gap Task Force. The Task Force is the national steering group accountable for CJS wide performance in bringing more offences to justice. It is chaired by Moira Wallace, Director General of the Criminal Policy Group at the Home Office, and its members include Jim Barker-McCardle (Association of Chief Police Officers), Fionnuala Gill (Association of Police Authorities), Peter Lewis (Crown Prosecution Service), Kevin Sadler (Court Service), Ruth Allan (Youth Justice Board), Steve Limpinkin (National Probation Directorate) and Colin Harnett (Prison Service).

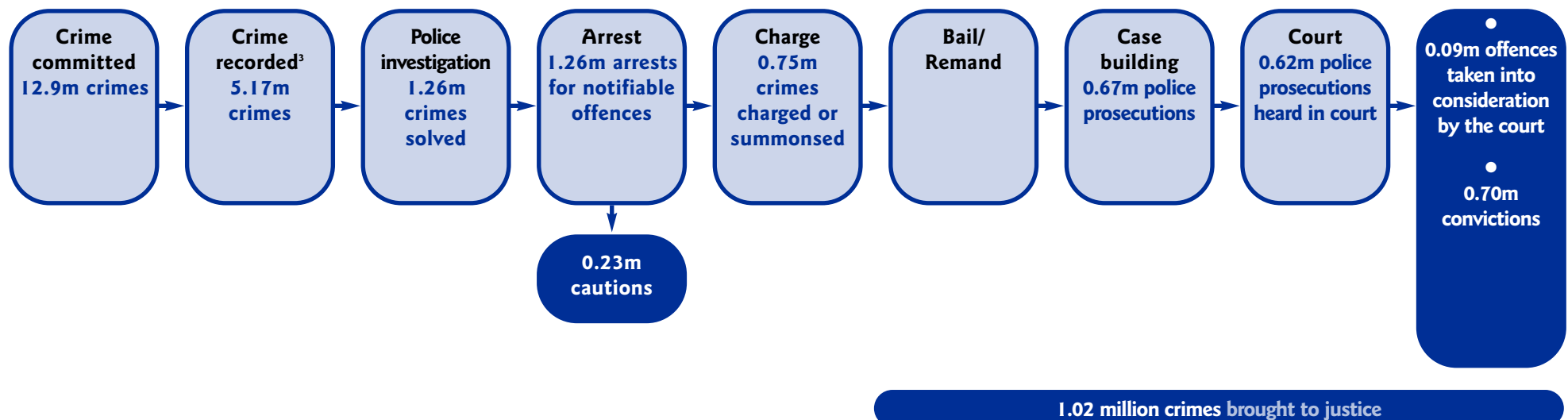
Finding out more

If you would like more information about any aspect of this document, or a copy of one of the companion documents, or if you would like to give feedback from your area about blockages to improvement or evidence of what works, please get in touch with the Justice Gap Action Team at jgatenquiry@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk, or write to Robert Ritchie, Head of the Justice Gap Action Team, at Room 366, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

What is the Justice Gap?

In 2000-2001, 5.17 million crimes were recorded, but only 19.8% of them resulted in an offender being brought to justice¹. This is the justice gap, the difference between the number of offences recorded and the number of offences for which an offender receives either a caution, a conviction or has the offence taken into consideration by the court. Between these two points, cases fall out of the system at every stage (this process is sometimes described as 'attrition').

Cases fall out of the system at every stage of the process. This diagram² draws a simplified version of how a case is taken through the system, from the crime being committed to the offender being brought to justice, and summarises the volumes involved at each stage³.



¹ **When is an offence brought to justice?** We describe an offence as having been brought to justice where an offender has been cautioned, convicted or had offences taken into consideration by the court. We only count notifiable offences (crimes which are recorded by the police). These exclude most summary offences. In the four pilot areas where Penalty Notices are being trialled, we will also count those issued for notifiable offences. We do not include offences where the police decide to take No Further Action, where the CPS decide not to proceed with a case, or where the defendant is acquitted.

² This diagram illustrates the volumes involved at each stage of the process. But not all the figures shown are directly comparable (for example, the figures for police prosecutions refer to number of cases, not offences, and may result in more than one conviction), and it does not reflect the total volume of the CJS's work (for example, only 42% of the CPS caseload involves recorded offences, while prosecutors other than the CPS also prosecute some offences charged or summonsed by the police).

³ I.e. notifiable offences: see footnote 1 above.

What is the Justice Gap?

How does the Justice Gap vary by offence type?

19.8%⁴ of all offences were brought to justice in 2000-01. But the proportion of recorded offences which are brought to justice varies significantly by offence type, largely because of the differing detection rates between crimes. These variations reflect the relative ease of detection of different crimes types. The table below gives some examples of the variations in the percentage of crimes brought to justice for different categories of offence.

Offence type	% of offences brought to justice ⁵
Violence Against the Person	35.5%
Sex Offences	37.0%
Burglary	8.9%
Robbery	11.2%
Theft & Handling of Stolen Goods	17.7%
Criminal Damage	9.7%

⁴ Because of the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard from 1 April 2002, and the likely increase in the number of recorded crimes which will result, the number of offences brought to justice as a percentage of recorded crime is likely to go down, even if the criminal justice system is successful in bringing more offences to justice.

⁵ This column shows the number of offences brought to justice in 2000-01 as a proportion of the crimes recorded in that year. Some of the offences brought to justice will relate to crimes recorded in previous years.

The widening justice gap – and why it matters

The **Justice Gap** has widened significantly over time.

Why does this matter?

Better performance is absolutely vital, because it will help to reduce crime and demonstrate that the criminal justice system is effective:

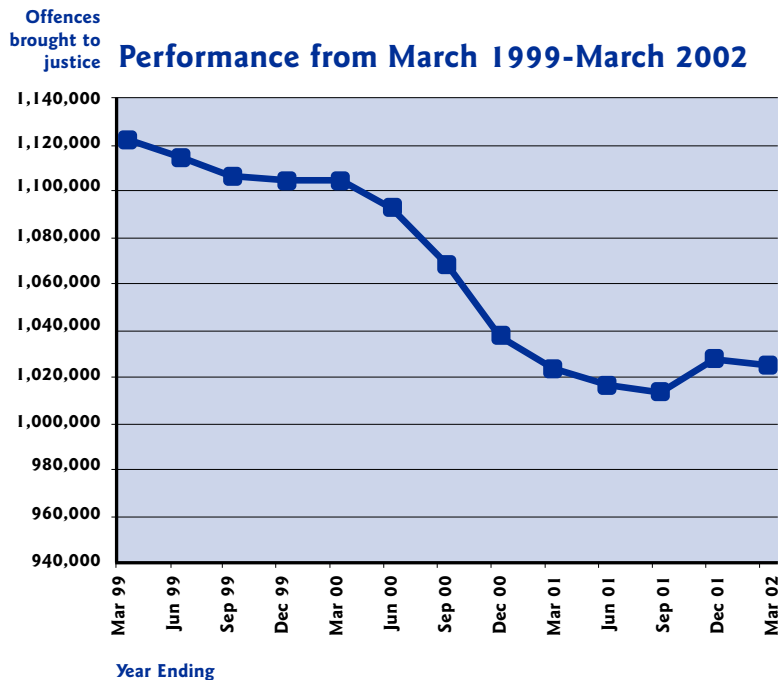
- **The current size of the justice gap is unacceptable** – In 80% of crimes recorded by the police, the offender goes unpunished. The size of the justice gap is a vital benchmark of the success of the criminal justice system. We must improve on this.
- **The more offences brought to justice, the less crime** - catching and punishing offenders is more effective in reducing crime than the severity of punishment. Evidence from Home Office research, awaiting publicationⁱⁱ, shows that increasing the frequency of an offender being caught and convicted is the most effective single way of shortening their criminal career. There is also evidence from other countries that there is a correlation between increased chances of offenders being caught and decreasing crimeⁱⁱⁱ.
- **Reducing the justice gap creates a virtuous circle with victims and witnesses** – 17% of the cases discontinued by the CPS are terminated because of the failure of civilian witnesses to attend at court or their refusal to give evidence^{iv}. If we could raise the level of confidence among victims that the criminal justice system would bring the perpetrator to justice, they should be more likely to act as witnesses. This in turn should reduce the number of cases which result in avoidable discontinuances, which will mean more offences are brought to justice. This would help to increase confidence in the criminal justice system even further. And of course it would reduce crime too, since catching and convicting an offender is the most effective way of shortening their criminal career.

What is the Justice Gap?

Recent performance in bringing offences to justice

Because narrowing the justice gap is so important, the Government has focused for some time on the need for performance improvement. Narrowing the justice gap means increasing the proportion of crimes which result in an offender being brought to justice. But the way crime is recorded is changing due to the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard, so it is difficult to measure performance improvement simply by looking at offences brought to justice as a percentage of recorded crime. This is why we are focusing on increasing the number of offences which are brought to justice.

The Government's 2001 manifesto made a commitment to bringing 100,000 more crimes to justice, while this year's CJS Business Plan described it as the top priority. However, although the justice gap has been widening for some time, an even more worrying trend has emerged – since March 2000, the number of offences brought to justice has fallen sharply.



Recent performance

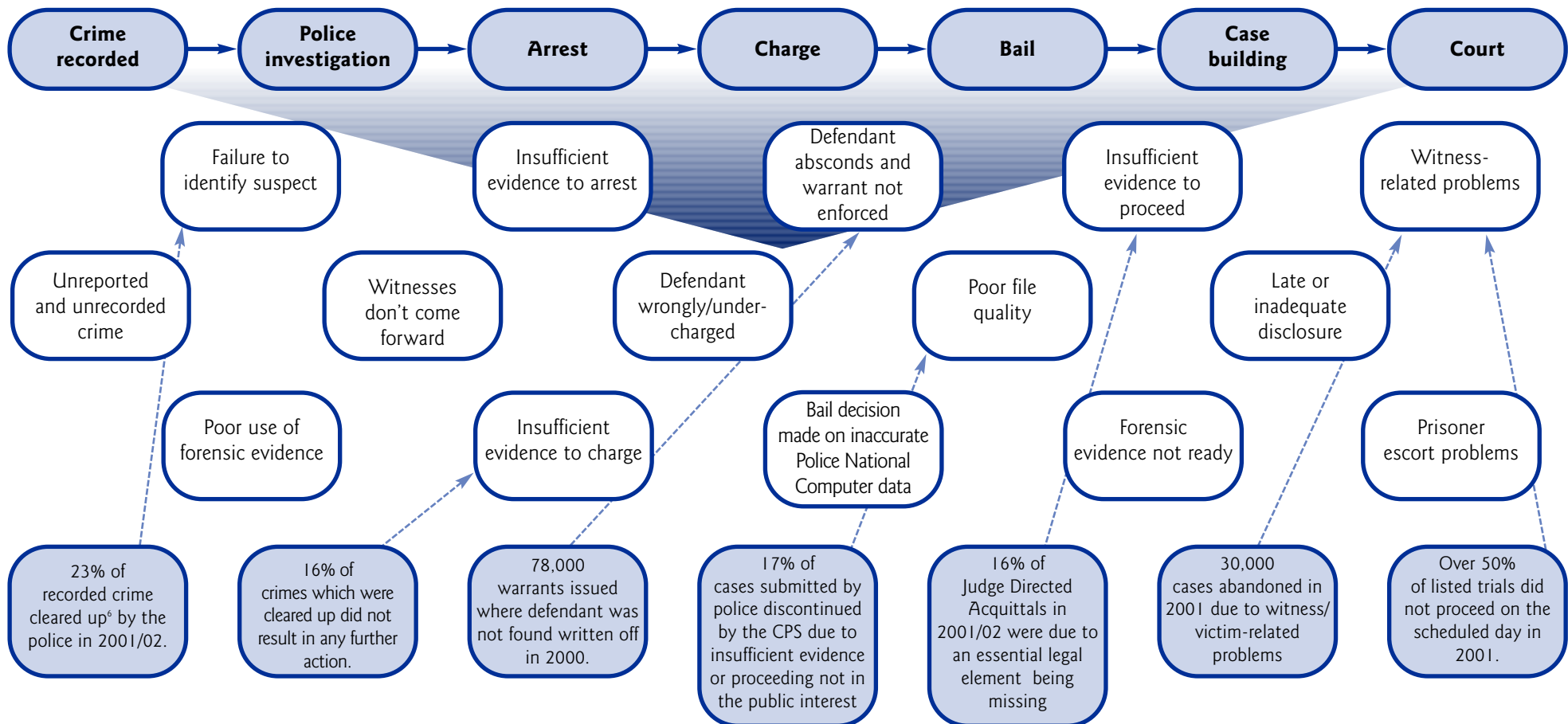
The number of offences brought to justice has declined sharply since March 2000, though the trend suggests that this decline had bottomed out by the year ending July 2001, and there was a small improvement in performance up to the year ending January 2002.

The decline in the number of offences brought to justice occurred for every type of offence, except robbery. The numbers of cautions, convictions and offences taken into consideration all decreased. And crime was falling during the period of declining performance.

Because there are so many points in the criminal justice system where a justice gap may occur, when performance gets worse, it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly why that has happened. The fall in police numbers in 1999-2000, which the Government has now reversed, is likely to account for at least part of the widening of the gap.

Why do cases fall out of the system?

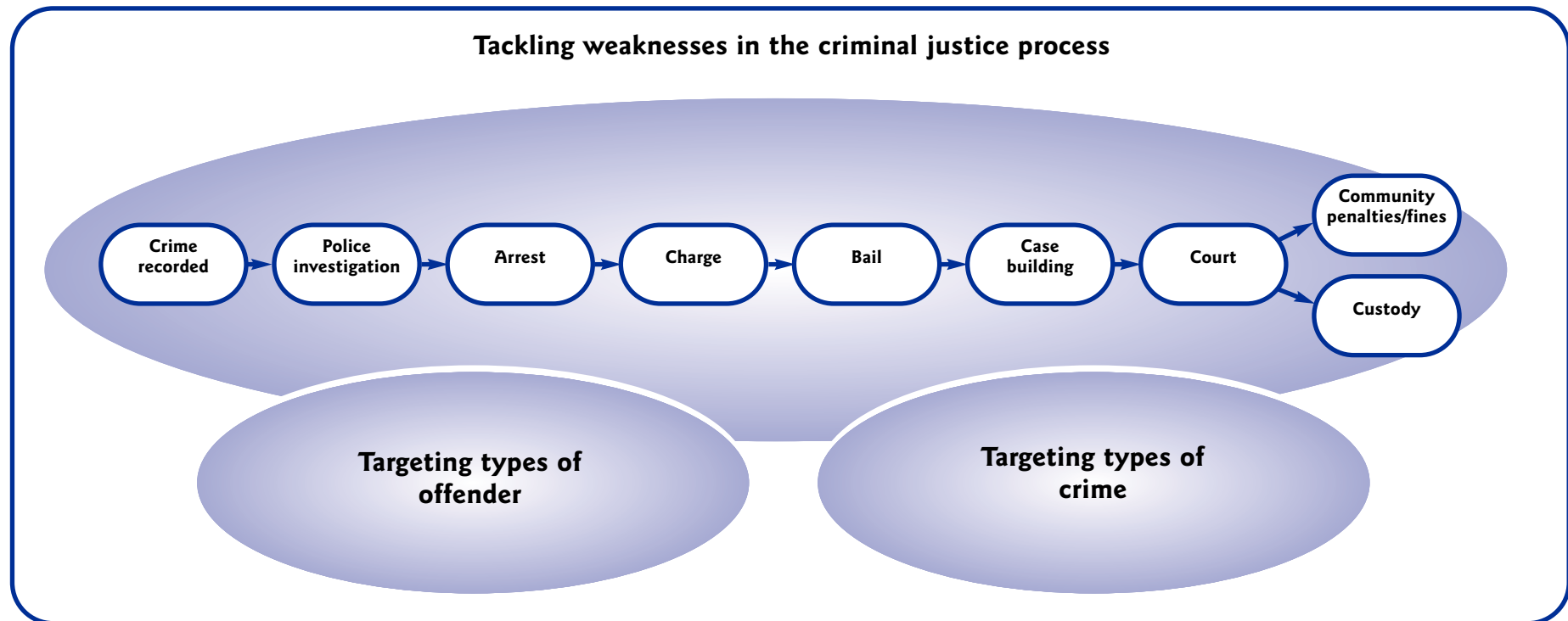
In order to take action to narrow the justice gap, we need to understand why cases fall out of the system. At every stage of the criminal justice system, the justice gap may widen. The recent Audit Commission report, *Route to Justice*⁶, assesses some of the blockages in the system which may cause a case to fail, while the Criminal Justice White Paper, *Justice for All*ⁱⁱ, provides further analysis of why an offender may not be brought to justice. This diagramⁱⁱⁱ gives a simple summary of some of the key reasons, and facts and figures.



⁶ An offence has been cleared up and detected by the police when they have identified the suspect for a recorded crime and have sufficient evidence to charge that suspect. The victim also has to have been informed that the crime has been cleared up.

What can we do to narrow the Justice Gap?

As the analysis of why cases may fall out of the system shows, there are many complex, often interlocking reasons why the CJS might not be successful in bringing an offender to justice for their crimes. We need to focus on tackling them in three ways:



- by strategies to **overcome weaknesses in the overall process** that cause cases to fail
- by strategies to **target particular types of offences**: such as the Street Crime Initiative, which started earlier this year in 10 criminal justice areas and will continue to be a key priority
- by strategies to **target particular types of offender**: the core initiative is the Persistent Offender Scheme which will support the CJS in dealing more effectively with the most prolific offenders.

What can we do to narrow the Justice Gap?

Tackling weaknesses in the criminal justice process

We need to understand in much greater depth what causes cases to fail, so that we can identify where to prioritise remedial action. This is why, from January to June of this year, the Association of Chief Police Officers led a detailed analysis in 9 forces of what is happening in the police controlled stages of the process. The findings were so powerful that the Justice Gap Task Force led a similar analysis over the summer to identify issues in the CPS and court influenced stages of the process. Alongside this overview, we have produced a companion document, *Tackling weaknesses in the criminal justice process*, explaining these findings, pinpointing some key areas where targeted action could reap results, explaining what CJS areas are expected to do, and the support available to them.

Longer term, the policy changes announced in the Criminal Justice White Paper, *Justice for All*, will also help to put right some of the blockages in the system. The trilateral Case Preparation Project, for example, will play an important role in developing some wide-ranging and innovative proposals (from the point of charge through to disposal in the courts) to effect major change to systems, processes, culture and capacity to deliver improved performance locally.

Case study 1: Benefits of joint working - Criminal Justice Units

Criminal Justice Units (CJUs) have been set up to encourage efficient joint working between the Police and the CPS. By co-locating, both agencies benefit from cost savings and efficiencies, due to the closer contact and communication, and the removal of duplication from the administrative process.

A study of the 'beacon' CJUs by the Glidewell Working Group^{viii} shows that co-location can make a real difference:

- an average joint **cost saving** for administering a case of about **£17.40** per case (equivalent to about **13.75%** of the total administration cost per case for the police and the CPS).
- potential for **wider deployment of staff** to more serious and complex casework (- in terms of reduced travel time for prosecutors, this could represent 'savings' equivalent to 250 prosecutors per year nationally.)
- **improvement in the timeliness and quality of files as measured by Joint Performance Management** (on average 80% after co-location, compared to 73% before)
- the **number of hearings per case reduced** (on average 2.63 after co-location compared to 3.13 before)
- the **percentage of first hearing clearances increased** (on average 61% after co-location compared to 46% before)
- **discontinuance rates in most sites reduced** (on average 10% after co-location compared to 12% before)

We plan to establish 131 co-located CJUs in 38 areas. 46 CJUs had been set up by 31 March 2002.

Targeting types of offender

As well as tackling problems at specific points in the criminal justice process, we can help to narrow the justice gap by focusing on specific types of offender. The CJS has halved the time it takes to deal with persistent young offenders from 142 days to under 71 days. We are committed to maintaining this significant achievement. But we now need to develop a strategy to deal more effectively with **adult persistent offenders** too.

We know that, although a lot of people commit some crime, a few criminals commit a substantial amount of the more serious crime. Home Office research⁷, suggests that, at any one time, 10% of offenders, a group of about 100,000 in size, will be committing half of all serious crime. Targeting these persistent offenders will have the greatest effect in narrowing the justice gap:

- Because they are responsible for so much crime, if more persistent offenders are caught, this should enable the CJS to bring more offences to justice.
- Once they have been sanctioned, if they receive effective support to tackle the reasons why they commit crime, they will be less likely to re-offend.
- And if they do reoffend, because they are being targeted, they are more likely to be caught again. And because there is evidence that catching and punishing offenders more often is the most effective way of shortening their criminal career, this will make an impact on reducing crime in the longer term.

This is why the Justice Gap Task Force is launching the Persistent Offender Scheme to support CJS agencies to catch, convict and provide effective rehabilitative support to the most prolific adult offenders, those who have been convicted of **6 or more recordable offences in the last year**, and **other offenders identified as persistent on the basis of local intelligence**, for instance under the national intelligence model. A companion document to this overview, *Guidance on tackling persistent offending*, gives more detailed guidance about how the Persistent Offender Scheme will work, what CJS areas are expected to do and the support available to help them.

⁷ Summarised in *Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead*. The research was based on the Offenders Index database which holds serious criminal convictions in England and Wales since 1963 linked to individual offenders.

What can we do to narrow the Justice Gap?

Case study 2: Persistent Offender Scheme – the ‘Premium Service’

The purpose of the ‘Premium Service’ is to make sure that the CJS puts its best efforts into bringing priority offenders to justice. A premium service is already being piloted in areas participating in the Street Crime Initiative, and it will be a core component part of the Persistent Offender Scheme. Key elements of the Persistent Offender Scheme ‘Premium Service’ will include:

Pre-charge

- Early identification of the offender as persistent and early police contact with experienced lawyers
- Early agreement on an evidential target plan, especially forensic and medical evidence
- Application of the national standard of investigation, including the supervision regime
- Experienced police officers and lawyers identified to handle the case
- Agreed prosecution plan developed

Preparation for and conduct of hearings at court

- Quality preparation of files prioritised
- CPS consulted before a case is written off following the arrest of a persistent offender, and discontinuance by the CPS subject to additional quality assurance
- Bail decisions based on accurate, full and up-to-date information
- Warrant enforcement prioritised in persistent offender cases
- Complexity and priority of cases reflected in listing arrangements

Targeting types of crime

As well as tackling blockages at specific points in the system, we also need to look at specific types of crime, where we have evidence that performance is poor or declining, or that the action we need to take should be tailored to that type of offence.

Tailoring the CJS response to the crime

The treatment of rape cases is a good example of where a tailored approach to investigation and prosecution could lead to an increase in the percentage of successful prosecutions.

Case study 3: Room for improvement – investigation and prosecution of involving allegations of rape

The rate of conviction for rape, after trial, has decreased from one in three cases reported in 1977 to one in 13 in 1999. In part, this reflects the fact that more crimes are reported. But a recent joint inspection^x by HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary revealed blockages at specific points in the system and the need for a tailored response where an allegation of rape has taken place. Some of the factors that they concluded were contributing to the widening justice gap included:

- Variable facilities for receiving and medically examining victims
- Lack of knowledge, awareness and training of forensic medical examiners
- Inconsistency in approach by police forces to recording and finalisation of crime reports
- Inconsistency of approach to casework decision-making by CPS
- Poor treatment of victims and witnesses

The report concluded that, despite the difficulties encountered in rape cases, the number of successful prosecutions could be improved by a concerted effort and joined up approach on the part of all those involved in their investigation and prosecution.

A cross CJS-working group has now drawn up a National Action Plan to implement the Inspectorates' recommendations. The Plan includes practical measures to improve: the investigation of rape cases by the police; guidance and training for police and prosecutors; the quality of advice, decision-making, case preparation and presentation at court, and the treatment of victims and witnesses.

Implementation of the individual action points will be the responsibility of designated working groups or agencies. For example, the Forensic Science Service and ACPO have launched a first response kit for police officers to prevent the loss of vital forensic evidence, and the CPS are developing guidance on the prosecution of rape, with advice on how to proceed when statements are retracted.

What can we do to narrow the Justice Gap?

Tackling a rising crime

Where there is an upsurge in a particular crime, this may also trigger the requirement for a crime specific approach. The Government has responded to the sharp rise in street crime by developing a whole system multi-agency approach, implemented in the 10 police force areas in England and Wales that together account for over 80% of street crime.

Many elements of this approach are aimed at ensuring that street crime offences are successfully brought to justice. For example, a raft of measures have been introduced to provide better support for victims and witnesses of street crime such as:

- making the identification procedure less daunting by introducing video technology instead of identity parades
- a Victim Support volunteer accompanying a victim when they do have to attend an identity parade and when they are interviewed, or provide a statement
- the Witness Service proactively offering court familiarisation visits and being available on the day of the court hearing or trial
- providing a special contact number for victims to ring if the suspect or their associates are intimidating them
- providing victims and witnesses with support and protection during court hearings, and information about the progress of their case, and the sentence if the defendant is convicted

Who is responsible for reducing the Justice Gap?

Several criminal justice agencies have a part to play in assessing why the justice gap is widening and helping to reduce it – the police, the CPS, defence, and the courts – while the Prison Service and National Probation Service contributions to reducing reoffending are crucial.

There is scope for every criminal justice area to improve. Comparing the years ending March 2000 and June 2001, the number of offences brought to justice fell in 33 of the 42 CJS areas. Performance declined nationally by 8% during this period.

There are huge variations in practice between different CJS areas. This box summarises some of the differences in approach between police forces. We are not suggesting that one approach is better than another, but this does highlight that criminal justice agencies need to understand more about which practices are most effective.

Variations in practice between police forces

In 2000-01⁸:

- For every 100 prosecutions, there were 45 cautions in one force; in another, 10 cautions were issued for every 100 prosecutions.
- In one force, 6.5% of all crime which was cleared up⁸ resulted in the offence being Taken into Consideration by the court; in another it was 0.5%.
- In one force, no further action was taken in 3% of the crimes which were cleared up; in another, the figure was 30%⁹.
- The proportion of suspects who were charged following arrest ranged from 47% to 93% across forces (although the charging rate needs to be viewed in the context of the avoidable discontinuance rate for the area).

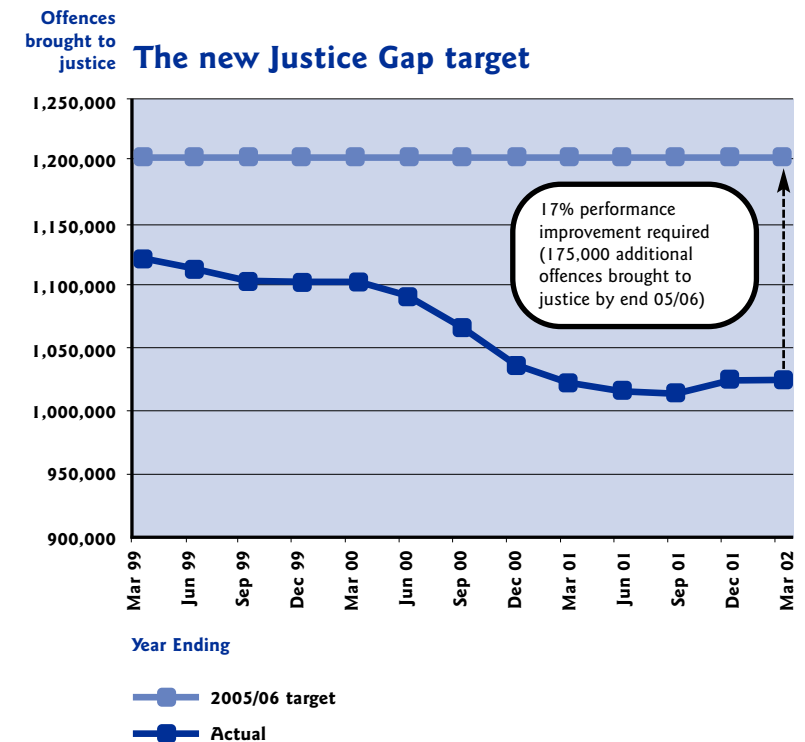
⁸ See footnote 6 on page 9.

⁹ Although the number of crimes which were cleared up which resulted in the offender being charged or summonsed, receiving a caution or having the offence taken into consideration by the court may still have been higher in this force.

The new Justice Gap target

Bringing more offences to justice will continue to be the top priority for the criminal justice system. The Government has just reinforced this message by setting a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) target¹⁰ to bring 1.2 million offences to justice in 2005-06 (as compared with 1.025 million offences brought to justice in the year ending March 2002). Although every CJS agency has its own important targets, every agency has a responsibility to contribute to this target too.

Delivering this target will mean a performance improvement of just under 6% each year for the next three years across the system as a whole (but only a 9% performance improvement over the three year period compared with the performance level in the year ending March 2000). But because there is such a massive gap between the better and worse performers, we will expect to see a greater improvement in the worse performing areas. The PSA target includes a special focus on the efficient processing of cases through court. There is a requirement across all agencies to reduce the proportion of ineffective trials (those which are unable to proceed on the day that they are scheduled to start).



¹⁰ The full wording of the PSA target is to 'Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2 million by 2005/06; with an improvement in all CJS areas, a greater increase in the worse performing areas and a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials'.

What does this mean for CJS areas?

The national framework

Changes launched in *Justice for All*

Closer working between local CJS agencies:

- roll out of CJUs and Criminal Justice Centre pilot in Warwickshire
- strengthened local CJS performance management by setting up 42 local Criminal Justice Boards, with dedicated performance support officers and a national pool of performance advisers

Better bail management:

- new power for police to impose conditions on bail before charge
- extension of prosecution right to appeal against bail decisions

More effective case preparation:

- CPS to determine the charge in all but routine cases
- better pre-trial case management (through the Case Preparation Project)

Improvements to court management, and the timeliness and effectiveness of the court process, including:

- unification of the court system
- extension of availability of preparatory hearings
- encouragement of early guilty pleas
- improved compliance by the prosecution and defence with the disclosure process
- improved rules of evidence
- prosecution rights of appeal against early termination of a case
- changing the double jeopardy rule

Better IT support for case management:

- up to date information for bail, charging and sentencing decisions when and where needed
- more accurate information leading to fewer collapsed cases and less wasted time

Better support for victims and witnesses:

- implementation of special measures for victims and witnesses
- development of a national strategy
- considering anonymity for victims of domestic violence

A huge programme of change is underway nationally which will help to make it easier to bring offences to justice. The Criminal Justice White Paper, *Justice for All*, described a raft of legislative and policy changes which will be set in train to improve the effectiveness of the CJS, while other national programmes will help to resolve specific blockages causing cases to fail at the moment.

Other national initiatives

Increased police capacity to detect more crimes:

- increased police officers, and more civilian support (through Community Support Officers and Custody Support Officers)
- reduced bureaucratic burden on police officers through implementation of the Policing Bureaucracy Task Force Action Plan

Improved investigative capability and consistent standards applied:

- establishment of Centrex (the Central Police Training and Development Authority)
- introduction of specialist detectives

More effective prioritisation and targeting, and better tools to aid detection:

- roll out of the National Intelligence Model - a focused approach to gathering and using intelligence - and Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- expansion of the DNA database, and development of NAFIS (National Automated Fingerprint Identification System)

Robust case preparation:

- roll out of VIPER (Video ID parade technology)
- use of IT to modernise case preparation (through roll out of NSPIS case and custody)

Improving services for victims and witnesses:

- victim and witness support services available at all criminal courts
- new CJS working group on witnesses, especially those reluctant to report offences or give evidence

Sharper scrutiny of what happens when things go wrong:

- joint analysis by the CPS and Magistrates' Courts Service of why trials have not proceeded in every CJS area from April 2002
- performance management tools for CJS areas

What does this mean for CJS areas?

Narrowing the justice gap requires the attention and commitment of every criminal justice agency. We are asking CJS practitioners to do three things:

- 1. Focus on bringing more offences to justice**
- 2. Develop a local inter-agency Narrowing the Justice Gap Plan, setting out how you will improve your performance.**
- 3. As part of this, implement the Persistent Offender Scheme locally.**

How much improvement is needed?

If we are to achieve the national target to bring 1.2 million offences to justice by 2005-06, this would mean that an average performance improvement of just under 6% would be needed each year. So that every CJS area is focused on delivering their share of the national target, we are setting a local Justice Gap target for each Local Criminal Justice Board. This will be a top priority in each local Delivery Agreement. For 2003-04, we are setting a target of 5% for every Board. In future years, we will graduate the targets to reflect how well each CJS area has performed, and to meet the national target by the end of 2005-06. Based on current performance, the table on the next page shows how many additional offences each CJS area will need to bring to justice in order to achieve the 2003-04 target.

What does this mean for CJS areas?

Local Justice Gap targets for 2003-04

CJS Area	Additional offences to be brought to justice in 2003-04	CJS Area	Additional offences to be brought to justice in 2003-04
Avon and Somerset	1,404	Lincolnshire	656
Bedfordshire	565	Merseyside	1,531
Cambridgeshire	539	Metropolitan area of London	6,183
Cheshire	761	Norfolk	631
Cleveland	730	North Wales	661
Cumbria	499	North Yorkshire	617
Derbyshire	879	Northamptonshire	660
Devon and Cornwall	1,282	Northumbria	2,076
Dorset	588	Nottinghamshire	1,228
Durham	686	South Wales	1,549
Dyfed Powys	551	South Yorkshire	1,219
Essex	1,096	Staffordshire	1,060
Gloucester	646	Suffolk	602
Greater Manchester	2,875	Surrey	613
Gwent	845	Sussex	1,136
Hampshire	1,592	Thames Valley	1,565
Hertfordshire	679	Warwickshire	405
Humberside	893	West Mercia	1,122
Kent	1,223	West Midlands	3,985
Lancashire	1,533	West Yorkshire	2,346
Leicestershire	979	Wiltshire	543

Planning to succeed

To meet the target, you will need to work out how you are going to achieve the performance improvement and how you will manage the consequences for your workloads of bringing more offences to justice. This is why we are asking CJS practitioners to develop **local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans**.

The focus of your plan is your decision, and it will need to address the most pressing local obstacles to bringing offences to justice. But we would expect you to identify three or four priorities for action in the coming year, one of which must be the implementation of the Persistent Offender Scheme. The companion document we are producing, *Guidance on tackling weaknesses in the criminal justice process*, will help you to select these priorities and to identify what action you will take locally. To help you to prepare the plan, we have put together a draft template which is attached as an appendix to this document. We are funding PA Consulting to assist you with developing the plan.

The way that these plans are developed will vary from area to area. In time, we would expect them to be owned by Local Criminal Justice Boards, and where shadow Boards exist, we envisage that the Chair Designate will co-ordinate their development. Where these arrangements are not already in place, another local inter-agency forum, such as the Chief Officer Group or the Trials Issues Group should take it forward, with the relevant Chair taking on this co-ordinating role. Whatever decision you make locally about the best way to develop work, please let Jo Hogarth at PA Consulting (Tel: 020 7333 5078) know by 1 November 2002.

The earlier you start to plan, the better prepared you will be to achieve the target in 2003-04. We recommend that you begin as soon as possible, and would expect plans to be completed by 31 January 2003. Please send your completed plans to the Justice Gap Action Team at Room 366, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1A 9AT.

Once your plan is complete, we will support you in several ways:

1. We are funding PA Consulting to help you implement it.
2. CJS Performance Officers for every CJS area will be in post by January, and will assist Local Criminal Justice Boards in monitoring performance against the Justice Gap target.

What does this mean for CJS areas?

3. A central team of 6 senior Performance Advisers will also be in place by the beginning of next year. They will provide the link between Local Criminal Justice Boards and the National Criminal Justice Board, and will be able to assist areas, and identify and spread best practice.
4. By April, you will also have access to JPIT (the Joint Performance Information Tool), which is being developed to assist with monitoring joint area performance. JPIT will draw on current and new information sources, including J-Track, the new case tracker for the Persistent Offender Scheme.

Ministers and officials of all the CJ Departments and agencies will take a close interest in performance against these targets and want to work together with those on the front line to identify and tackle barriers, and champion good practice. We welcome your feedback and ideas throughout the process.

This document has been produced for all CJS practitioners by the Justice Gap Task Force. The Task Force is the national steering group accountable for CJS wide performance in bringing more offences to justice. It is chaired by Moira Wallace, Director General of the Criminal Policy Group at the Home Office, and its members include Jim Barker-McCardle (Association of Chief Police Officers), Fionnuala Gill (Association of Police Authorities), Peter Lewis (Crown Prosecution Service), Kevin Sadler (Court Service), Ruth Allan (Youth Justice Board), Steve Limpkin (National Probation Directorate) and Colin Harnett (Prison Service).

Finding out more

If you would like more information about any aspect of this document, or a copy of one of the companion documents, or if you would like to give feedback from your area about blockages to improvement or evidence of what works, please get in touch with the Justice Gap Action Team at jgatenquiry@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk, or write to Robert Ritchie, Head of the Justice Gap Action Team, at Room 366, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Area: _____ **Date:** _____

Period covered: _____

This template has been developed to help you to structure your local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plan. You may not wish to follow this template, but your plan will need to include the information set out below, including the three or four priority areas you intend to tackle in the first year to meet your local Justice Gap target. One of these priorities must be the introduction of the Persistent Offender Scheme. You will find more information about the types of issues you will want to address in your plan in Guidance on tackling weaknesses in the criminal justice system (see www.cjsonline.org/njg). Please send your completed plans to the Justice Gap Action Team at Room 366, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT by 31 January 2003.

Lead officers in each agency:

Police: _____

CPS: _____

Magistrates' Court: _____

Crown Court: _____

Probation: _____

Local Criminal Justice Board Chair: _____

Justice Gap target for period

Baseline performance: (Expressed as number of offences brought to justice)

Overall Justice Gap target: (Expressed as number of offences brought to justice)

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Priority areas for the period

Priority 1	Persistent Offender Scheme
Priority 2	(Title)
Priority 3	(Title)
Priority 4	(Title)

Management/Review arrangements:

(Outline how the work will be managed - by the Local Criminal Justice Board itself, a dedicated steering group or by an existing group)

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Priority 1: Persistent Offender Scheme

Outline of priority: *(Description of issue and priority aims)*

Target(s): *(Outline any known baseline data. Targets may be national or locally agreed depending on the priority but should contribute to the overall local justice gap target)*

Agencies involved: *(You may wish to consider identifying a lead organisation for each priority)*

Actions to deliver priority	Responsibility	Date
Action 1 <i>(Outline specific actions that you are going to take to address the weaknesses identified in the priority area)</i>		
Action 2		
Action 3		
Action 4		

Monitoring arrangements: *(Outline the data you will collect to monitor the priority, the source of the information and the frequency of monitoring)*

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Priority 2: Title

Outline of priority: *(Description of issue and priority aims)*

Target(s): *(Outline any known baseline data. Targets may be national or locally agreed depending on the priority but should contribute to the overall local justice gap target)*

Agencies involved: *(You may wish to consider identifying a lead organisation for each priority)*

Actions to deliver priority	Responsibility	Date
Action 1 <i>(Outline specific actions that you are going to take to address the weaknesses identified in the priority area)</i>		
Action 2		
Action 3		
Action 4		

Monitoring arrangements: *(Outline the data you will collect to monitor the priority, the source of the information and the frequency of monitoring)*

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Priority 3: Title

Outline of priority: *(Description of issue and priority aims)*

Target(s): *(Outline any known baseline data. Targets may be national or locally agreed depending on the priority but should contribute to the overall local justice gap target)*

Agencies involved: *(You may wish to consider identifying a lead organisation for each priority)*

Actions to deliver priority	Responsibility	Date
Action 1 <i>(Outline specific actions that you are going to take to address the weaknesses identified in the priority area)</i>		
Action 2		
Action 3		
Action 4		
Monitoring arrangements: <i>(Outline the data you will collect to monitor the priority, the source of the information and the frequency of monitoring)</i>		

Appendix: Template for local Narrowing the Justice Gap Plans

Priority 4: Title

Outline of priority: *(Description of issue and priority aims)*

Target(s): *(Outline any known baseline data. Targets may be national or locally agreed depending on the priority but should contribute to the overall local justice gap target)*

Agencies involved: *(You may wish to consider identifying a lead organisation for each priority)*

Actions to deliver priority	Responsibility	Date
Action 1 <i>(Outline specific actions that you are going to take to address the weaknesses identified in the priority area)</i>		
Action 2		
Action 3		
Action 4		
Monitoring arrangements: <i>(Outline the data you will collect to monitor the priority, the source of the information and the frequency of monitoring)</i>		

- ⁱ Sources: Kershaw, C. et al (2000) *The 2000 British Crime Survey*, Home Office Research Findings No 136 London: Home Office; Povey, David et al (2001) *Recorded Crime: England and Wales, 12 Months to March 01*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 12/01; Ayres, M., et al (2001) *Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operation of Certain Police Powers under PACE, England and Wales 2000/01*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 19/01; Court Proceedings Database
- ⁱⁱ Research summarised in Home Office (2001) *Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead*, London: Home Office
- ⁱⁱⁱ Langan, Patrick A. and Farrington, David (1998) *Crime and Justice in the United States and in England and Wales, 1981-96*, Report, NCJ 169284. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics
- ^{iv} 1998 CPS Discontinuance Survey (unpublished)
- ^v Audit Commission (2002) *Route to Justice – improving the pathway of offenders through the criminal justice system*, London: Audit Commission
- ^{vi} Home Office (2002) *Justice for All*, London: Home Office
- ^{vii} Sources: Simmons, J. et al (2002) *Crime in England and Wales 2001/2002*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 07/02; 1998 CPS Discontinuance Survey (unpublished); CPS Performance Indicator System; Joint Performance Management Group Cracked and Ineffective Trials Scheme
- ^{viii} Glidewell Working Group (December 2001) *Review of Cost and Efficiency Savings within Glidewell Co-located Criminal Justice Units*
- ^{ix} HMCPSI and HMIC (April 2002) *A Report on the Joint Inspection into the Investigation and Prosecution of Cases Involving Allegations of Rape: a CPSI and HMIC joint thematic inspection*
- ^x Home Office (2001) *Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 2000*, London: Home Office; Court Proceedings Database