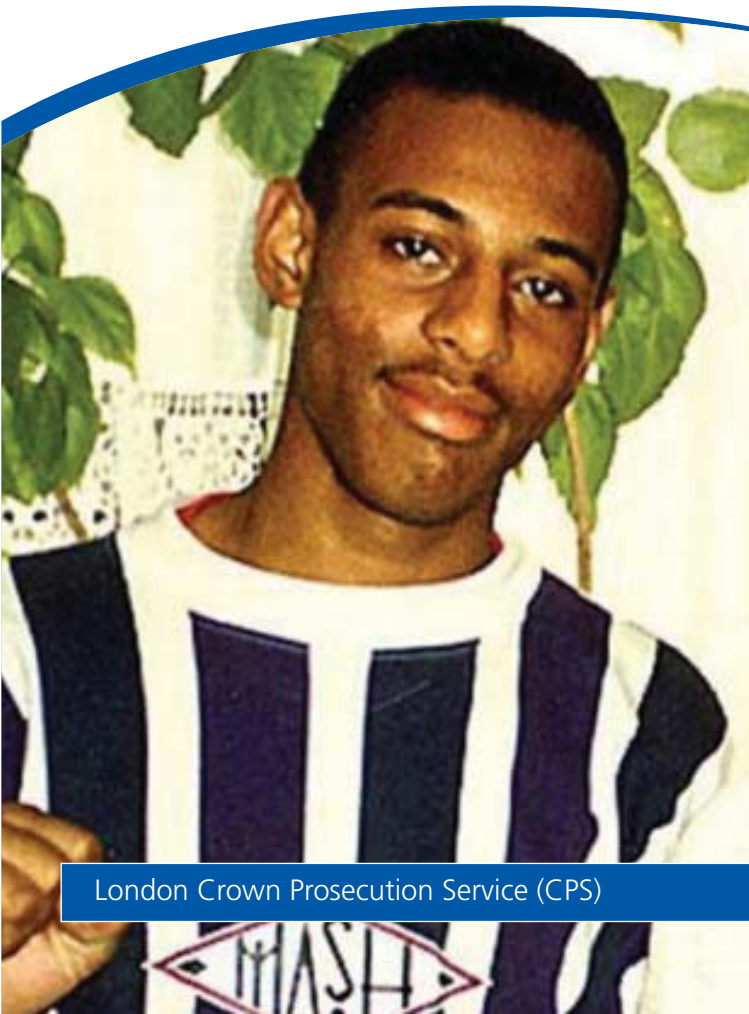




CPS

The Lawrence Legacy

Making London safer for you



London Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Stephen's murder marked race relations crossroads

The murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993 shocked the nation and led to a watershed in race relations in this country.

The 18-year-old student collapsed and died in a pool of blood after he was stabbed near his home in Eltham, South-East London.

An inquest held in 1997 ruled he had been “unlawfully killed in a completely unprovoked racist attack by five white youths”.

The failure of the Metropolitan Police investigation to find and convict the killers was the subject of an inquiry, headed by Sir William Macpherson.

In his report, published in 1999, he said the investigation was incompetent, concluding that the Metropolitan Police force was “institutionally racist”.

The inquiry marked a crossroads in relations between the police and black and minority ethnic groups.

Macpherson called for greater openness and accountability across the criminal justice system and urged police and other agencies to tackle institutional racism. Sixteen years after Stephen's tragic death the case remains open.

- With thanks to the Stephen Lawrence Trust for help in producing this leaflet.

Racist monitoring scheme praised by equality group

Ten years after the inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's murder highlighted failings in the criminal justice system, the CPS has been praised for implementing key recommendations from the report.

The Runnymede Trust – an organisation that specialises in studying equality – said in a report*: “We welcome the detailed attention paid by the CPS to recording and monitoring data related to racist incidents.

“That this information is accessible and published annually in one place warrants further commendation, and other agencies would do well to learn from and build on this successful initiative.”

While much has been done by the CPS since the Macpherson inquiry report, we are far from complacent about achieving race equality.

CPS London recognises the challenge of institutional discrimination and works continuously to tackle it and stamp it out.

As an organisation the CPS is committed to promoting race equality. In this leaflet we explain the steps we have already taken and outline what we are doing to help make our communities in London feel safer.

**The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 10 Years On: A Critical Review of the Literature*

We shape our policies by working with communities

Since 1997 the CPS nationally has introduced a number of initiatives to improve race equality. These include:

- Consulting communities on our prosecution policies.
- Training more than 2,000 lawyers on prosecuting racist and religious aggravated crimes.
- Prosecuting racist and religious crimes “fairly, firmly and robustly” as a matter of policy.
- Setting targets to reduce unsuccessful outcomes, such as acquittals, in racist and religious crime cases.
- Publishing annual results on outcomes of racist and religious crimes.



We work with the police to ensure victims and witnesses are cared for. Witness care units, jointly operated by CPS and police staff, keep victims and witnesses informed of the progress of a case.

The witness care officers also assess the needs of victims and witnesses in order to help them attend court. This could include providing access to childcare services and transport.

How we help victims and witnesses achieve justice

Under our Direct Communication with Victims scheme, prosecutors write to victims of racially or religiously aggravated offences explaining their decisions to discontinue or substantially alter a charge.

They will also offer to meet the victim where circumstances change and we can no longer proceed with the case.

By applying for 'special measures' we can help children under 17, victims of sexual offences, intimidated witnesses and people with communication difficulties to give evidence in the best possible way. These may include placing screens around the witness box or allowing the witness to sit in a room in the court building away from the courtroom and give evidence via a TV link.

Staff

In CPS London we have increased the number of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff from 10.8 per cent in 2001, when we began recording numbers, to nearly a third – 31.5 per cent – in 2008. Last year BME colleagues accounted for 437 of our 1,387 personnel.

We know we need to have a workforce that is representative of the people we serve.



Prosecutors engage with the public to reduce crime

Local communities are to be given more say in the criminal justice system, including stronger links with the CPS.

In London, the borough community prosecutors who head the teams based in each of the capital's 32 boroughs and the City of London are working more closely with the public. They are engaging with local groups and criminal justice agency partners in a drive to reduce crime.

Through consultation with neighbourhood communities and agency colleagues they then agree priorities, for example, gang crime, street theft and vandalism.

They are supported by 33 borough community prosecution co-ordinators. These experienced prosecutors specialise in hate crime (disability, homophobic, transphobic, racist and religiously aggravated) cases, football banning orders, ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders) and other crime considered a priority in their boroughs.

They can also advise police, charge suspects and prosecute offenders.



Getting the community to examine our performance

We now consult our communities when we examine aspects of our performance.

Representatives sit on CPS London's community involvement panel, which plays an important part in shaping our business planning and policies.

Its members have already helped us with our business, equality and diversity and community engagement plans.

The panel invites lawyer/managers of borough teams to meetings to discuss local issues and to assist them in strengthening community engagement.

The panel has received an award for its work from a group representing London councils, voluntary organisations, agencies and public services.

Its members are Arun Batra, David Michael, Dennis Carney, Edmond Yeo, Theo Gavrielides, Yvonne Okiyo, Mira Goldberg (until Nov 2008) and Ruth Bashall (from Nov 2008).

A second group, the hate crime scrutiny panel, examines finalised cases involving racist, religious, homophobic and disability hate crimes, violence against women and crimes against older people.

This helps us to identify and share good practice, and increases understanding of the way we make decisions and how they may affect the communities.

Members are Anthony Wills, Cindy Butts, Deborah Gold, Gerry Campbell, Hamid Khan, Harpreet Sihota, Mari Taber, Elcena Jeffers and Bobbie Cheema.

Making offenders realise consequences of crimes

One way we are delivering a quicker service is by diverting less serious offences away from courts.

Conditional cautioning is an option for adults willing to admit their guilt. Under this scheme our prosecutors attach conditions to the caution.

If the offender fails to comply with the conditions they face the possibility of going to court for the original offence.

Conditions, which are set by the CPS, usually involve compensation, letters of apology to victims and referrals to drugs and alcohol programmes.

We are hitting criminals where it hurts the most – in their wallets – by recovering the proceeds of their crimes.

Meeting our priority of speeding up the system and making it simple, we are improving processes to reduce the number of court hearings. This will ensure that we deal quickly and effectively with low-level crime.



Our plans to make people feel supported and safer

London's criminal justice system aims to be the best. We propose to deliver a quicker service, support the public, make people safer, keep processes simple and develop a youth strategy.



In 2009 we will be piloting virtual courts (above), which could see offenders go from arrest to conviction within two hours, benefiting victims, witnesses and defendants.

Using video conferencing technology, Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court in South London will be linked to 15 police stations.

Defendants at the police stations will appear on screen in court.

Case papers are uploaded into a document system which can be accessed by the CPS, police, courts and probation service.

CPS borough teams in London are moving to the front-line – by relocating to local police stations. Under the initiative police and CPS staff will process a single case file, rather than two separate ones.

Our role in the capital's criminal justice service

The main role of London's Crown Prosecution Service is to prosecute people charged with a criminal offence.

We are responsible for:

- Deciding the charges that should be levelled against suspects, except in minor cases.
- Advising the police (the Metropolitan, City of London and British Transport police forces) on cases for possible prosecution.
- Reviewing evidence submitted by police to ensure the right defendants are prosecuted on the right charges before the right court.
- Preparing cases for court.
- Presenting cases in magistrates' courts, Crown Courts and higher courts.

In the year spanning April 2008 to the end of March 2009 CPS London prosecuted 134,123 cases in the capital's magistrates' courts and 21,153 cases in Crown Courts.

How to contact us

CPS London Head Office
50 Ludgate Hill,
London EC4M 7EX
Tel: 020 7796 8000
Textphone: 18001 020 7796 800

Email for general enquiries:
enquiries@cps.gsi.gov.uk
Email for complaints:
complaints@cps.gsi.gov.uk

CPS London website: www.cps.gov.uk/London