

Our commitment to YOU

I am delighted to present the Northamptonshire Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) annual report 2005-2006. This report is in recognition of the positive steps this organisation has made to ensure an effective and productive service for the communities in the county of Northamptonshire.



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Domestic safety for you

1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence at some time in their lives.

2 women are killed every week by a current or former partner.

Violence against women and children is a crime —

Domestic violence
Rape and sexual assaults
Forced marriage
Honour crimes
Child abuse
Elder abuse
Human trafficking
Prostitution
Female genital mutilation



Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
Perpetrators' phonenumber RESPECT: 0845 122 8609



Prosecuting hate crime for you

We regard a racist or religiously-motivated incident as:

Any incident which is perceived to be racist or religiously motivated by the victim or any other person.

An offence is racially or religiously aggravated if:

- at the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrates towards the victim of the offence hostility based on the victim's membership (or presumed membership) of a racial or religious group; or
- the offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial or religious group based on their membership of that group.

Certain offences, including assault, harassment, criminal damage and public order offences, can be prosecuted specifically as racially or religiously-aggravated offences.

With any other offence where there is evidence of racial or religious aggravation, the defendant faces a harsher sentence than if he or she were found guilty of a non-racial or religious crime.

Helping you to feel safe

We regard a homophobic incident as:

Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic or transphobic by the victim or by any other person [including the perpetrator].

We regard homophobic crimes as particularly serious because they undermine people's right to feel safe about, and be safe in, their sexual orientation.

Such crimes are based on prejudice, discrimination and hate, and they have no place in an open and democratic society.

We regard the homophobic element of any crime as a serious aggravating feature. We are determined to play our part in reducing crime by bringing offenders to justice.

If a case involving a homophobic element passes the evidential test set out in The Code for Crown Prosecutors and the victim is willing to give evidence, we will almost always prosecute because we regard the homophobic element as a serious aggravating feature.



Tackling anti-social behaviour

Acts of anti-social behaviour, such as vandalism, graffiti or harassment, may seem comparatively minor crimes. But they can have a devastating effect on local communities, causing residents to live in fear and destroying people's quality of life.

We work closely with the police, local authorities and the courts to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour. These may include drugs, begging, street crime, misbehaviour by youths and general disorder.

Where appropriate we will apply for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to be made on conviction, and support other agencies in the enforcement of any breaches of those orders.

We will also take action against anyone committing low-level disorder offences and carrying out acts of anti-social behaviour, such as criminal damage.



The Crown Prosecution Service in Northamptonshire and

YOU

...working with our community



What the CPS does for you

The Crown Prosecution Service was set up in 1986 to prosecute criminal cases investigated by the police in England and Wales. In undertaking this role, the CPS:

- advises the police on cases for possible prosecution
- reviews cases submitted by the police for prosecution
- where the decision is to prosecute, determines the charge in all but minor cases
- prepares cases for court; and
- presents those cases at court

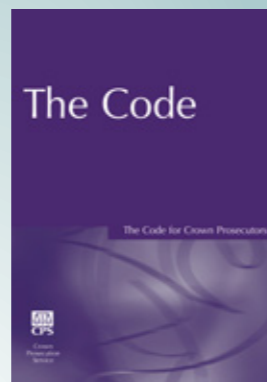
Each year we handle around 17,517 cases in the magistrates' court cases and 1,202 Crown Court cases. In 2006, our average conviction rate was 78.6% in the magistrates' court and 79.9% in the Crown Court.



Taking the oath in a magistrates' court.

Justice for you

The *Code for Crown Prosecutors* is a public document, issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions that sets out the general principles Crown Prosecutors should follow when they make decisions on cases.



Is there enough evidence against the defendant?

When deciding whether there is enough evidence to prosecute, Crown Prosecutors must consider whether evidence can be used in court and is reliable. Crown Prosecutors must be satisfied there is enough evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" against each defendant.

Is it in the public interest for the CPS to bring the case to court?

A prosecution will usually take place unless the public interest factors against prosecution clearly outweigh those in favour of prosecution.

Keeping you informed

No Witness No Justice

At the heart of No Witness No Justice are the Witness Care Units, which now provide an enhanced level of service to all victims and witnesses in England and Wales in cases where a charge has been brought. This includes completing needs assessments, to identify childcare or accessibility issues for example, and organising pre-court familiarisation visits.

Victims' Code

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime came into full effect on 3 April 2006.

The Code of Practice will give victims rights to minimum standards of service from the criminal justice system for the first time. This includes notifying vulnerable or intimidated victims within one working day if there is insufficient evidence to charge a defendant, and within five working days for all other victims, as well as identifying any special measures that may be appropriate.

The CPS is committed to its obligations under the code, which formalises many of the good things it is already doing.

Supporting you

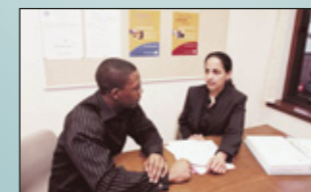
Witness Care Units (WCU) have been created under the No Witness No Justice initiative to look after victims and witnesses of crime.

Every victim and witness is allocated a WCU officer to guide them through their experience. Your officer will update you on court dates, take any questions you have about the criminal justice system and reassure you about all aspects of your court appearance.

If you would like a pre-court visit to see the witness facilities and walk around the court, this can be arranged.

If you require special treatment in the court room, the CPS can apply for special measures on your behalf, likewise if you have dependants and so attending court is difficult the WCU can arrange a registered childminder.

We want to take the stress out of attending court and keep you up to date with any news in a way that is convenient to you. We can write to you, e-mail, call or even text! Witnesses are a key part of securing prosecutions and narrowing the justice gap that we want to make your experience with us as straightforward as we can.



Working with us

Career opportunities at the CPS have never been so diverse, whether joining us as an administrator, a caseworker or lawyer, we have a wide-range of exciting vacancies.

Recruitment is via a dedicated centre and all vacancies can be viewed on-line at <http://www.cps.gov.uk/working>

There are a raft of benefits when working for the CPS including —

- Opportunities to gain experience from different functions or to specialise in a particular area
- Flexible working, including flexitime, part-time working, job-sharing, and career breaks
- 25 days' annual leave with the potential to rise to 30 days. In addition there are 10.5 public holidays and privilege days
- Support with childcare
- The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme
- Training and Development: we actively encourage our staff to undergo training and professional development. Training is provided by your office or headquarters or through courses held externally for all grades and experience

Putting the case for you

Modern prosecutors routinely conduct their own advocacy. Our Designated Caseworkers have consistently prosecuted cases robustly and fairly in the magistrates' courts, and today's prosecutor is gaining more and more experience in the Crown Court.

Known as Higher Court Advocates (HCAs), these solicitors and barristers have been granted special rights to appear in higher courts.

The Service's talented pool of in-house advocates will increasingly use their skills in trials of ever-increasing duration and complexity.

This is a foundation of the Director of Public Prosecution's vision that the CPS is a world-class prosecution service that routinely conducts its own advocacy.

