

Our commitment to you

We aim to become a world-class prosecuting authority at the heart of the criminal justice service in London.

Working with the capital's other criminal justice agencies, we are committed to bringing more offenders to justice, championing justice and the rights of victims.

In this leaflet you will find out more about the work of the CPS and some of the highlights of our performance during 2006-07.

Should you have any questions about our role or suggestions on how we can improve our service to your community, please contact me.



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Helping you feel safe

Rape and other sexual offences are shocking crimes, damaging the lives of victims and their families.

We are determined to increase the number of convictions by helping to build stronger cases against sex attackers.

This year we recruited three specialist rape advocates, with years of experience of handling rape cases. And we provided additional training for around 150 of our prosecutors who are specialists in dealing with these cases.

The training courses highlighted the importance of ensuring the victim is supported – for example, asking the court to allow him or her to give evidence from behind screens or by video link. Also, it examined ways of strengthening the prosecution case, by using hearsay and 'bad character' evidence.

Other issues included how to deal with victim cross-examination which goes too far and to appeal against an unduly lenient sentence given to the defendant.

Under a separate initiative we have included doctors from the Havens, London's sexual assault referral centres, in our training programme.

Domestic safety for you

Domestic violence is the cause of one in four murders and nearly a quarter of all violent incidents reported in London.

The safety of victims and children is a major consideration when we decide whether to prosecute domestic violence cases.

We try to build cases on evidence other than that of the victim's. This may include evidence from the scene, the accounts of police officers and a record of 999 calls.

And we do not automatically halt a case when victims no longer wish to give evidence. Legislation allows us to compel a victim to attend court.

The cost of services to victims and lost economic output in London is estimated at £278 million a year. The distress to victims and their families is immeasurable.

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



Prosecuting hate crime for you

We regard hate crime as particularly serious. Everyone has a right to live free from fear and harassment.

CPS London is determined that those who victimise or assault people because of their race, religion or belief, sexuality or disabilities are brought to justice.

Certain offences can be prosecuted specifically as racist or religiously aggravated offences.

When we present evidence in court of racist or religious aggravation, or of homophobic aggravated crimes, or of disability aggravated crimes, the courts have a duty to impose a harsher sentence on the defendant.

We also work to ensure that offences with a transphobic element and crimes committed against disabled people because of their perceived vulnerability will also be treated more seriously.



A new way of giving you justice

Under a new way of dealing with certain offences, adult offenders who admit their guilt are offered a caution which has conditions attached.

If they fail to comply with the conditions, decided by CPS London prosecutors in consultation with police, they face the possibility of going to court for the original offence.

Conditional cautions offer a speedy way of delivering justice.

Around 50 have been issued in the six West Sector boroughs and by the British Transport Police Charging Centre in Tottenham Court Road since the scheme began at the end of 2006.

The conditions include agreement for offenders to undergo counselling for drugs and alcohol abuse, abiding by restrictions over visiting a place or contacting a person, and writing letters of apology and paying compensation to victims.

The scope of use was illustrated by a case in Acton arising from a neighbours' dispute.

A man who headbutted his victim causing cuts, bruises and a chipped tooth agreed to pay £350 compensation and apologise in writing.

Conditional cautioning will be introduced in all the capital's 32 boroughs and by the City of London Police by March 2008.



The Crown Prosecution Service
in London and you
 Working with our community

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CPS London Crown
 Advocate Gerard Martin at
 Snaresbrook Crown Court



What the CPS does for you

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

Our lawyers determine the charge in all but minor cases. They review the evidence gathered by police and decide whether the case should go to court.

Their work involves:

- deciding charges
- reviewing prosecutions to ensure the right defendants are prosecuted on the right charges before the right court
- preparing cases for court
- presenting cases in magistrates' courts, the Crown Court and higher courts.

In 2006-07, CPS London handled more than 236,000 magistrates' court cases and 22,200 Crown Court cases.

Our conviction rate in magistrates' courts in 2006-07 was 82.18 per cent (against 79.5 per cent the previous year). In the Crown Court the conviction rate was 71.04 per cent, compared with 70.7 per cent in 2005-06.

For further performance figures go to: www.cps.gov.uk, click on Publications, then Performance Management Information.

What you should know about us

Covering the capital's 32 boroughs, we deal with cases from the Metropolitan Police, City of London and British Transport Police.

We serve London's 35 magistrates' courts, 11 Crown Courts – including the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) – and youth courts.

Heading CPS London is Chief Crown Prosecutor Dru Sharpling, who has overall responsibility for the Area. She is supported by Operations Director Lesley Burton, in charge of business systems.

Within CPS London we have three regional sectors – North & East, West, and South (which includes a unit that processes all the city's traffic cases).

Our two specialist sectors are Serious Casework Sector, which handles casework and cases heard at the Old Bailey, and the Fraud Prosecution Service.

Each is led by a sector director – a senior lawyer/manager. They are Wendy Williams (North & East), Nazir Afzal (West), Simon Clements (South), René Barclay (Serious Casework Sector) and David Kirk (Fraud Prosecution Service).

We have nearly 1,400 staff, 75 per cent of whom are women. More than 43 per cent of staff are from black and minority ethnic communities. Disabled staff account for 4.3 per cent.

We work closely with the London Criminal Justice Board, run by the chief officers of all the capital's criminal justice agencies. The London CJB co-ordinates the activities of the agencies, helping to make our city safe from crime.

How we secure justice for you

Our decisions on whether or not to prosecute are governed by the principles set out in *The Code for Crown Prosecutors*. The full Code test has two stages:

The evidential stage

Our lawyers have to satisfy themselves that there is enough evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" against a defendant. No matter how important or serious it may be, if a case fails to pass the evidential test it does not go ahead.

The public interest stage

Our lawyers must then decide whether a prosecution is needed in the public interest. This will usually happen "unless there are public interest factors tending against prosecution which clearly outweigh those tending in favour..."

The threshold test

This is applied to cases where it would not be appropriate to release a suspect on bail after charge, but the evidence to apply the full Code test is not yet available. We have to decide whether there is "at least a reasonable suspicion" that the suspect has committed an offence.

The Code is available on: www.cps.gov.uk/London under Publications – CPS guides and leaflets.

Keeping you informed

Victims' Code

The *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* came into full effect in April 2006. This gives victims rights to minimum standards of service from the criminal justice service 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. Under the code victims should also be told about special measures that may be appropriate, such giving evidence in court via a video link.



Witness Care Units

Joint CPS London/Metropolitan Police Witness Care Units have been set up in each of the capital's 32 boroughs. Units have also been established by British Transport Police and City of London Police. These units provide a service to all victims and witnesses in cases where charges have been brought. This includes completing needs assessments, for example, to identify childcare or accessibility issues, providing updates on the progress of the case and organising familiarisation visits of courts before a trial.

Tackling fraudsters on your behalf

Our Fraud Prosecution Service (FPS) provides a specialist prosecution and advisory service for serious fraud cases in London and elsewhere in England and Wales.

Generally, it handles cases that are complex, sensitive, high profile, or involve large amounts of money. The amounts involved range from £250,000 to millions of pounds.

In London, it handles cases investigated by the Metropolitan Police Economic and Specialist Crime Division and by City of London Police.

As well as handling their own caseload, our fraud specialists provide legal advice and technical guidance to other prosecutors and police. They attend regular 'surgeries' with police.

The 30-plus team is led by David Kirk (pictured). With its main offices at Southwark Bridge, London, the FPS also has a team in York to handle cases from the northern part of the country.



Improving justice for you

As outlined elsewhere in this leaflet, convictions in London magistrates' courts and the Crown Court have risen in 2006-07.

The rate of ineffective trials – those unable to go ahead on the day they were scheduled to start and have to be re-listed for another date – has also improved.

In magistrates' courts, this fell from 24.4 per cent in 2005-06 to 19.9 per cent in 2006-07. Ineffective trials in Crown Courts dropped from 14.1 per cent to 13.4 per cent.

During the year we saved a considerable amount of public money by training and deploying our own lawyers to handle cases in the Crown Court and higher courts rather than instruct outside advocates to act for us.

By using 'in-house' Higher Court Advocates, we achieved savings of £1,724,085, against £784,678 in 2005-06.

Similarly, we increased the deployment of our Designated Caseworkers (DCWs), lay staff trained to deal with most matters in the magistrates' court, except trials, committals and the more serious indictable-only cases.

Deployment of DCWs rose 80 per cent, from 3,760 magistrates' court sessions in 2005-06 to 6,755 sessions in 2006-07. This meant 12 per cent of all magistrates' court sessions in London were handled by our DCWs.