

Our commitment to you

The CPS is working in partnership with other criminal justice system agencies to make the West Midlands a safer place to live, work and play. The chance of being a victim in this area is now at its lowest level for 20 years.



We have now established 10 Victim and Witness Teams across the Area. Staffed by the CPS and police, they provide timely information to victims and witnesses about the progress of their case. We aim to provide information to all victims and witnesses within 24 hours of key decisions being reached. We will support victims and witnesses in order to minimise the concerns often felt at the prospect of giving evidence before a court.

I hope that you will find the time to read this report and, if you wish to raise any issues of concern with us, our contact details are below.

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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.

The Area continues to train its prosecutors to equip them with up to date skills and knowledge required to prosecute homophobic crime cases. In February 2006 we launched our Homophobic Action Plan and hosted a seminar to provide guidance and advice to prosecutors on handling cases of this nature.

Area information

CPS West Midlands is the second largest Area in England and Wales, responsible to a population of some 2.6 million people. The Area currently employs 550 members of staff, with 168 of those lawyers. In 2005/06 we prosecuted over 120,000 cases in the Crown Courts and Magistrates' Courts.

West Midlands is one of the most diverse, multi-cultural parts of the country. This is reflected in our staff profile and the nature of community engagements currently being undertaken by CPS.

The Area divides naturally in to three – The Black Country (Western Sector), Birmingham (Central Sector) and Coventry (Eastern Sector).

There are co-located Units with the police at:

- Birmingham
- Solihull
- Bournville
- Brierley Hill
- Coventry
- Halesowen
- Warley
- Wolverhampton
- Sutton Coldfield
- Walsall
- West Bromwich



The Crown Prosecution Service in the West Midlands and

YOU

...working with our community



"Future" by Robert Bowers, Brindley Place, Birmingham.



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 51,714 magistrates' court cases and over 5,450 Crown Court cases. In 2005-06, the Area finalised 111,694 cases in the magistrates' court of which 43,855 were referred to the Pre Charge Decision and 8,409 finalised

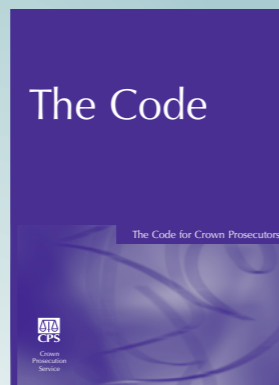
cases in the Crown Court.

Pictured left: Assistant Chief Constable David Shaw from West Midlands Police and Director of Public Prosecutions Ken Macdonald open the Birmingham Prosecution Team Unit.



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

One of the continued main priorities for the Area in 2005-2006 was to increase the public's confidence in the CPS. Through the successful community engagement programme, which we have been running over the last three years, the Area is proud to say that we continued to achieve this priority and in May 2005 at the prestigious inaugural Law Society and the Commission for Racial Equality Solicitors' Race Equality Awards 2005, CPS West Midlands were awarded the winners award in the category 'Best Service Provider In-House Legal Department and Public Sector'.

In making this award, the judges were impressed by the range of activities, such as mentoring schemes with local universities, the use of ethnic media to explain and provide information about the work of the CPS and training staff to work with local communities were all undertaken to try to improve confidence, especially that of BME communities.

Pictured from left: CRE Chair Trevor Philips, Law Society Chief Executive Janet Paraskeva, Vinny Bolina, CPS, Lord Falconer, Lord Chancellor, David Blundell, CPS, Nicky Campbell, BBC.



Working for you

We are committed in ensuring all of our staff possess the right skills to perform their duties and to provide a world class prosecution service to the community that we serve.

Since its launch in 2004, we have sponsored 46 members of staff to progress through the CPS Law Scholarship Scheme, which offers all grades of staff opportunities to higher education.

In 2003, we became the first CPS Area to sign up to the Public Sector Compact, which has been created to bring together public sector organisations, raise the profile of public services, staff development and to make the public sector an employer of choice.

Under this joint working and in conjunction with the Chartered Management Institute, the Diploma in Public Service Leadership was created to equip today's public service leaders with the skills to become public service leaders of tomorrow. In 2005, all five CPS managers passed this course.



Pictured: The Chief Crown Prosecutor and Area Business Manager (centre) at the passing out ceremony for the Diploma in Public Service Leadership.

Working together for you

In 2003 a new Local Criminal Justice Board was created to transform the way the criminal justice system works. The overall aim of the new Board is to catch, convict and rehabilitate more criminals in the West Midlands.

The Board was established after national research showed that in 2000/2001, over five million crimes were recorded but only a fifth of them (1.2 million) resulted in offenders being brought to justice. This is known as the 'justice gap'. The Board is made up of representatives from the Police, CPS, Magistrates' Court, Crown Court, Probation Service, Prison Service and Youth Offending Teams.

The Board is particularly concerned at tackling the following four main areas:

- persistent offenders
- specific types of priority crime - street crime, house burglary, usage of knives and hate crimes including domestic violence cases
- weaknesses in the criminal justice process
- providing support for victims and witnesses.

WEST MIDLANDS
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Criminal Justice System: working together for the public

