



**CPS**

# Casework Quality Standards

October 2014

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## Introduction

These standards are issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

The DPP is the head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which is the principal public prosecution service for England and Wales. The DPP operates independently under the superintendence of the Attorney General who is accountable to Parliament for the work of the CPS.

These standards set out the benchmarks of quality that we strive to deliver in prosecuting crime for the public. The standards are an important way in which we can demonstrate our values of treating everyone with respect, being independent and fair, being honest and open, behaving professionally and striving for excellence.

This second edition of the standards replaces the previous Core Quality Standards document in respect of casework and sits alongside the [Complaints Handling and Community Engagement Quality Standards](#).

Detailed guidance about how we deal with particular aspects of our work can be found in the Legal Guidance section on our website at [www.cps.gov.uk](http://www.cps.gov.uk).

## Overarching principles

1. The work of all those employed by the CPS should be carried out in a way that accords with the CPS Code of Conduct and the CPS Values, both published on our website: [www.cps.gov.uk](http://www.cps.gov.uk)
2. All work carried out should be in accordance with these overarching principles and follow a clear strategy moving the case towards a just outcome.
3. We are responsible for making decisions and dealing with our work in a way that is:
  - Fair to victims and witnesses and in accordance with the Victims Code
  - Fair to suspects and defendants
  - Proportionate to what is required to achieve a just outcome
  - Responsive to the concerns of the communities we serve
4. Prosecutors make decisions in accordance with:
  - the law
  - [the Code for Crown Prosecutors](#)
  - guidance issued by the Attorney General
  - relevant policies and guidance issued by the DPP

## **Standard 1: Victims, witnesses and communities**

We recognise that criminal offences have an impact on individuals and communities as does our work. This standard covers our responsibilities in this respect.

### **The benchmarks of quality are:**

1. Treating victims and witnesses with respect and understanding.
2. Prosecuting in a way that is fair to all and reflects the wider public interest.
3. Taking account of the rights, interests and needs of victims and witnesses.
4. Taking necessary steps to secure victim participation, where appropriate and protecting their rights in the court process.
5. Consulting, where it is appropriate to do so, in order to make properly informed decisions.
6. Making correct, properly reasoned decisions which can be explained to and understood by those affected.
7. Communicating effectively so that victims, witnesses and communities are given the right information at the right time.
8. Challenging court decisions, including by way of appeal or review, where appropriate.

## Standard 2: Legal decision-making

This standard covers three areas of work:

- Advising the police and other investigators
- Deciding whether to authorise charges
- Making and reviewing decisions in cases that have been charged

### **The benchmarks of quality are:**

1. Giving advice which contributes to the investigation reaching a proper and timely outcome.
2. Giving timely and effective advice.
3. Correctly applying the law and the Code for Crown Prosecutors in each case.
4. Making timely decisions as to whether or not to prosecute, including whether to continue to prosecute.
5. Making decisions which are properly informed, reasoned and take account of key evidence, unused material and the likely issues
6. Formulating a prosecution strategy and ensuring that decisions taken in accordance with the strategy contribute to the effective conduct of the case through to a just outcome.
7. Considering and recording decisions digitally in a way which is accurate and proportionate so that our position is clear, can be understood by others, and is capable of withstanding challenge.
8. Identifying cases involving a Proceeds of Crime “benefit”, and setting a strategy to prevent criminals from retaining a financial advantage from crime.

### **Standard 3: Casework preparation**

This standard covers the work involved in preparing cases for court.

#### **The benchmarks of quality are:**

1. Thinking ahead, anticipating and resolving issues.
2. Taking all appropriate steps to ensure that the right information is available to the advocate and or decision-maker at the right time, so that progress is made.
3. Communicating effectively and promptly with victims, witnesses, the police, the courts, defendants and their representatives and others who rely on us.
4. Complying with our procedural obligations such as those relating to disclosure, and those set out in the Criminal Procedure Rules, and holding other parties to account.
5. Continually reviewing the remand status of defendants, and ensuring that custody time limit cases are dealt with in accordance with the national standard.
6. Recording digitally what we have done, promptly, in a way which is accurate and proportionate, so that our position is clear and work is not duplicated.

## Standard 4: Presentation

This standard covers the work of prosecutors and paralegals at court. This is not limited to appearances in trials: it includes all written and oral representations.

### **The benchmarks of quality are:**

1. Taking control of the case, commanding the confidence of the court and being decisive and pro-active.
2. Assisting the court throughout the proceedings, including sentence, being fair and professional at all times.
3. Preparing properly so that each hearing can be suitably progressed.
4. Engaging with defendants and their representatives fairly and effectively.
5. Effectively engaging with victims and witnesses
6. Understanding and properly representing the interests of victims, witnesses and the public.
7. Opposing bail where it is appropriate to do so, taking account of the risk posed to victims, the public and the course of justice.
8. Anticipating and responding effectively to challenges.
9. Presenting the prosecution case clearly, effectively and persuasively
10. Recording digitally court hearing events, outcomes and actions, promptly, in a way which is accurate and proportionate, so that our position is clear and work is not duplicated.