



# Complaints handling & Community Engagement Standards

July 2015

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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.

These standards replace the previous Core Quality Standards document in respect of complaints handling and community engagement and sit alongside the [CPS: Casework Quality Standards](#).

## 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. The CPS has an Independent Assessor of Complaints who reports to the CPS Board on compliance with the standards. The CPS Community Accountability Forum scrutinises CPS policies to ensure we receive feedback on our case handling procedures, policies and practices. Each operational unit reports twice a year on its compliance with these standards through the certificate of assurance.
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 ([Insert Link](#))
  - guidance issued by the Attorney General
  - relevant policies and guidance issued by the DPP

## Standard 1: Complaints handling

We will provide a service that complies with the principles of effective complaints handling.

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

1. Responding to complaints effectively, sensitively, fairly and thoroughly.
2. Getting it right, taking account of the rights of complainants by acting in accordance with relevant law and providing clear governance to complaints management.
3. Being victim focused, listening to complainants and providing an accessible complaints service with clear and simple procedures.
4. Being open and accountable, providing honest evidence based explanations as well as publishing clear information and service standards.
5. Acting fairly and proportionately, without discrimination ensuring that complaints are investigated thoroughly and decisions are proportionate, appropriate and fair.
6. Putting things right, acknowledging mistakes and apologising where appropriate with prompt and proportionate remedies.
7. Seeking continuous improvement, by regularly reviewing and using all feedback and the lessons learnt from complaints to improve service design and delivery.

## Standard 2: Community engagement

We will engage with communities so that we are aware of their concerns when we make decisions and develop policies and practices.

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

8. Having in place effective governance and reporting arrangements that assist in the management of national and local priorities and that quality assure and monitor community engagement e.g. Local Scrutiny and Involvement Partnerships.
9. Explaining our role and consulting on our business priorities with local communities and diverse groups, particularly those defined as having protected characteristics in the Equality Act (2010).
10. Responding proactively to feedback to help set local and national priorities that impact positively on casework quality.
11. Working with partners such as the police, courts, police and crime commissioners, locally elected officials and third sector organisations as appropriate to respond to the priorities that emerge in neighbourhoods and communities”.

[www.cps.gov.uk](http://www.cps.gov.uk)

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