

CPS response to HMCPSI report on Better Case Management

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) has issued a report today [3 November 2016] which reviews the Crown Prosecution Service's contribution to the multi-agency Better Case Management (BCM) initiative led by the Senior Presiding Judge.

The Chief Inspector has recognised the complex nature of these fundamental reforms to Crown Court casework and has accepted that his Inspection occurred very soon after the implementation of BCM and the related Crown Court Digital Case System (DCS). We thank the Chief Inspector and his team for the constructive way in which they have engaged with the CPS throughout the review, and for their acknowledgement of the progress made in delivering this significant change.

We are pleased to note that the Inspectorate has commented positively on the principles of BCM and the CPS contribution to the planning and implementation of this initiative at a national and local level. The report notes that there are sound governance arrangements in place and that significant resource materials and training for CPS staff has been provided. There is a high level of engagement from our members of staff, particularly in relation to the DCS, and early data indicates an excellent level of decision making, with 99.4% of CPS decisions to charge being compliant with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

These findings are largely consistent with the results of CPS internal assurance processes, which show a steady improvement in compliance with BCM and, in some instances, that the CPS is taking a more robust view of performance than the Inspectorate.

Whilst the Inspectorate has not made any recommendations requiring action, it has identified a number of compliance issues. The CPS acknowledges that, whilst significant progress has been made over a short period of time, there is more to be done to embed new processes. Prior to Inspection, we had disclosed to the Inspectorate the results of the CPS own internal assurance returns which revealed where issues remained.

The Crown Prosecution Service is fully committed to continue supporting the Senior Presiding Judge's Better Case Management initiative and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service's Crown Court Digital Case System. Since receiving early feedback from the Inspectorate, the CPS has held a Forum of BCM leads from the 13 geographical Areas to reinforce the requirements of BCM and to maintain this level of engagement.

Given that the success of Better Case Management depends upon a collaborative cross agency approach, we will continue to work with our partners in the Criminal Justice System to ensure that performance in the Crown Court continues to improve, and use regular compliance checks to ensure that progress is maintained.