



Crown Prosecution Service response to HMCSPI report on Transforming Summary Justice

22 February 2016

CPS response to HMCPSI report on Transforming Summary Justice

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) has issued a report today [22 February 2016] which reviews the Crown Prosecution Service's contribution to the multi-agency Transforming Summary Justice initiative (TSJ).

We are pleased to note that the Inspectorate's findings and suggestions are largely consistent with the results of the CPS's own internal TSJ compliance reviews. These were completed in December 2015 and Areas have been issued with individual action plans setting out issues to be addressed with improvements or changes to be monitored.

The Crown Prosecution Service is fully committed to the TSJ programme. We will continue to monitor and develop the way we work with our partner agencies to ensure that performance in the magistrates' courts continues to improve.

National governance of the programme will remain the responsibility of our Magistrates' Court Business Board. Assurance of Area compliance will continue, and will commence with a national review by our Internal Assurance Officer to analyse performance and suggest improvements.

Inspectorate's Suggested Steps

1. Consideration is given to a national forum comprising the CPS Area TSJ leads and national project team representatives. Inspectors understand that this already happens in respect of the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences work and that feedback is positive. This has the potential to save resources by sharing good practice, build engagement and maintain momentum.

CPS Response: We will implement the Report's suggestion to set up a national forum with Area TSJ leads and the national project team, to formalise the structure for sharing of good practice and maintain focus.

2. Consideration is given at a national level to the training of administrative staff to ensure that they are best equipped to carry out their roles. This is particularly important with the advent of Better Case Management which is an initiative being piloted to improve the way in which cases are managed in the Crown Court. A national package would be the best tool to assist in this regard and would save duplication across the different CPS areas.

CPS Response: Our Administrative staff attended overview and familiarisation courses prior to TSJ national rollout. However, to ensure they are best equipped to carry out their roles, we are also delivering training on our case management system (CMS) to ensure full compliance with the magistrates' court standard operating practice, which sets out how to follow the correct procedures for TSJ. All administrative staff are also receiving training on the Better Case Management initiative and the linked standard operating practice for our Crown Court work. A future national training plan for all staff in respect of digital working and CMS use is also being planned within the operational delivery development programme in 2016.

3. We suggest that the national Transforming Summary Justice Group (TSJG) re-examines the disclosure forms, and considers simplification, so that the police fill out the same form whether the particular case is destined for the Crown Court or the Magistrates.

CPS Response: We will give careful consideration to the Inspectorate's suggestion that the Streamlined Disclosure forms are re-examined, and will work with the police to identify further training and support that may be required.

4. We find that inclusion of the MGDDA documentation in guilty anticipated plea drink drive cases improves the chances of an early guilty plea being entered at the first hearing. Consideration should be given to seeking an agreement with the police to include this documentation.

CPS Response: Early indications illustrate that the removal of MGDDA forms makes no discernible difference to the guilty plea rate. However, we will work collaboratively with the police and others to consider the Inspectorate's suggestion that this documentation should be included in anticipated guilty plea drink drive cases.

5. Consideration should be given to revisiting the optimum number of cases to be listed in the NGAP and GAP courts in the light of operational experience at the national TSJG.

CPS Response: The correct weighting of court sessions is a vital component of the TSJ model. Area Local Implementation Teams report to the multi-agency national TSJ Working Group on their listing practices which were set against pre-agreed criteria. The CPS continues to work closely with HMCTS and the Police on listing matters.