



HM CPSI

HM Crown Prosecution
Service Inspectorate

Individual Quality Assessments

**An inspection of how the
Crown Prosecution Service
uses individual quality
assessments to monitor and
improve casework quality**

February 2025

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Who we are

HMCPsi inspects prosecution services, providing evidence to make the prosecution process better and more accountable.

We have a statutory duty to inspect the work of the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office. By special arrangement, we also share our expertise with other prosecution services in the UK and overseas.

We are independent of the organisations we inspect, and our methods of gathering evidence and reporting are open and transparent. We do not judge or enforce; we inform prosecution services' strategies and activities by presenting evidence of good practice and issues to address. Independent inspections like these help to maintain trust in the prosecution process.

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1. Chief Inspector's foreword

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases in England and Wales. This requires it to make legal decisions about who to prosecute, for what offence(s) and how the prosecution will prove its case. All this taken together is often referred to as casework, and it is the core function of the CPS. It follows, therefore, that high-quality casework is not only important, but a fundamental cornerstone of an effective and efficient prosecution service and ultimately of the Criminal Justice System.

In 2021-2022, we published a series of inspections of the 14 geographical Areas of the CPS, assessing the quality of its casework, followed by a composite report published in 2023 drawing together the findings of those 14 reports. We found that there was more to do to improve the quality of casework, particularly around case analysis and trial strategy.

As well as the external scrutiny that HMCPSI provides to assess the quality of legal decision-making, the CPS has its own internal first line assurance mechanisms to assess the quality of its own work. This is the Individual Quality Assessment (IQA) system.

When we inspect CPS Areas, we are often told by senior managers that they know about the standard of their own casework through IQA results. We last inspected the CPS's own internal assessment system in 2018. In that inspection we found that IQA had the potential to drive improvement in casework quality, but the standard of assessments and the way in which they were carried out was not consistent. Although it is clear that much has happened in the intervening period, including the CPS relaunching the IQA system, revising guidance and delivering a programme of training to support consistency, it is disappointing to see, given the weight placed on IQA as a way to assess and improve casework quality, that in 2024, our findings largely replicate what we found in 2018.

The CPS needs to be clear about what it is trying to do to assess its own casework and drive improvements in quality. The current system has some benefits, and some lawyers and managers thought that there were positive aspects to the process. If IQA is to drive real improvement, then it needs to be seen as supportive, presenting an opportunity to coach, mentor and develop legal expertise. The current system is seen by many as data collection and is often reduced to a tick-box exercise, which diminishes its value. The findings of this inspection highlight that the CPS needs to reconsider its approach to monitoring and measuring casework quality.

We make one recommendation: for the CPS to review whether the arrangements in place are the right ones to deliver improvements in casework quality. In discussion with senior leaders in the CPS, it appears that there is an appetite to make radical change.

Given our findings and recommendation, we intend to follow up this inspection in the 2026-27 inspection period so that those who superintend the CPS will know if

there has been any progress and that any action taken has resulted in the necessary improvements.

Anthony Rogers
HM Chief Inspector

2. Summary, conclusions and recommendation

Summary

2.1. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has used Individual Quality Assessment (IQA) as its main first line assurance tool for assessing the quality of its legal decision-making and case progression for the past ten years. It is the primary tool for front line managers and prosecutors in CPS Areas to assure and improve the quality of its casework and the service it provides to the public.

2.2. The purpose of IQA is to ensure that casework is undertaken in accordance with the CPS's standards and values, that individual prosecutors are supported and developed, and that general themes and issues are identified so that further action can be taken to bring about improvement.

2.3. Assessments are carried out by legal managers. They should select cases that are still in progress and are sufficiently through the prosecution process to allow a meaningful assessment to take place. As they are *individual* quality assessments, managers should select cases for the prosecutors they are assessing where that prosecutor has carried out sufficient work for it to be a valid assessment. The manager's assessment of quality should be carried out in accordance with national guidance. A proportion of those assessments are then quality assured by senior legal managers to ensure that they are suitably robust and that good practice and areas for improvement are identified.

2.4. Fundamentally, we found that the IQA process can be effective in supporting the aims of continuous improvement and delivering high-quality casework if operated properly. However, the evidence from our inspection shows that this is too often not the case; there is a lack of compliance with the guidance and significant inconsistencies in the marking of casework assessments and in whether and how feedback is given, as well as a lack of rigour in how the assurance is carried out. These issues undermine the effectiveness of IQA in delivering high-quality casework.

Findings

2.5. Although in most CPS Areas the required number of IQAs were being completed, we found that cases were being selected for IQA when they were not live or had not been sufficiently progressed. The guidance stipulates that cases selected for IQA should be both live and sufficiently progressed to enable a meaningful assessment of performance to be made and to enable prompt remedial action to be undertaken if the IQA identifies it. We also saw cases where the prosecutor being assessed, although named as the prosecutor responsible for the case on the CPS's case management system, had carried out little casework, significantly limiting the value of the assessment that could be made. As they are individual quality assessments, only the casework completed by the prosecutor

being assessed can be considered. Selecting cases for IQA that fall outside the guidance, while appearing to meet the target in terms of numbers, adds little value and misses the opportunity to use it as an effective tool to improve casework quality.

2.6. The IQA guidance is generally helpful but could be improved. The guidance sets out a list of issues to address for each question that should be considered by the legal manager when assessing a prosecutor's work. The guidance assists in identifying those areas where prosecutors have met CPS standards and those where they have not. It also assists managers in identifying key factors that make a material difference to casework and would inform a yes or no assessment, and those issues that could properly be addressed by way of feedback. However, the guidance is unclear in places, particularly in relation to the disclosure questions and the differentiation between pre-charge and post-charge questions.

2.7. We found that the IQA guidance is not being applied consistently. We saw instances of managers even within the same Area marking differently for the same error or omission.

2.8. We saw many examples of legal managers not being robust in their assessments, meaning that key issues that may have adversely affected the case were left unchallenged. Fundamental issues were minimised, missed altogether, or picked up only as feedback or areas to improve when they reasonably merited a 'no' response. These are missed opportunities to improve the quality of casework.

2.9. A conversation should take place between the legal manager and the prosecutor following every IQA, but we found that this was not routinely the case. Our file examination results revealed that in over half of the IQAs we examined, there was no evidence of a meaningful conversation between the legal manager and the prosecutor. This is the most important and valuable part of the IQA process as it provides an opportunity to discuss, coach and develop, and to ensure that learning is embedded. Where conversations were taking place, they were well-received by the prosecutors we spoke to.

2.10. The assurance process added little value in most of the cases we examined and again missed the opportunity for senior legal managers to coach and develop their legal managers to positively influence casework quality. Quality assurance through dip checking is an important part of the IQA process, as it provides senior legal managers with an opportunity to ensure that the assessments being carried out by their legal managers are consistent, robust and in accordance with the IQA guidance. We found many quality assurers were not robust when assessing the work of the legal manager and that the quality assurer

often agreed with the legal manager's assessment when it was incorrect or missed key issues, and feedback should have been provided. We also identified other themes during the file examination, with quality assurers commenting on the work of the prosecutor rather than the quality of the legal manager's assessment and failing to identify where legal managers had not held conversations with prosecutors.

2.11. Most legal managers we spoke to cited capacity as an impediment to effective IQAs. They considered IQAs to be a useful tool to identify casework issues, and that ideally would like to conduct more assessments, but that they did not have the time due to competing priorities and commitments. This view was shared by some of the prosecutors we spoke to who said that they would welcome more assessments as they felt IQAs helped them learn and develop.

Conclusions and recommendation

2.12. We found that, when done well, IQAs can lead to improvement on an individual basis. We saw examples of the IQA guidance being properly and robustly applied with meaningful conversations taking place which then led to an improvement in individual cases. We saw isolated examples of effective dip sampling at the assurance stage. However, the inconsistencies in application of the guidance, generally and in answering the specific questions, are profound, and as such it is hard to see how they can be effectively addressed.

2.13. At present, the need to carry out a certain number of assessments per quarter and to record this on the IQA application appears to drive the process and, at times, has become a 'tick-box' exercise in much the same way as the CPS's previous quality assessment systems. There is a lack of compliance with the process, and it is seen as an 'add-on', rather than part of the core role for legal managers.

2.14. The overarching aim of IQA is to assess the quality of the CPS's casework and to assist in making improvements at prosecutor, team, Area and national level. We could not establish a link between IQA and such improvements on a systemic level.

2.15. We are acutely conscious of the considerable pressure prosecutors and legal managers in the CPS are under with higher volumes of caseloads than ever before. Finding the time to complete IQAs was cited as a barrier to being able to carry out IQA in a meaningful way. Improving the quality of casework will ultimately make for a more effective and efficient approach that will, at least in part, reduce the pressures. Many of the other measures to reduce pressures are outside the control of the CPS, but improving the quality of casework is not.

2.16. Legal managers have case conversations with their prosecutors every day and it is a fundamental part of the role. Generally, they do not use these conversations as the basis for selecting a case for IQA; instead they select cases, often towards the end of the quarter, and review them separately, assess and rate the case and then, in some but not all cases, have a conversation with the prosecutor afterwards. This does not provide a collaborative or coaching environment in which to have a conversation about casework quality. To many prosecutors it can feel like the legal manager has made their assessment already and they are simply being notified of it.

2.17. The inconsistencies and issues have an impact on the integrity of the data collated from IQA about the quality of the CPS's casework and whether it is in accordance with the standards expected.

2.18. In our view, the evidence from our inspections suggests that the CPS needs to fundamentally change the way it assesses and improves casework quality. At the frontline this should include:

- putting case conversations at the heart of any casework assessment to facilitate a coaching approach to supervision that allows for learning and development of both prosecutors and legal managers
- focusing assessments on cases, with feedback going to prosecutors who have contributed to the overall legal decision-making and management of the case so more value is added through each case assessed
- ensuring that there are intuitive digital tools to support any process, but that these do not drive the process
- assurance that adds value and supports development of prosecutors and legal managers
- ensuring that case strategy principles form a key component in line with CPS priorities

| Recommendation |
|---|
| <p>The CPS should use the findings from this inspection of IQA to consider, develop and implement a new approach to how it assesses casework quality. A crucial aspect of any new approach will be strong leadership and management, ensuring accountability at the first line assurance level to drive the initiative forward.</p> <p>By 31 July 2025 to have designed and planned a new approach.</p> |

By 31 March 2026 to have implemented the new approach to first line assurance of its casework quality.

Given the importance of high-quality casework, HMCPSI will carry out a follow-up inspection early in its 2026-27 business plan cycle.

3. Introduction

Background and context

3.1. In March 2010, the Director of Public Prosecutions published a set of Core Quality Standards for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which were devised to inform the public about the standards they could expect from those who prosecute on their behalf and to set out what was expected of CPS staff. The standards were supplementary to other legal and policy guidance issued to CPS staff. In the same year, the CPS also introduced a mechanism by which they could assess compliance with the standards. This scheme, the Core Quality Standards Monitoring (CQSM) scheme, was a process by which CPS managers assessed the quality of casework.

3.2. The Core Quality Standards were revised and re-named Casework Quality Standards (CQS)¹ in 2014. In October of the same year, Individual Quality Assessment (IQA) was introduced to replace CQSM, which had lost credibility as it had become a ‘tick-box’ exercise. IQA was designed to assess compliance with the CQS by evaluating casework and advocacy conducted by individual prosecutors. It therefore focused on four key stages of individual contributions to a case: advice, charging and review, case progression, and case presentation.

IQA is the CPS’s main first line assurance tool for assessing the quality of its casework.

3.3. IQA is the CPS’s main first line assurance tool for assessing the quality of its casework and improving the quality of service provided to the public. Assessments are carried out by legal managers selecting cases and assessing the

quality of the work of individual prosecutors in accordance with the IQA guidance, which is available to all prosecutors and managers.

3.4. IQAs are carried out by CPS Area legal managers on the prosecutors in their teams. There are casework IQAs, relating to legal decision-making and case management (non-advocacy IQAs) and separate advocacy IQAs relating to the standard of advocacy at court (advocacy IQAs). The number of assessments carried out per year and per member of the team varies according to the team and the work completed. For ‘volume crime’ units² managers are required to undertake four non-advocacy assessments per prosecutor, per year.

3.5. Of those assessments carried out by legal managers, 10% are quality assured each quarter by senior legal managers against CPS IQA guidance.

¹ www.cps.gov.uk/publication/casework-quality-standards

² Prosecutions carried out by CPS Areas, other than those dealt with by complex casework units and rape and serious sexual offences units.

3.6. The overall purpose of IQA is to:

- ensure that casework management and decisions match CPS standards and values
- enable managers to provide advice and support to their prosecutors
- encourage managers and prosecutors to work together to improve the quality of service provided.

3.7. IQA is designed to drive improvements in two distinct but connected ways. Firstly, via direct feedback between the legal managers and prosecutor, and secondly, the data obtained from IQA assessments, both at national and Area level, helps identify general standards and themes and any need for additional quality assurance, further or updated guidance, and/or training to bring about improvement.

3.8. HMCPsi last inspected the IQA regime in 2018³ when we identified a lack of robustness in some assessments conducted by legal managers compared to the same assessments conducted by inspectors. In 2018, findings suggested that CPS managers were not always giving the necessary feedback, and more could be done to ensure the accuracy of data. Since the 2018 report, the CPS has revised and refreshed its IQA regime. Assessments are still carried out by legal managers, but there is also a requirement for senior legal managers to now dip sample a percentage of legal managers' IQA assessments.

3.9. The CPS updated the IQA process and guidance on 1 October 2021. Further minor changes to the guidance were made on 1 July 2023.

Methodology

3.10. The objective of the inspection was to ascertain the following: to what extent do Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs) carried out in Areas support the CPS aims of continuous improvement and delivering high-quality casework?

3.11. Inspectors examined non-advocacy/casework IQAs for each of the 14 geographical CPS Areas. We did not examine assessments carried out on case presentation (advocacy) because we were unable to observe the advocacy and make an independent assessment. The IQAs we selected came from magistrates' court teams and Crown Court teams, which deal with the majority of the CPS's caseload. We did not examine IQAs relating to rape and serious sexual offences

³ *The Operation of Individual Quality Assessments in the CPS*; CPS; March 2018, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20200701122949/https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmcpsi/inspections/the-operation-of-individual-quality-assessments-in-the-cps-mar-18/>

or those from specialist casework divisions or complex casework units. Our assessments were carried out using the CPS's own standards and guidance.

3.12. We aimed to examine 15 IQAs per CPS Area - ten from the magistrates' court team and five from the Crown Court team. However, due to the CPS's retention and disposal policy⁴, our file sample was short by three magistrates' IQAs. In total, across all CPS Areas, we examined 207 IQAs – 137 magistrates' court and 70 Crown Court.

3.13. We selected the most recently completed IQAs to get the most up-to-date position, with each IQA that we examined carried out after 1 November 2022. This allowed us to assess how well the refreshed CPS IQA guidance published in October 2021 was being applied by Areas.

3.14. Every IQA we examined was also one that had been quality assured by a senior legal manager, so we could assess the impact of the assurance process.

3.15. We reviewed and assessed the quality of IQAs completed by legal managers against CPS IQA guidance (October 2022/July 2023 as appropriate). For each assessment, we determined whether we (the inspector) agreed with the answer recorded by the legal manager ('yes', 'no', or 'not applicable'), whether good practice and areas for improvement had been recorded, and considered any case actions noted. The full question set is in Annex C.

3.16. For each assessment, we also looked at the standard of the quality assurance undertaken by the senior legal manager.

3.17. We assessed the effectiveness of the Area in using IQAs and quality assurance findings to identify and address individual development needs and to identify themes to allow it to improve the quality of its casework, share best practice and celebrate success.

3.18. We selected four CPS Areas⁵ to visit and carry out interviews with prosecutors, legal managers and senior legal managers. These interviews took place in July and September 2024. The Areas were chosen to represent a range of casework ratings against CPS levels of ambition and the number of IQAs they were conducting.

⁴ A decision was made by the CPS that the moratorium on destruction of casework could be lifted, this was effective from 6 August 2024. This led to the removal of some older cases from the CPS's system.

⁵ North East, South West, Thames and Chiltern, and Mersey-Cheshire

3.19. We were supplied with key documents by the four Areas and CPS headquarters. We reviewed these documents alongside data from IQAs for the Areas, the CPS nationally and other CPS performance data.

3.20. In the Areas visited, we held focus groups with prosecutors whose work is subject to assessment, the legal managers who carry out assessments and we interviewed senior managers who are involved in quality assuring IQA. We also spoke to relevant staff at CPS headquarters, including the director of operational change and delivery, the deputy director of operational performance, and staff in the Legal Assurance team.

3.21. This inspection was led by legal inspector Emma Jones. She was assisted by senior legal inspectors Jeetinder Sarmotta and Rachael Pavion, and legal inspectors Gavin Hernandez, Daniel Caan and Leanne Townsend.

3.22. We extend our thanks to all in the CPS who assisted with this inspection.

4. Guidance and IQA application

IQA Guidance

4.1. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) refreshed its Individual Quality Assessment (IQA) guidance in October 2021, to ensure that IQA was more relevant to the way in which the CPS was operating and to reflect the changing profile of its workforce.

4.2. There were three primary changes:

- fewer questions – in addition to being fewer in number, the questions became more open and covered a wider range of work. This was intended to allow managers to take a broader view of the casework quality in each individual case
- separate recording of good practice, where the standard in relation to any particular question was reached
- meaningful conversations to be held – managers and prosecutors alike attested to the benefits of IQA being focused on a conversation to discuss the findings of the assessment, either remotely or face-to-face.

4.3. The guidance was further updated on 1 July 2023 to reflect the launch of the new IQA application on 3 October 2022, and a requirement to assess domestic abuse and rape cases at least once a year.

4.4. The guidance accompanies a set of 12 questions, designed to assess the prosecutor's handling of the case with an emphasis on casework quality, added value and grip. The guidance aligns with the CPS's case strategy principles⁶, which assist managers in the standards to be applied for each question.

4.5. The guidance document also provides specific guidance on answering questions. In deciding whether they agree that the standard outlined in each question has been reached, legal managers are expected to be able to reference and apply the Code for Crown Prosecutors as well as the relevant law, policy and guidance. For each question, there are several 'issues to address', which are a good indicator of the matters that the manager ought to consider.

4.6. Legal managers are required to make assessments that are reasonable and proportionate.

⁶ Ten case strategy principles outlining the responsibilities of a prosecutor in developing a case strategy when prosecuting a case.

4.7. The guidance stipulates that cases selected for IQA are live and sufficiently progressed to enable a meaningful assessment of performance to be made. However, nothing in the guidance precludes the undertaking of focused or themed assessments.

4.8. The guidance stresses the importance of using IQA to identify learning and actions for the CPS Area as a whole, and not solely individual prosecutors.

4.9. The legal manager records their assessment using an online application designed for the purpose, and records an answer of 'yes', 'no' or 'not applicable' for the questions relevant to the activity being assessed. The IQA application also allows legal managers to add comments to explain their assessments.

4.10. The IQA application allows for the recording of comments identifying good practice and areas for improvement in every case, whether or not the standard has been met for each question.

4.11. The IQA application contains a separate free text box for recording specific casework actions for the case and when they should be followed up. The legal manager should identify any actions for the case that the prosecutor will need to address if the case is to proceed in an effective way to a successful conclusion. The actions can be given a date for conclusion, which can be before or after the conversation with the prosecutor.

4.12. Prosecutors are also able to use the IQA application to record their comments in response to the assessment and the feedback provided to them. However, this is not a mandatory requirement under the guidance.

4.13. Senior managers (senior district crown prosecutors and/or deputy chief crown prosecutors) in each Area take the lead on monitoring and are responsible for reporting casework quality to the chief crown prosecutor. To ensure that assessments are robust and consistent, senior managers are required to dip sample 10% of IQAs undertaken in their Area each quarter. The guidance says that the size of this sample must be 10% of all the IQAs undertaken for each of the two categories, casework and advocacy, in any quarter. The guidance does not set any requirement that each legal manager has a minimum number of their IQAs dip sampled. This quality assurance requirement was introduced to enable senior managers to identify areas for improvement and good practice in all aspects of casework, as well as ensuring that the quality of assessments made by legal managers is monitored and assured, and that any development needs are addressed.

4.14. The current IQA guidance does not require senior managers to record comments in relation to each IQA standard when carrying out their quality

assurance and does not address how and when the dip sampler should provide feedback to the legal manager. However, the IQA application does require that a comment is entered for an IQA to be marked as having been dip sampled.

Findings

4.15. It is our view that the IQA guidance provided some assistance when completing assessments, but that it could be improved.

4.16. The list of points to be considered for each question is helpful, as it assists in identifying those areas where prosecutors have met CPS standards and those where they have not. It also assists legal managers in identifying key issues that make a material difference to casework and would inform a yes or no assessment, and those issues that could properly be addressed in areas for improvement.

4.17. However, the guidance was confusing in places and we found that this was contributing to its inconsistent application by legal managers. Specifically:

- the general distinction between pre-charge questions and post-charge questions was not clearly defined in the guidance
- we found many examples of legal managers answering the post-charge questions when carrying out IQAs on pre-charge cases
- when carrying out IQAs on post-charge cases, we found issues with the distinction between the pre-charge disclosure⁷ question (Q3) and the post-charge initial disclosure⁸ question (Q9)
- we found many examples of legal managers answering Q3 and Q9 with the same comments when initial disclosure had been addressed at the pre-charge decision (PCD) stage⁹ and there had been no developments in the case post-charge
- there was a lack of guidance on where to assess and record overarching victim and witness issues at both pre- and post-charge stages

⁷ The prosecution has a duty to disclose to the defence material gathered during the investigation of a criminal offence, which is not intended to be used as evidence against the defendant but is considered capable of undermining the prosecution case or assisting the defence case. This is called 'unused material'. When a suspect is charged with an offence, the prosecutor must disclose to the defence certain material that may assist the defence at the first hearing in the magistrates' court. This early disclosure is known as 'common law disclosure'. In essence, a prosecutor should consider whether justice and fairness require any immediate disclosure in the particular circumstances of the case.

⁸ The duty of initial disclosure arises after a suspect has been charged with an offence and following a not guilty plea being entered at court, whereupon the prosecution must review the material held by them and disclose anything that may undermine the case for the prosecution or assist the defence.

⁹ The stage at which the prosecutor considers evidence and unused material submitted by the police and decides whether there is sufficient evidence and if it is in the public interest to charge a suspect with a criminal offence.

- we found instances where legal managers were answering Q8 (service provided to victims and witnesses from first hearing to conclusion of the case) in relation to what had been done at the pre-charge stage
- there was a lack of consistency about the guidance; there was no bullet point for added value and grip¹⁰ in the question guidance for Q2 (pre-charge/initial review question), but it was included in the same question on post-charge reviews
- there was no reference to the case strategy principles in the guidance which would allow legal managers to be clear about the standards to be applied on each question to the applicable case strategy principle. Although the legal assurance team has provided some material to support this, it is in addition to the guidance itself.

Selection of Cases

4.18. The guidance stipulates that cases selected for IQA should still be in progress and far enough through the prosecution process for a meaningful assessment of performance to be made and to enable prompt remedial action to be undertaken if identified by the IQA. This should ensure that casework issues are identified early, thereby allowing action to be taken to ensure that the case progresses effectively to a successful conclusion. For this reason, managers are directed not to include in their non-advocacy assessments either anticipated guilty pleas or cases where a guilty plea has been entered. However, nothing in the guidance precludes the undertaking of focused or themed assessments.

4.19. We found instances of cases being selected for IQA when they were not live or had not been sufficiently progressed. In our file examination, we found that in ten of the 70 Crown Court IQAs (14.3%) and 12 of the 137 magistrates' court IQAs (8.8%), the cases selected were not live. In a further eight Crown Court IQAs (11.4%) and 11 magistrates' IQAs (8.0%), the cases were not sufficiently progressed for a meaningful assessment of performance to be made. That means that within our file sample, 25.7% of Crown Court cases and 16.8% of magistrates' court cases were not selected in line with the guidance.

4.20. IQA relates to the work of a single prosecutor and so selecting cases where the prosecutor being assessed has had little to do with the case prevents a meaningful assessment of performance and again diminishes the value of the IQA. In 12 of the Crown Court IQAs (17.1%) we examined and 12 of the

¹⁰ Added value is the making of good, proactive prosecution decisions by applying legal expertise to each case, and grip is proactively progressing each case efficiently and effectively.

magistrates' court IQAs (8.8%), the legal manager had not confined their assessment to work done by the prosecutor who was the subject of the IQA.

4.21. Selecting cases for IQA that fall outside the guidance, while appearing to meet the target in terms of numbers, adds little value and misses the opportunity to use it as an effective tool to improve casework quality.

4.22. This also impacts on the quality of the data. It can have a disproportionately positive impact on the overall data, as cases that have not been sufficiently progressed will have fewer aspects to consider and consequently fewer learning points or issues to address.

5. The application of IQA

Consistency

5.1. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) recognised that there were issues of consistency with how Independent Quality Assessments (IQAs) were being assessed and their own internal assurance identified that there was some degree of confusion when applying the guidance. Therefore, the CPS Legal Assurance Team (LAT) in the Headquarters Operations Directorate devised and delivered IQA Area workshops to legal managers and senior legal managers to improve consistency of approach across the organisation. It was accepted that inconsistencies could not be completely eradicated and there would be marginal differences of opinion, but the workshops aimed to reduce the disparity in approach by facilitating discussions on the application of the IQA guidance and how questions should be answered.

5.2. The LAT also produced case strategy guidance that set out case strategy principles to be applied in all cases, a 'top ten tips' document and a podcast for managers to use when completing IQAs, which are useful aides.

5.3. Most of the legal managers we interviewed confirmed that they had attended the IQA workshops and had found them useful. In one Area, the legal managers told us that, in addition to the LAT workshops, they had arranged their own consistency exercises in which they would all review the same cases and compare answers, but that it was difficult to maintain these due to time pressures and other commitments.

We saw many examples where the IQA guidance had not been applied consistently or correctly or had been misunderstood.

5.4. Despite the LAT training provided to managers, we saw many examples where the IQA guidance had still not been applied consistently or correctly or had been misunderstood.

5.5. The example around confusion between the pre- and post-charge disclosure questions was one we explored with the LAT. We were informed that when the latest IQA guidance was published,

it did not take into account the standard operating procedure in relation to the front-loading of cases in accordance with the Director of Public Prosecution's (DPP) Guidance on Charging (DG6¹¹) as it had not at that point been fully

¹¹ The Director of Public Prosecution's (DPP) Guidance on Charging, sixth edition, December 2020. The guidance sets out the arrangements prescribed by the DPP for charging decisions; the information to be sent by the police when a charging decision is sought; the other material required to support a prosecution; and the joint working framework for police officers and prosecutors during the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases.

implemented, which might account for the confusion. However, the LAT confirmed that it intends to update its guidance as soon as possible.

5.6. While we found some good examples of cases being properly selected with the guidance applied correctly and robustly, followed up by conversations that clearly added value, this was not consistent. In a significant number of cases, we found that legal managers were not making reasonable assessments when assessing prosecutors' work against CPS standards. Too often, questions were marked positively when, applying the guidance correctly, they should have been marked negatively. This lack of consistency affects the integrity of any data produced about the quality of legal casework derived from IQAs.

5.7. We found that where there were failings that may have materially affected the case, many legal managers were making assessments that were too lenient. Key issues were minimised, missed altogether, or picked up only as feedback/areas to improve when they reasonably merited a 'no' marking. Examples included a case where the manager marked Q7 (post-charge further review)¹² positively when there were significant issues with the case strategy that had not been addressed, a case where the manager missed multiple factors in the guidance for Q2 (pre-charge/initial review) and gave a positive assessment, and a case where the manager marked Q8 (service to victims and witnesses) positively when the prosecutor had failed to send a victim communication letter¹³.

5.8. A theme we identified from our file examination was that legal managers were answering questions when they should have been marked as 'not applicable'. Most of these errors related to cases that had been the subject of a pre-charge IQA, meaning that questions relating to case progression and the service provided to victims and witnesses post-initial review stage were not relevant.

5.9. In some Areas, we found many of the pre-charge or initial reviews that were assessed for Q2 of IQA were deficient for a variety of reasons, but were instead marked positively. Across all Areas, in 20 of the 70 Crown Court IQAs (28.6%) and 41 of the 137 magistrates' court IQAs (29.9%), we found that the legal managers' assessments were too lenient when assessing compliance with Q2.

5.10. Some prosecutors told us that assessments were 'manager dependent'. This means that one legal manager might consider something to have met the

¹² Prosecutors should ensure that, after a suspect is charged and as the case progresses, any developments in the case are recorded by way of further review.

¹³ A victim in a case should be informed by the CPS of any decision not to prosecute, to stop a case or substantially alter a charge. In the main, victims are informed by letter.

standard, while another might not. This view was supported by our findings from the file examination.

5.11. We found examples of legal managers marking differently for the same error or omission. In one Area, some managers marked Q8 regarding the service to victims and witnesses negatively because the prosecutor had not identified that the victim was entitled to an enhanced service under the Victims' Code¹⁴ whereas other managers only identified this as a point to improve and marked the question positively.

5.12. This subjective approach to assessment leads to inconsistencies which are not helpful to setting expectations and standards for prosecutors, driving improvement in Areas or identifying good practice. Ultimately, the approach also undermines the integrity of the IQA data, both at Area and national level.

5.13. We found far fewer examples of legal managers making assessments that were too harsh in our file examination. For example, we found that the assessments for Q2 (pre-charge and initial reviews) were too strict in three Crown Court IQAs (4.3%) and four magistrates' court IQAs (2.9%). Across all other questions, assessments were too harsh in 13 Crown Court cases (18.6%) and 27 magistrates' court cases (19.7%).

5.14. We did see examples of legal managers making reasonable assessments when identifying non-compliance with CPS standards and adding value to the IQA process. In one such case, the manager had identified that the case analysis was lacking, and that the prosecutor had failed to consider a potential defence under the Modern Slavery Act. This gave the prosecutor the opportunity of remedying the deficiencies before the case proceeded to trial.

Provision of feedback

5.15. We found that there was an inconsistent approach to the provision of feedback by legal managers to prosecutors. A conversation should take place between the legal manager and the prosecutor following every IQA. Some managers told us that they were having conversations with prosecutors following every IQA whereas others said that conversations tended to happen when there were negative aspects to discuss or when the prosecutor asked for feedback following receipt of the IQA. Furthermore, they considered that it was not a good use of time to hold a conversation if the IQA was positive, as there were no areas

¹⁴ The Victims' Code focuses on victims' rights and sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime.

that required feedback. This is contrary to the guidance and loses the opportunity to reinforce effective casework.

5.16. We found a similarly inconsistent picture when we spoke to prosecutors. Some said that they were having conversations with their managers, but the timing and method of those conversations varied, with some taking place during the IQA process itself but more often during one-to-one meetings. Other prosecutors told us that managers telephone or email them following completion of an IQA, whilst a few said that they do not discuss the findings from IQA at all. Nearly all the prosecutors we interviewed said that they valued conversations about casework with their managers, whether those were related to IQA or not. We were told of many positive relationships where prosecutors and legal managers were discussing casework issues on a daily or weekly basis, often outside the IQA process, thereby promoting learning and development.

5.17. The conversation between the legal manager and the prosecutor is the most important part of the IQA process. It allows coaching and development to take place, reinforcement of good practice and identification of areas for improvement. This process enables the manager to develop the individual prosecutor and influence casework quality in the Area.

5.18. The findings from our on-site interviews were reflected in the file examination results. These show that in 42 of the 70 Crown Court IQAs (60.0%) and 75 of the 137 magistrates' court IQAs (54.7%), there was no evidence of a meaningful conversation having taken place between the legal manager and the prosecutor.

5.19. We did find some good examples where the IQA guidance had been followed and legal managers had held meaningful conversations with prosecutors to discuss positive and negative aspects of the assessment. In one such case, there was a record of a detailed conversation between the manager and the prosecutor in which the manager praised the prosecutor for her good grip of the case, which meant that there could be an effective trial, but raised specific areas for improvement. It was clear from the IQA application that the prosecutor had reflected on the feedback and rectified the omissions in a subsequent review.

5.20. We found that, generally, legal managers were recording good practice and areas for improvement on the IQA application, but that the quality of the feedback varied.

5.21. A common theme we found across all Areas was that legal managers were recording very brief comments or recording comments such as 'no concerns', in the 'areas of good practice'. These were of no or limited value to the prosecutor. Some legal managers were commenting on the general theme of the IQA question

but not providing specific feedback to highlight good practice against the points in the guidance.

5.22. We did find examples of legal managers providing more detailed, focused and constructive comments that were of benefit to the prosecutor in identifying aspects of the case that they had dealt with well. In one such case, the legal manager recorded positive comments about the standard of the prosecutor's review and that their case strategy had rightly considered the strengths and weaknesses of the case and complied with the CPS's case strategy principles. In another, a domestic abuse case, the manager provided detailed feedback and praised the prosecutor for correctly applying the new statutory time limit¹⁵, for their case strategy in relation to the hard media evidence, and their consideration of an evidence-led prosecution and a restraining order¹⁶ for the victim's protection.

5.23. Most of the prosecutors we spoke to thought that the legal managers' comments were constructive where there were issues to raise and that these comments assisted their development. However, some prosecutors told us that on occasions they thought managers could be 'too picky' and that they should take into consideration high caseloads and the consequent pressures on prosecutors. Some prosecutors commented that they could be criticised for minor oversights such as not ticking a box about proceeds of crime or not mentioning that there was no victim personal statement. They felt that this sort of feedback was unhelpful, made no practical difference to the way in which the case was presented and did not make them better prosecutors.

5.24. There was a mixed picture on case actions. Our file examination results revealed that in almost three quarters of magistrates' court IQAs and over half of Crown Court IQAs, no urgent case actions were required. However, in those cases where urgent actions were required, we typically found that they were not properly recorded. We found that legal managers were recording unnecessary actions, recording actions that were not urgent or missing relevant actions altogether. An example of the latter was a domestic abuse case where a victim communication letter was required because the prosecution had offered no evidence at trial, but the letter had not been sent. This should have been identified by the manager as an urgent action, because the victim was entitled to an enhanced service under the Victims' Code. In another case, which was a Crown

¹⁵ Under section 39A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, for cases of common assault or battery where the alleged behaviour of the accused amounts to domestic abuse, the time limit for prosecuting such cases will begin from the date the alleged offence is formally reported to the police rather than from the date of the alleged offence, as was previously the case. This is subject to an overall time limit of a prosecution being commenced within two years of the alleged offence occurring.

¹⁶ Restraining orders may be made by the court on conviction or acquittal of a defendant for any criminal offence. They are intended to be preventative and protective. The guiding principle is that there must be a need for the order to protect a person or persons from conduct amounting to harassment or fear of violence.

Court domestic abuse matter where the defendant was remanded in custody, the prosecutor was on a period of extended leave, but no action had been taken to adequately monitor the case in his absence. The manager should have raised this as an urgent case action during the IQA process.

Culture

5.25. We heard that many legal managers were reluctant to mark IQA questions negatively and give prosecutors feedback on areas to improve, for fear of overwhelming them and potentially affecting their wellbeing. This may be a possible explanation for some of our findings.

5.26. Some legal managers commented that the IQA guidance is vague and is a 'dispassionate list' of what prosecutors have and have not done. Others felt that the guidance is too strict and if followed rigidly could lead to prosecutors being failed on every IQA. However, most considered that the current IQA system is better than the old, as prosecutors were more defensive about receiving 'not met' assessments under the former regime¹⁷. The new system allows and encourages positive aspects of casework to be highlighted, so even when something has not met the requisite standard, the manager can still provide feedback on those areas that the prosecutor has dealt with well on the same case.

5.27. In one Area, legal managers told us that they focus on providing positive feedback rather than negative, and a similar message was received from the Area prosecutors.

5.28. In another Area, prosecutors told us that good practice is commented on in detail by the legal managers, with specific feedback that is clear and helpful, even when something is marked negatively overall. The prosecutors felt that a focus on good work is important, together with a recognition of the amount of work that each case now requires with front-loading of cases pre-charge.

IQA can facilitate positive engagement between prosecutors and their managers, providing an opportunity to coach and develop.

5.29. We found that IQA can facilitate positive engagement between prosecutors and their managers, providing an opportunity to coach and develop, and that when conversations do take place, they are generally well received.

5.30. Although a focus on positive aspects of casework is an important part of IQA, the file examination results show that it can lead to a

¹⁷ Under the former IQA regime, legal managers were required to assess whether prosecutors had complied with CPS casework standards by marking IQA questions as 'met' or 'not met'.

lack of robustness, with some legal managers making assessments that are too lenient and missing opportunities to address issues in specific cases and to avoid recurrence. We saw many examples of managers answering the good practice question positively when it was difficult to identify any such practice. Often, the good practice cited was something that the prosecutor should be routinely addressing when reviewing a case. Areas for improvement were often missed where there had been clear failings.

5.31. This was recognised and acknowledged by senior legal managers we spoke to who accepted that one of the issues with the current IQA system is whether it is sufficiently robust to drive improvements in casework quality, given that legal managers are ‘marking their own homework’. They considered that there was also an issue with legal managers not wanting to have difficult conversations with prosecutors they line manage. This could be due to reluctance on their part to criticise members of their own team, or due to pressure of time. However, if managers invested time in the short-term to identify issues and provide detailed feedback to prosecutors both consistently and more often, this may lead to an improvement in casework quality and reduce work for managers in the long-term.

5.32. Capacity was repeatedly raised as an issue by legal managers throughout our inspection. Most considered IQA to be a useful tool for identifying casework issues and ideally there would be more than one per prosecutor per quarter, but they do not have the time due to competing priorities and commitments. This view was shared by some of the prosecutors we spoke to who said that they would welcome more assessments, as they consider IQA helpful to their learning and development. Although this is encouraging to hear, simply increasing the volume of IQAs is unlikely to result in significant casework quality improvement unless there is greater consistency.

6. Assurance

IQA first line assurance

6.1. Quality assurance is an important part of the Individual Quality Assessment (IQA) process as it provides senior legal managers with an opportunity to ensure that the assessments being carried out by their legal managers are robust and in accordance with the IQA guidance.

6.2. The senior legal manager should focus on the quality of the assessment carried out by the legal manager and provide constructive feedback to ensure that good practice is reinforced, areas for improvement are identified and lessons are learned.

Issues and areas for improvement were frequently missed and the assurance process was often superficial and added little value.

6.3. We found that the quality assurance carried out by senior managers in the majority of cases we assessed was not effective. Relevant issues and areas for improvement were frequently missed and the assurance process was often superficial and added little value.

6.4. From records held on the IQA application we found that in ten out of the 70 Crown Court IQAs (14.3%) and 19 out of the 137 magistrates' court IQAs (13.9%), the quality assurer had addressed all relevant matters and highlighted good practice and identified relevant issues. In 29 Crown Court IQAs (41.4%) and 52 magistrates' court IQAs (38.0%), we found that the quality assurer had not highlighted any good practice or identified issues that had been missed by the legal manager. In a further 31 Crown Court IQAs (44.3%) and 60 magistrates' court IQAs (43.8%), although the quality assurer had addressed some issues, they had not identified all relevant matters.

6.5. Lack of robustness on the part of the quality assurer when assessing the work of the legal manager was a theme. We found that the quality assurer often agreed with the legal manager's assessment when that assessment was incorrect or missed key issues, and feedback should have been provided. An example is a case where the legal manager had not applied the guidance properly and had answered the review questions positively, when they should have been answered negatively; the prosecutor had not formulated a trial strategy, had missed relevant applications and had not addressed victim and witness needs. The dip sample consisted of one line where the quality assurer simply endorsed the legal manager's assessment. We found other examples where the quality assurer had missed clear learning points for the legal manager, such as the manager

answering irrelevant questions, misunderstanding the scope of some questions, and choosing cases for IQA that had not been sufficiently progressed.

6.6. Other themes identified during the file examination included quality assurers commenting on the work of the prosecutor rather than the quality of the legal manager's assessment and failing to identify where legal managers had not had conversations with prosecutors, as per the guidance.

6.7. We did find some limited good examples where the quality assurer had added value to the process. In one such case, the quality assurer had set out in detail their views on the legal manager's assessment and had clearly read the case, meaning they were able to comment on actions set by the legal manager for the prosecutor, together with the outcome of those actions.

6.8. Our on-site interviews revealed a mixed picture of the nature and quality of feedback provided by senior legal managers to legal managers. Some legal managers told us that they received feedback via the IQA application but rarely had conversations with their senior managers. The quality of feedback varied according to the senior manager, with some clearly having read the cases before commenting on the quality of the legal manager's assessment whereas others relied on the comments of the legal manager alone.

6.9. Capacity was raised as an issue by senior legal managers who reported that they would like the time to delve into cases more deeply but were constrained by competing commitments. They said that they try to have conversations with legal managers following IQAs, especially where there are negative aspects to discuss, but this isn't always possible.

6.10. Ideally, senior legal managers should be having conversations with their legal managers after every IQA, to ensure that the latter are supported and developed. This is particularly important to build capability within the legal manager cadre, many of whom we were told are relatively new and inexperienced. If they are to be proactive and capable in driving legal casework quality across the CPS, their learning and development needs to be prioritised and invested in.

6.11. Another issue that was highlighted to us was that there was insufficient time to conduct thorough quality assurance when legal managers delayed the completion of IQAs until the end of the quarter. This was being addressed in some Areas as we were told that senior legal managers were monitoring the timely completion of IQAs by legal managers, and we saw reference to this in the documents provided.

6.12. Some senior legal managers we interviewed thought that the IQA system was of most use in relation to less experienced prosecutors and those where performance was an issue. They conceded that IQA was not a performance management tool but instead was a useful tool to enable them to coach legal managers and prosecutors to improve standards.

Second line assurance and national perspective

6.13. The Crown Prosecution Service's Legal Assurance Team (LAT) do not currently carry out any assurance work around the operation of the IQA process. They do carry out separate casework quality assurance checks, but there is no national second line assurance carried out of the compliance with the consistency of IQA across the 14 geographical Areas other than discussion and scrutiny through the Area performance review process.

6.14. We were told by the IQA national leads that they consider IQA to be an effective system if it is operated as intended. The number of assessments and questions were reduced under the refreshed system to try to ensure that managers had sufficient capacity to carry out the requisite number of assessments per quarter. However, they acknowledged that the quality of IQAs vary and questioned whether the assessments being carried out are sufficiently robust to drive improvement in casework quality.

6.15. Data from IQA is compiled quarterly and uploaded to the Operational and Legal Assurance dashboard, which is available to all Areas and all staff. General themes from IQA are discussed at a senior level, along with data from other sources such as adverse case reports and custody time limit reports, to identify where there are casework quality issues. IQA is one of the tools used to assess legal and operational performance.

6.16. The IQA national leads agreed that the most important part of the IQA process was the conversation between the legal manager and prosecutor, but only where that conversation was candid and addressed matters requiring improvement as well as identifying good practice. They considered that the system needed to move away from a 'tick-box' exercise to one that was viewed as an essential tool for facilitating quality conversations and for improving performance.

7. Impact on casework quality

Impact on casework quality

7.1. There was some evidence from our interviews and document review that casework themes were being identified from Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs). However, many managers told us that whereas IQA is a useful tool for identifying some issues arising from casework, it is only one of a raft of measures used by Areas to assess and monitor performance, and there are too few IQAs being carried out to identify themes solely from IQA data. They considered that IQA is of most use when implemented in conjunction with other data (such as adverse case outcomes¹⁸ and custody time limit¹⁹ reports) to identify areas for improvement. They could not point to an improvement in casework specifically arising from the current IQA system.

7.2. We did find examples of issues arising from IQA being discussed at team meetings, but these were rare, and there was little evidence that this had led to any tangible improvement in casework in those Areas.

7.3. In some Areas, reports on themes arising from IQA are provided to Casework Quality Committees²⁰ and discussed at Area Performance Meetings²¹. We found isolated examples of issues arising from IQA having led to positive action by Areas. For example, in one Area, an issue was highlighted in relation to identification evidence, which had resulted in further training for prosecutors, but we could not find a link between these isolated examples and an improvement in casework quality.

There was no clear link between the reported quality of casework from IQA assessments and Area performance.

7.4. During our visits to CPS Areas as part of our Area Inspection Programme²², we were told that IQA was the main tool for driving casework improvement. While there were some positive indications that, when done well, IQA can lead to improvement on an individual basis, there was

¹⁸ Where all charges are dismissed by magistrates on the basis that there is no case to answer at the conclusion of the prosecution case; where a trial judge at the Crown Court orders that an acquittal should be entered following a decision by the prosecution that the case should not proceed and prior to the empanelling of a jury; where a trial judge in Crown Court proceedings rules, following the commencement of the evidence, that it is insufficient for the prosecution to proceed and directs the jury to acquit.

¹⁹ The length of time an unconvicted defendant can be kept in custody pre-trial.

²⁰ Internal CPS meetings at which casework quality issues are discussed.

²¹ Internal high-level CPS meetings during which the general performance of an Area is discussed, including failed cases and victim complaints.

²² *Area Inspection Programme: Composite report of the baseline assessments of the 14 Crown Prosecution Service Areas in England and Wales*; HMPCSI; September 2023.

no clear link between the reported quality of casework from IQA assessments and Area performance generally.

7.5. We found that different Areas were dip sampling different volumes of cases. It was not possible for us to assess whether this had an impact on the quality of casework. Data from the Operational and Legal Assurance dashboard shows that the Area that completed the most quality assurance between Quarter Three 2022/2023 and Quarter Two 2024-2025 (inclusive) was the East Midlands, which dip sampled 32.9% of magistrates' and Crown Court IQAs. The Area that completed the fewest quality assurance was the West Midlands, which dip sampled 4.6% of cases.

7.6. Area Inspection Programme 2²³ data shows that there is little difference between the two Areas in terms of casework quality:

| | East Midlands | West Midlands |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| MC added value | 70.9% | 66.1% |
| CC added value | 66.5% | 70.3% |
| MC Grip | 75.0% | 72.5% |
| CC Grip | 75.0% | 80.7% |

7.7. During the baseline phase of our Area Inspection Programme in 2021-2022, we were told that IQA was the main tool used to improve casework quality. However, our findings show that IQA is not being used effectively to support the CPS's aims of continuous improvement and delivering high-quality casework.

7.8. If IQA is to be the tool the CPS uses to drive casework improvement, it will only be effective if more time and care is taken to ensure that the right cases are selected, assessments are more robust and in line with guidance, and, most importantly, good quality conversations take place routinely after each assessment. Assurance needs to be similarly robust to ensure that legal managers develop and there is rigour in the overall approach.

²³ Area Inspection Programme 2. This is a follow up inspection to the previous inspection of CPS Areas' casework quality in 2021-22, to assess whether any improvements have been made or performance has deteriorated for each of the 14 CPS Areas.

Annex A

Glossary

Adverse case outcomes

Where all charges are dismissed by magistrates on the basis that there is no case to answer at the conclusion of the prosecution case; where a trial judge at the Crown Court orders that an acquittal should be entered following a decision by the prosecution that the case should not proceed and prior to the empanelling of a jury; where a trial judge in Crown Court proceedings rules, following the commencement of the evidence, that it is insufficient for the prosecution to proceed and directs the jury to acquit.

Casework Quality Standards (CQS)

The benchmarks of quality that the CPS seeks to deliver in prosecuting crime for the public. They cover treatment of victims and witnesses, legal decision-making, casework preparation and advocacy.

Case Strategy Principles

The CPS's ten case strategy principles that outline the responsibilities of a prosecutor in developing a case strategy to build strong cases, consistently applying the Code for Crown Prosecutors, and recording their decision-making.

Charging decision

The process by which the police and the CPS decide whether there is sufficient evidence for a suspect to be prosecuted. The process is governed by the Director's Guidance on Charging, 6th edition, which came into effect in December 2020.

Chief Crown Prosecutor

The most senior legal manager at CPS Area level and the person who is held to account for its assurance controls and performance.

Code for Crown Prosecutors

The public document that sets out the framework for prosecution decision-making. Crown prosecutors have the Director of Public Prosecutions' power to determine cases delegated but must exercise them in accordance with the Code and its two-stage test – the evidential and public interest stages. Cases should only proceed if, firstly, there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction and, secondly, if the prosecution is required in the public interest.

Complex Casework Unit (CCU)

A unit set up within each CPS Area that handles the most serious cases, such as organised crime, people or drug trafficking and complex frauds.

Custody time limit (CTL)

The statutory time limit for keeping a defendant in custody awaiting trial. May be extended by the court in certain circumstances.

Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor (DCCP)

Second-in-command to the Chief Crown Prosecutor (*see above*) for legal aspects of managing a CPS Area.

DG6

The Director of Public Prosecution's Guidance on Charging, sixth edition, December 2020. The guidance sets out the arrangements prescribed by the DPP for charging decisions; the information to be sent by the police when a charging decision is sought; the other material required to support a prosecution; and the joint working framework for police officers and prosecutors during the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases.

Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

Senior Civil Servant who is the head of the CPS.

Disclosure

The prosecution has a duty to disclose to the defence material gathered during the investigation of a criminal offence, which is not intended to be used as evidence against the defendant, but that may undermine the prosecution case or assist the defence case. There are various regimes, and the type of case determines which one applies.

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is "*any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional*".

Evidence-led prosecution

A prosecution where the victim is either unknown or unwilling to assist but where all the available evidence points towards the defendant as having committed the offence.

Guilty anticipated plea (GAP)

A guilty anticipated plea involves a case whereby the defendant is expected to admit the offence at court following an assessment of the available evidence.

Individual Quality Assessment (IQA)

An assessment of a piece of work done by a CPS member of staff, usually a prosecutor, but some Areas also carry out IQAs for some operational delivery staff. The assessment will be carried out by a manager, and feedback on the assessment given to the member of staff. Areas also use IQAs to identify areas for improvement and training needs across a team or the whole Area.

Pre-charge decision (PCD)

The process by which the police and CPS decide whether there is sufficient evidence for a suspect to be prosecuted. The process is governed by the Director's Guidance on Charging.

Post-charge

The stage after a suspect has been charged with a criminal offence.

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)

Includes rape, sexual assault, sexual activity offences, abuse of children through prostitution or pornography, and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Restraining Order

Restraining orders may be made by the court on conviction or acquittal of a defendant for any criminal offence. They are intended to be preventative and protective. The guiding principle is that there must be a need for the order to protect a person or persons from conduct amounting to harassment or fear of violence.

Senior District Crown Prosecutor (SDCP)

A lawyer employed by the CPS with the necessary skills and experience to progress to a more senior legal role. It is a role that includes managing staff.

Unused material

Material collected by the police during an investigation, but which is not being used as evidence in any prosecution. The prosecutor must consider whether to disclose it to the defendant. See also *disclosure*.

Victims' Code

Focuses on victims' rights and sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime.

Victim Communication Letter (VCL)

A victim in a case should be informed by the CPS of any decision not to prosecute, to stop a case or substantially alter a charge. In the main, victims are informed by letter.

Volume crime

Prosecutions carried out by CPS Areas, other than those dealt with by complex casework units and rape and serious sexual offences units.

Annex B

Framework

Framework

Inspection Question - To what extent do individual quality assessments (IQAs) carried out in Areas support the CPS aims of continuous improvement and delivering high quality casework?

Inspection Criteria - The aim of this inspection is to answer the overarching inspection question above, and the following sub-questions:

1. Is the IQA process carried out by District Crown Prosecutors (DCPs) accurately identifying compliance and non-compliance with CPS standards and values?
 - a. Are DCPs making reasonable assessments in line with benchmarks of quality set out in CPS standards and values when identifying compliance with those standards?
 - b. Are DCPs making reasonable assessments in line with benchmarks of quality set out in CPS standards and values when identifying non-compliance with those standards?
2. Is the IQA process being carried out by DCPs in accordance with CPS guidance to ensure accountability and development for individual prosecutors?
 - a. Are DCPs recording focused and constructive comments when identifying compliance with benchmarks of quality to ensure that good practice is noted and the prosecutor can understand what went well and can build on that good practice?
 - b. Are DCPs recording focused and constructive comments when identifying non-compliance with the benchmarks of quality and issues to address?
 - c. Are DCPs identifying actions required to progress the case effectively to assist individual development and improve casework quality?
 - d. Is there evidence that DCPs are holding conversations with prosecutors following IQA assessments?
 - e. Are those conversations being recorded on the IQA application?
3. Is the dip sampling quality assurance carried out by DCCP/SDCPs promoting accountability and assisting DCPs to develop?
 - a. Are enough IQAs being quality assured?
 - b. Are quality assurance findings recorded on the IQA application?

- c. Is the quality assurer providing focused and constructive comments to the DCP to ensure the right lessons are learned and good work noted?
 - d. Are the comments/feedback recorded on the IQA application?
 - e. Where the quality assurer identifies issues in the quality of the original IQA, are effective actions being taken to develop the DCP to ensure that the quality of IQAs improve?
 - f. Are actions recorded on the IQA application?
- 4. Is the data and information provided by the IQA process being used effectively to embed good practice and identify and address aspects for improvement in Area casework?
 - a. Are emerging themes from IQA being identified?
 - b. Is good practice being identified?
 - c. How effectively is the Area using data and information emerging from IQA to improve casework quality, including through CQB, APR and Area communications, and sharing across the legal cadre?
 - d. How does Area measure the effectiveness of learning and actions arising from casework issues identified by IQA?

Evidence will be drawn from:

- File examination
- Focus groups and interviews with relevant CPS staff and national leads
- Document review and relevant data

Annex C

Question set

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | The charging or review decision has been made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. | How did the CPS IQA assess this question? Yes/No/NA |
| 1A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | Yes No – CPS assessment too lenient No – CPS assessment too strict No – CPS assessment should not have been NA No – other, (see comments) |
| 1B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded NA |
| 1C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded NA |
| 2 | Any review (early advice (EA)/Pre-Charge Decision (PCD)/Not Guilty Anticipated Plea (NGAP)/Post Sending) | How did the CPS IQA assess this question? Yes/No/NA |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| | was of a high quality in that it was compliant with the Code and all relevant and applicable policy and legal guidance; it was timely, informed, reasoned, and set out a prosecution strategy for the case that could be followed by others. | |
| 2A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 2B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 2C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 3 | The prosecutor has complied with their obligations under DG6. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| | Disclosure issues were anticipated and properly addressed in the initial review (including reasonable lines of inquiry, rebuttable presumption material, and common law disclosure). | |
| 3A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 3B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 3C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 4 | Asset recovery is considered in any case in which the suspect has benefited from criminal conduct. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| 4A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 4B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA – asset recovery not relevant</p> |
| 4C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA – asset recovery not relevant</p> |
| 5 | Any communication to other stakeholders (such as Case Action Plans, Defence engagement, contact with YOS/ISVA/IDVA) is reasonable, justified, well-drafted (in terms of linking each action to an issue in the case) and sets clear and realistic timescales for any response. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| 5A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 5B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 5C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 6 | There is clear evidence that the prosecutor has added value in terms of improving the chances of a just outcome and shown grip in their progression of the case to a conclusion. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |
| 6A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|--|
| | | No – CPS assessment should not have been NA No – other, (see comments) |
| 6B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded NA |
| 6C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded NA |
| 7 | The case is well managed with appropriate reviews demonstrating that issues arising and any developments in the case have been considered and addressed including by compliance with Court directions and the use of timely and well drafted internal and external communications. | How did the CPS IQA assess this question? Yes/No/NA |
| 7A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | Yes No – CPS assessment too lenient No – CPS assessment too strict |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|--|
| | | No – CPS assessment should not have been NA No – other, (see comments) |
| 7B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded. CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded NA |
| 7C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded NA |
| 8 | The rights and interests of victims and witnesses were considered (especially in relation to Special Measures and possible victimless prosecutions) and there was timely and effective communication with them, where appropriate, in accordance with the Victims' Code (including engagement and communication with victim support services). | How did the CPS IQA assess this question? Yes/No/NA |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| 8A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 8B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 8C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 9 | The prosecutor has demonstrated a thinking approach to disclosure and good grip in complying with all duties under common law, CPIA, Attorney-General’s Guidelines and any applicable protocols. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |
| 9A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|-----|--|---|
| | | <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 9B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 9C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 10 | The prosecutor has dealt appropriately with defence disclosure (including challenging inadequate or missing Defence Statements) and demonstrated a thinking approach and good grip in discharging their duties of ongoing disclosure. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |
| 10A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|-----|---|---|
| | | No – other, (see comments) |
| 10B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA – no ongoing disclosure</p> |
| 10C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘no’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer ‘yes’ (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA – no ongoing disclosure</p> |
| 11 | The prosecutor has drafted a good quality Disclosure Record Sheet (DRS) and Disclosure Management Document (DMD) (where appropriate) so that the rationale for disclosure decisions and our disclosure strategy is clear and understandable. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |
| 11A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|-----|--|---|
| 11B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 11C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA</p> |
| 12 | The prosecutor has adopted an appropriate and timely international strategy in any case in which there is or is reasonably believed to be relevant material, evidence, suspect(s), witness(es) or assets outside of the UK. | <p>How did the CPS IQA assess this question?</p> <p>Yes/No/NA</p> |
| 12A | Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too lenient</p> <p>No – CPS assessment too strict</p> <p>No – CPS assessment should not have been NA</p> <p>No – other, (see comments)</p> |
| 12B | Did the DCP record areas of good practice | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and good practice recorded</p> |

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|-----|--|---|
| | when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded and should have been</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but good practice recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and no good practice recorded</p> <p>NA – international strategy not relevant</p> |
| 12C | Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'no' (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded</p> <p>CPS answer 'yes' (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded</p> <p>NA – international strategy not relevant</p> |
| 13 | Did the DCP identify that an urgent casework follow-up action was required and record it on the IQA app? | <p>Yes, urgent action identified and recorded</p> <p>No, no action recorded</p> <p>No, no action required</p> |
| 14 | Was it possible from the 'summary of discussion with prosecutor' box to determine whether there had been a meaningful conversation with the prosecutor? | <p>Yes, it was clear that there had been a meaningful conversation with the prosecutor</p> <p>No, the box had been completed but contained insufficient detail to assess whether there had been a meaningful conversation with the prosecutor</p> <p>No, the box had been completed but recorded an intention for a future conversation with the prosecutor</p> <p>No, the box had not been completed</p> |
| 15 | Was the case live and sufficiently detailed with sufficient progress made to enable a meaningful assessment of performance? | <p>Yes, the case was live and sufficiently detailed and progressed</p> <p>No, the case was not live</p> <p>No, the case was live but was not sufficiently detailed and progressed</p> |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| # | Question | Possible answers |
|----|---|---|
| 16 | Did the dip sampler provide focused and constructive comments to the DCP to ensure that the right lessons were learned and good work noted, i.e., did the dip sampler add value? | <p>Yes – FM The dip sampler identified good practice and/or highlighted issues that had been missed and provided good quality feedback to the DCP</p> <p>Yes – PM The dip sampler identified some areas of good practice/issues that had been missed, but not all</p> <p>No – NM The dip sampler did not identify good practice/issues that had been missed</p> <p>NA – there were no areas of good practice and/or areas for improvement that required constructive feedback</p> |
| 17 | Was there evidence on the IQA app that the prosecutor had commented on the assessment? | Yes/No |
| 18 | Did the DCP confine their assessment to work done by the prosecutor who was the subject of the IQA? | Yes/No |

Annex D

Data Pack

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| Casework Type | | CC | MC |
|--|--|------------|------------|
| Question | Answer | Percentage | Percentage |
| 01. The charging or review decision has been made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. | NA | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | No | 14.3% | 11.7% |
| | Yes | 81.4% | 86.1% |
| 01a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 4.3% | 1.5% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 4.3% | 6.6% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 4.3% | 4.4% |
| | No other | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| | Yes | 82.9% | 87.6% |
| 01b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 8.6% | 9.5% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 74.3% | 81.8% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | NA – there was no good practice that required recording | 12.9% | 4.4% |
| 01c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 14.3% | 13.1% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 25.7% | 18.2% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) | 20.0% | 23.4% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| | but areas for improvement recorded | | |
| | NA | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 35.7% | 43.1% |
| 02. Any review (early advice (EA)Pre-Charge Decision (PCD)Not Guilty Anticipated Plea (NGAP)Post Sending) was of a high quality in that it was compliant with the Code and all relevant and applicable policy and legal guidance, it was timely, informed, reasoned, and set out a prosecution strategy for the case that could be followed by others. | NA | 1.4% | 2.2% |
| | No | 34.3% | 37.2% |
| | Yes | 64.3% | 60.6% |
| 02a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 0.0% | 2.2% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 28.6% | 29.9% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 4.3% | 2.9% |
| | No other | 2.9% | 1.5% |
| | Yes | 64.3% | 63.5% |
| 02b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 27.1% | 33.6% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 61.4% | 58.4% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| | NA | 2.9% | 2.2% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 4.3% | 2.2% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| 02c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 34.3% | 39.4% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 20.0% | 16.8% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 38.6% | 35.0% |
| | NA | 2.9% | 2.2% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 2.9% | 6.6% |
| 03. The prosecutor has complied with their obligations under DG6. Disclosure issues were anticipated and properly addressed in the initial review (including reasonable lines of inquiry, rebuttable presumption material, and common law disclosure). | NA | 2.9% | 8.0% |
| | No | 24.3% | 24.1% |
| | Yes | 72.9% | 67.9% |
| 03a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 0.0% | 4.4% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 18.6% | 22.6% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 1.4% | 2.2% |
| | No other | 11.4% | 9.5% |
| | Yes | 68.6% | 61.3% |
| 03b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 2.9% | 2.9% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) | 15.7% | 16.8% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| | but good practice recorded | | |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 65.7% | 62.8% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 4.3% | 4.4% |
| | NA | 2.9% | 8.0% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 8.6% | 5.1% |
| 03c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 25.7% | 24.8% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 31.4% | 30.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 25.7% | 21.9% |
| | NA | 2.9% | 8.0% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 14.3% | 14.6% |
| | | | |
| 04. Asset recovery is considered in any case in which the suspect has benefited from criminal conduct. | NA | 85.7% | 97.8% |
| | No | 5.7% | 1.5% |
| | Yes | 8.6% | 0.7% |
| 04a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 2.9% | 0.0% |
| | No other | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | Yes | 92.9% | 99.3% |
| 04b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 4.3% | 0.7% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 7.1% | 0.0% |
| | NA | 87.1% | 97.8% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| 04c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| | NA | 88.6% | 97.8% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 1.4% | 0.7% |
| | | | |
| 05. Any communication to other stakeholders (such as Case Action Plans, Defence engagement, contact with YOS, ISVA, IDVA) is reasonable, justified, well-drafted (in terms of linking each action to an issue in the case) and sets clear and realistic timescales for any response. | NA | 4.3% | 23.4% |
| | No | 11.4% | 13.1% |
| | Yes | 84.3% | 63.5% |
| 05a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 1.4% | 8.8% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 14.3% | 9.5% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 1.4% | 4.4% |
| | No other | 10.0% | 2.9% |
| | Yes | 72.9% | 74.5% |
| 05b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 5.7% | 8.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 82.9% | 60.6% |
| | CPS answer yes' (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 4.3% | 24.1% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 7.1% | 5.1% |
| 05c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 11.4% | 12.4% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 37.1% | 19.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 27.1% | 20.4% |
| | NA | 5.7% | 24.1% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 18.6% | 23.4% |
| | | | |
| 06. There is clear evidence that the prosecutor has added value in terms of improving the chances of a just outcome and shown grip in | NA | 8.6% | 17.5% |
| | No | 17.1% | 12.4% |
| | Yes | 74.3% | 70.1% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| their progression of the case to a conclusion. | | | |
| 06a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 1.4% | 3.6% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 17.1% | 15.3% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| | No other | 10.0% | 21.2% |
| | Yes | 70.0% | 58.4% |
| 06b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 14.3% | 10.2% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 72.9% | 57.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 2.2% |
| | NA | 10.0% | 24.1% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 2.9% | 4.4% |
| 06c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 15.7% | 13.1% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 27.1% | 19.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) | 22.9% | 11.7% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| | but areas for improvement recorded | | |
| | NA | 8.6% | 24.8% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 20.0% | 31.4% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording NA | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| 07. The case is well managed with appropriate reviews demonstrating that issues arising and any developments in the case have been considered and addressed (including by compliance with Court directions and the use of timely and well drafted internal and external communications). | NA | 21.4% | 50.4% |
| | No | 22.9% | 12.4% |
| | Yes | 55.7% | 37.2% |
| 07a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 1.4% | 2.2% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 12.9% | 4.4% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 2.9% | 1.5% |
| | No other | 12.9% | 15.3% |
| | Yes | 70.0% | 76.6% |
| 07b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 17.1% | 5.1% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 51.4% | 34.3% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 21.4% | 55.5% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 5.7% | 2.9% |
| 07c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 24.3% | 7.3% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 20.0% | 13.9% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 15.7% | 7.3% |
| | NA | 21.4% | 56.2% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 17.1% | 14.6% |
| 08. The rights and interests of victims and witnesses were considered (especially in relation to Special Measures and possible victimless prosecutions) and there was timely and effective communication with them, where appropriate, in accordance with the Victims Code (including engagement and communication with victim support services). | NA | 27.1% | 15.3% |
| | No | 15.7% | 16.1% |
| | Yes | 57.1% | 68.6% |
| 08a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 4.3% | 2.2% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 8.6% | 15.3% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 5.7% | 2.2% |
| | No other | 7.1% | 34.3% |
| | Yes | 74.3% | 46.0% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| 08b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 5.7% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 5.7% | 8.8% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 54.3% | 60.6% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 2.2% |
| | NA | 28.6% | 20.4% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 5.7% | 6.6% |
| 08c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 14.3% | 14.6% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 24.3% | 19.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 12.9% | 18.2% |
| | NA | 28.6% | 21.9% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 20.0% | 26.3% |
| | | | |
| 09. The prosecutor has demonstrated a thinking approach to disclosure and good grip in complying with all duties under common law, CPIA, Attorney General's Guidelines and any applicable protocols. | NA | 14.3% | 21.2% |
| | No | 15.7% | 19.0% |
| | Yes | 70.0% | 59.9% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| 09a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 0.0% | 4.4% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 21.4% | 13.1% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | No other | 18.6% | 38.7% |
| | Yes | 60.0% | 43.1% |
| 09b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 2.9% | 2.2% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 8.6% | 10.9% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 64.3% | 50.4% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 1.4% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 15.7% | 27.0% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 7.1% | 8.8% |
| 09c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 15.7% | 18.2% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 32.9% | 20.4% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for | 20.0% | 13.1% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|---|---|-------|-------|
| | improvement recorded | | |
| | NA | 15.7% | 28.5% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 14.3% | 19.7% |
| 10. The prosecutor has dealt appropriately with defence disclosure (including challenging inadequate or missing Defence Statements) and demonstrated a thinking approach and good grip in discharging their duties of ongoing disclosure. | NA | 71.4% | 91.2% |
| | No | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | Yes | 25.7% | 8.0% |
| 10a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 2.9% | 0.0% |
| | No other | 2.9% | 7.3% |
| | Yes | 94.3% | 92.0% |
| 10b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 25.7% | 4.4% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 71.4% | 92.7% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| | | | |
| 10c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 2.9% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 1.4% | 0.0% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 12.9% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 4.3% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 71.4% | 93.4% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 7.1% | 3.6% |
| 11. The prosecutor has drafted a good quality Disclosure Record Sheet (DRS) and Disclosure Management Document (DMD) (where appropriate) so that the rationale for disclosure decisions and our disclosure strategy is clear and understandable. | NA | 17.1% | 31.4% |
| | No | 25.7% | 13.9% |
| | Yes | 57.1% | 54.7% |
| 11a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 10.0% | 10.9% |
| | No CPS assessment too lenient | 22.9% | 12.4% |
| | No CPS assessment too strict | 1.4% | 2.9% |
| | No other | 5.7% | 10.9% |
| | Yes | 60.0% | 62.8% |
| 11b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and no good practice recorded | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but good practice recorded | 15.7% | 7.3% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded | 52.9% | 49.6% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not recorded | 4.3% | 2.2% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|---|---|--------|--------|
| | NA | 18.6% | 34.3% |
| | NA there was no good practice that required recording | 7.1% | 5.1% |
| 11c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer no (to the main question) and areas for improvement recorded | 25.7% | 11.7% |
| | CPS answer no (to the main question) but areas for improvement not recorded | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and areas for improvement not recorded | 22.9% | 19.7% |
| | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 20.0% | 10.2% |
| | NA | 18.6% | 35.0% |
| | NA there were no areas for improvement that required recording | 12.9% | 22.6% |
| 12. The prosecutor has adopted an appropriate and timely international strategy in any case in which there is or is reasonably believed to be relevant material, evidence, suspect(s), witness(es) or assets outside of the UK. | NA | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 12a. Was the IQA assessment reasonable? | No CPS assessment should not have been NA | 1.4% | 0.0% |
| | No other | 2.9% | 0.0% |
| | Yes | 95.7% | 100.0% |
| 12b. Did the DCP record areas of good practice when completing the IQA? | CPS answer yes (to the main question) and good practice recorded. CPS answer yes (to the main question) but good practice not | 0.0% | 0.7% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|--|--|--------|-------|
| | recorded and should have been | | |
| | NA | 100.0% | 99.3% |
| 12c. Did the DCP record areas requiring improvement when completing the IQA? | CPS answer yes (to the main question) but areas for improvement recorded | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| | NA | 100.0% | 99.3% |
| 13. Did the DCP identify that an urgent casework follow-up action was required and record it on the IQA app? | No action recorded | 4.3% | 3.6% |
| | No action recorded but there should have been | 17.1% | 15.3% |
| | No action required | 57.1% | 71.5% |
| | Yes urgent action identified and recorded | 21.4% | 9.5% |
| 14. Was it possible from the 'summary of discussion with prosecutor' box to determine whether there had been a meaningful conversation with the prosecutor? | No the box had an entry but did not record details of a conversation with the prosecutor | 60.0% | 54.7% |
| | No the box had not been completed | 5.7% | 3.6% |
| | Yes it was clear that there had been a meaningful conversation with the prosecutor | 34.3% | 41.6% |
| 15. Was the case live and sufficiently detailed with sufficient progress made to enable a meaningful assessment of performance? | No the case was live but was not sufficiently detailed and progressed | 11.4% | 8.0% |
| | No the case was not live | 14.3% | 8.8% |
| | Yes the case was live and sufficiently detailed and progressed | 74.3% | 83.2% |
| 16. Did the dip sampler provide focused and constructive comments to the DCP to ensure that the right lessons were learned and good work noted, i.e., did the dip sampler add value? | NA there were no areas of good practice and or areas for improvement that required constructive feedback | 0.0% | 4.4% |

Inspection of Crown Prosecution Service Individual Quality Assessments (IQAs)

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| | No NM The dip sampler did not identify good practice issues that had been missed | 41.4% | 38.0% |
| | Yes FM The dip sampler identified good practice and or highlighted issues that had been missed and provided good quality feedback to the DCP | 14.3% | 13.9% |
| | Yes PM The dip sampler identified some areas of good practice issues that had been missed but not all | 44.3% | 43.8% |
| 17. Was there evidence on the IQA app that the prosecutor had commented on the assessment? | No | 97.1% | 86.1% |
| | Yes | 2.9% | 13.9% |
| 18. Did the DCP confine their assessment to work done by the prosecutor who was the subject of the IQA? | No | 17.1% | 8.8% |
| | Yes | 82.9% | 91.2% |

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

London Office

7th Floor, Tower
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9GL
Tel. 020 4574 3218

York Office

Foss House, Kings Pool
1–2 Peasholme Green
York, North Yorkshire, YO1 7PX
Tel. 01904 54 5490

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