HMCPSI
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

Area inspection programme: Composite report of the phase three inspections of CPS Yorkshire & Humberside and CPS Cymru Wales

A report identifying the factors that contribute to casework quality in the Crown Prosecution Service.

March 2026

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Who we are

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate 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.

Our vision

We are part of the solution to improving the Criminal Justice System through high quality inspection.

We have four priorities to enable us to deliver this vision:

- We hold the CPS and SFO to account for what they deliver (we make recommendations that drive improvement)
- Victims will be at the heart of inspection (where we can, we will use victim experience in our inspection)
- Using our 25 years of experience we will help public prosecutors improve (their legal casework)
- Inspection will identify and spread best practice

Our values

We act with **integrity**, creating a culture of **respect**, drive **innovation**, pursue **ambition**, and commit to **inclusivity** in everything we do.

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1. Chief inspector's Foreword

Foreword

As HM Chief Inspector, I have had the privilege of observing the work of Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) geographical Areas across England and Wales for many years. Each inspection offers fresh insight into the strengths, challenges and aspirations of the people delivering our prosecution services. The two inspections that form the basis of this report—CPS Cymru-Wales and CPS Yorkshire and Humberside—were conducted to help us to identify how quality is built, sustained, and sometimes rebuilt in times when the CPS, and the wider criminal justice system, is under immense pressure.

What struck me most in both inspections was the unwavering commitment of staff to doing the right thing for victims, witnesses and the wider public. Even where pressures were acute—whether from organisational change, rising caseloads or the natural ebb and flow of experience across teams—people were determined to deliver a good service. That sense of purpose is evident throughout the CPS, whenever we engage with CPS staff.

CPS Yorkshire and Humberside's progress between our baseline and follow-up inspections was exceptional, and it did not happen by chance. It came from clear leadership, a refusal to be distracted from the basics, and a genuine culture of collaboration both within the Area and with stakeholders. What impressed me most was how the Area used data not as a shield but as a tool—to understand problems, take timely action, and measure whether change was having the impact it needed.

CPS Cymru-Wales faced a different set of challenges, including unprecedented turn-over in senior leadership posts and a high proportion of new staff. Yet we found a team that remained focused and resilient, with a clear drive to learn, adapt and improve. Their use of mock trials to build confidence and capability in their magistrates' courts teams reflects a practical, thoughtful approach to addressing real skills needs. They have the foundations in place to turn good intentions into consistently strong results.

These inspections reinforce something I have believed for a long time: that high-quality casework is not secured through complex strategies or sweeping reforms. It comes from clarity of direction, disciplined attention to the basics, and respectful, honest partnerships across the criminal justice system. When these conditions are present, performance improves. When they are absent, improvement is harder to achieve—and certainly harder to sustain.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all those in CPS Cymru-Wales and CPS Yorkshire and Humberside who contributed so openly to these inspections. Their willingness to reflect on both successes and challenges is essential to the work we do and to the progress we collectively seek across the criminal justice system.

My hope is that this report helps colleagues across the CPS consider how these insights apply in their own Areas. The lessons are clear, practical and achievable—and most importantly, they come directly from the people doing the work every day.

Anthony Rogers
HM Chief Inspector
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

2. Executive Summary

Executive Summary

2.1. This report presents a thematic, high-level comparative analysis of two Phase 3 inspections conducted by HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate: CPS Cymru-Wales (published January 2026) and CPS Yorkshire and Humberside (published September 2025). Both inspections examined what drives good-quality casework, building on baseline and follow-up findings from earlier phases of the Area Inspection Programme.

2.2. Across both Areas, inspectors identified shared drivers of improvement: strong strategic direction, a commitment to strengthening fundamental casework practices, and close and purposeful collaboration with partners. While each Area faced unique operational pressures, the evidence indicates that positive casework outcomes are shaped by senior leadership clarity, consistent management of fundamental processes, collaborative working between the operational delivery and legal disciplines, and a culture that encourages problem-solving across organisational boundaries.

2.3. Yorkshire and Humberside demonstrated the most marked improvement between baseline and follow-up assessments across all 14 of the CPS's geographical Areas. Its transformation—achieved despite demanding caseloads—was underpinned by disciplined performance management, strong leadership visibility (which was sustained despite a change in Chief Crown Prosecutor), collaborative working internally, and effective partnership working.

2.4. Cymru-Wales continued to deliver good outcomes despite significant challenges, including leadership changes and a high proportion of new staff. Inspectors found examples of strong practice, including innovative use of mock trials and a well-regarded induction programme. However, performance trends showed a decline in magistrates' courts casework quality compared to baseline, set against improvement in Crown Court work over the same period.

3. Introduction

Introduction

3.1. Phase 3 of the Area Inspection Programme sought to understand what drives casework quality rather than to report on the performance of specific Areas. CPS Yorkshire and Humberside and CPS Cymru-Wales were selected due to contrasting performance trajectories between their baseline and follow-up inspections[1]. CPS Yorkshire and Humberside displayed substantial improvement across both magistrates' courts and Crown Court casework, while CPS Cymru-Wales presented divergent trends between magistrates' courts and Crown Court performance: a decline in magistrates' courts casework and an improvement in Crown Court casework.

3.2. The purpose of this thematic report is to summarise the findings from our inspection activity in these two Areas under three core components:

- **Setting Direction**
- **Focusing on the Basics**
- **Working Together**

3.3. The analysis sets out how each Area approached these components, identifies what contributed to improvements, and highlights what hindered or slowed progress.

[1] Area Inspection Programme CPS Cymru Wales – HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate published October 2021, Area inspection programme CPS Yorkshire & Humberside AIP – HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate published April 2022. Area Inspection Programme – HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate – a follow-up published January 2025

4. Setting Direction

Setting Direction

CPS Cymru-Wales

4.1. In Cymru-Wales, leadership direction was shaped by a period of organisational transition. Senior leadership changes including in the most senior roles of Chief Crown Prosecutor and Area Business Manager (since renamed Head of Operational Delivery) coincided with an influx of new staff, presenting challenges in maintaining consistency of messaging, reinforcing standards, and ensuring continuity during a period of operational adjustment. Despite these pressures, inspectors found that the Area maintained a clear commitment to delivering high-quality casework.

4.2. The use of structured induction programmes helped reinforce the Area's expectations and approach to prosecutorial work. Leaders demonstrated the intention to stabilise performance, and although the Area faced differing directions of travel between magistrates' court and Crown Court casework, there was a sustained effort to communicate priorities and set foundations for improvement.

CPS Yorkshire and Humberside

4.3. CPS Yorkshire and Humberside adopted a deliberate "back-to-basics" strategy, identifying clear priorities highlighted in the baseline assessment and focusing on systematically addressing those priorities rather than attempting widespread reform simultaneously. Senior leaders, including the Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) and Area Business Manager, provided a visible, steadying presence and articulated a focused direction of travel with an ethos of strong collaboration internally across lawyers and operational delivery staff, that was sustained despite a change in leadership at CCP level.

4.4. The Area's bespoke real-time performance tool strengthened leadership ability at all levels to identify issues, direct resources, track progress, and assess impact. The consistent alignment of managerial activity with strategic objectives ensured that staff across the Area understood expectations and priorities. This clarity and focus was central to the Area's significant improvement between baseline and follow-up.

Comparative Observations

4.5. Both Areas demonstrated commitment to improvement, but CPS Yorkshire and Humberside was more advanced in embedding structured, data-driven leadership across the Area and casework types. CPS Cymru-Wales had strong intentions and pockets of innovation, but the

impact was less consistent. In our judgement, clarity of direction, stability, and data-driven decision-making were the decisive factors to deliver change and improved quality.

5. Focusing on the basics

Focusing on the Basics

CPS Cymru-Wales

5.1. Inspectors noted that the Area continued to provide good service quality despite operational pressures created by the large-scale recruitment of new legal staff into the Area and significant numbers of newly appointed legal managers. Effective basic practice was evident in the use of mock trials, which strengthened prosecutor capability in the magistrates' courts. However, the Area's magistrates' courts performance had declined since the baseline assessment, suggesting that there were some underlying issues that impacted the Area's ability to drive improved casework outcomes. Our findings highlighted that significant recruitment had impacted the level of experience both of prosecutors and first line legal managers, concentrated largely in the magistrates' courts teams.

5.2. The Area's induction programme was praised, ensuring new staff were equipped with essential skills early in their tenure. Inspectors found that the Area intended to address developmental issues, but the combination of new staff and leadership change meant that basic processes needed further consolidation.

CPS Yorkshire and Humberside

5.3. A disciplined and systematic focus on the fundamentals was central to CPS Yorkshire and Humberside's success. Improvements were driven by:

- strengthened casework preparation
- clear accountability structures
- structured learning through Local Case Management Panels
- targeted training interventions responding to earlier inspection findings.

5.4. As well as a structured focus on basics, Area improvement was also driven by a collaborative and collegiate approach across the teams. There was also a clear plan to make improvement that set out specific actions which were systematically addressed using best practice principles. Clear lines of responsibility and action owners were identified and held to account. Our findings showed that this clearly resulted in improvement and strengthened casework preparation across magistrates' court and Crown Court teams.

5.5. The Area embedded a culture of continuous improvement supported by rigorous data analysis. Staff understood expectations, actions were clearly defined, and outcomes were regularly checked for impact.

Comparative Observations

5.6. CPS Yorkshire and Humberside demonstrated a more mature, embedded approach to fundamental casework practices. Its application of structured learning, disciplined process management, and strong assurance mechanisms set a clear benchmark. CPS Cymru-Wales showed commitment and some innovative practice, particularly around prosecutor capability building, but the variability in performance—especially in magistrates' courts casework—indicated that there were some basic fundamentals that needed a more consistent application. A focus on building experience through legal management, including coaching and mentoring of new staff would lead to better decision making and improved casework quality.

6. Working together

Working Together

CPS Cymru-Wales

6.1. The Area continued to maintain constructive relationships locally despite considerable internal change. Inspectors found a strong culture of collaboration with stakeholders and a proactive approach to engaging with partners. Feedback suggested genuine intent to address issues raised and to maintain good outcomes for victims and witnesses.

CPS Yorkshire and Humberside

6.2. Yorkshire and Humberside displayed an exceptionally strong collaborative culture. Inspectors found this culture at all levels and across the casework teams. The shared focus on quality, coupled with the real time performance tool, allowed managers, both legal and operational to be empowered and confident in identifying and addressing the root cause of issues and problems. Being able to quickly identify and tackle issues was central to the Area's ability to focus on structured improvement. The partnership between legal and operational delivery teams was also critical to the Area's success.

6.3. There was also a culture of structured improvement seen in the Area's approach to partnership working. Joint working with police forces, the judiciary, and HMCTS yielded tangible operational benefits, including:

- improved police file quality
- increased acceptance of DGA feedback
- effective joint training and learning initiatives
- reduced trial backlogs through collaborative problem-solving
- consistent engagement through structured inter-agency forums

Partnerships were rooted in open communication, shared aims, and data-informed joint improvement activity.

Comparative Observations

6.4. Both Areas recognised the importance of collaboration, but CPS Yorkshire and Humberside's partnerships, both between legal and operational teams and with CJ partners produced more measurable impact

on casework quality. The Area's practical, problem-solving approach, supported by strong inter-agency engagement, directly contributed to its improved performance.

7. Judgements and Conclusions

Judgements and Key Messages

Key Strengths Across Both Areas

- A clear commitment to improving casework quality.
- Creative approaches to prosecutor development (mock trials and prosecutor induction in CPS Cymru-Wales; increased use of local case management panels in all casework types in CPS Yorkshire & Humberside).
- A recognition that strong partnership working is essential to good outcomes.

Where CPS Yorkshire & Humberside Excelled

- Strong, visible leadership direction setting a culture of collaboration and improvement.
- Highly effective use of real-time performance data.
- Systematic approach to casework quality improvement with clarity of responsibility, accountability and assurance of impact.
- Operationally productive stakeholder partnerships resulting in measurable improvements.

Where Cymru-Wales Showed Strength but Needs Consolidation

- Effective induction and creative learning methods.
- Continued provision of good service despite organisational pressures.
- Strong senior leadership direction and vision that needs to be embedded across the Area.
- A more structured approach to actions taken, ensuring each action produces the desired outcome and improvement.
- Need to articulate and consolidate core casework fundamentals.
- Address the decline in magistrates' courts casework performance to ensure balanced quality across units.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of CPS Cymru Wales and CPS Yorkshire and Humberside highlights clear patterns in what drives high quality casework. Effective leadership direction, disciplined focus on the basics, and strong partnership working are essential to achieving positive outcomes.

CPS Yorkshire and Humberside's substantial improvement demonstrates the value of a clear vision, structured governance, robust assurance mechanisms, and collaborative culture, both internal and with partners. The Area provides an example of how coordinated, data driven action can transform performance even in challenging circumstances.

CPS Cymru Wales continues to deliver positive results and has strong foundations—particularly in staff development and commitment to improvement—but needs to consolidate fundamental processes and stabilise their delivery. It is clear that the Area can achieve this given the scale of improvement seen in Crown Court casework.

8. Annex A Glossary

Area
The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is divided into 14 geographical Areas across England and Wales.

Each Area is led by a Chief Crown Prosecutor, supported by an Area Business Manager.

Agent
A lawyer from outside the CPS who is employed when required to prosecute cases at court on behalf of the CPS. They cannot make decisions about cases under the Code for Crown Prosecutors ('the Code') and must take instructions from the CPS.

Area Business Manager (ABM)
The most senior non-legal manager at CPS Area level. They are responsible for the business aspects in an Area, such as managing the budget, and work with the Chief Crown Prosecutor to run the Area effectively and efficiently.

Barrister/Counsel
A lawyer with the necessary qualifications to appear in the Crown Court and other criminal courts, who is paid by the CPS to prosecute cases at court, or by the representative of someone accused of a crime to defend them.

Case Management System (CMS)
An IT system for case management used by the CPS, which records most of the details of cases and provides management information and data. Through links with police systems, the case management system (CMS) receives electronic case material that has replaced paper files.

Case Strategy Principles (CSPs)
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.

Casework Quality Standards (CQSs)
Issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions, these casework quality standards (CQSs) set out the benchmarks of quality that the CPS strives to deliver when prosecuting crime on behalf of the public. They include the CPS's responsibilities to victims, witnesses and communities, legal

decision-making and the preparation and presentation of cases.

Charging Decision
A decision by the CPS (or the police in certain circumstances) whether there is sufficient evidence, and whether it is in the public interest, to charge a suspect with a particular offence. The process is governed by the Director's Guidance on Charging, 6th edition (DG6), which came into effect in December 2020.

Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP)
Each of the 14 CPS Areas has a Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) who runs the Area with the Area Business Manager. The CCP is the most senior legal manager at CPS Area level and is responsible for the legal aspects in the Area, such as quality of legal decision-making, case progression, and working with stakeholders, communities, and the public to deliver quality casework.

Code for Crown Prosecutors ('the Code')
A public document, issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions, that sets out the framework for prosecution decision-making. Cases should proceed to charge only if there is sufficient evidence against a suspect to provide a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to prosecute.

Common Platform
A digital system that allows the police, judiciary, solicitors, barristers and criminal justice agencies to access and edit case information. Operated by HMCTS.

Contested Case
Where a defendant pleads not guilty or declines to enter any plea at all, and the case proceeds to trial.

Cracked Trial
A case which ends on the day of trial either because of a guilty plea by the defendant or because the prosecution decides to stop the case.

Criminal Procedure Rules
Rules which give criminal courts powers to manage criminal cases waiting to be heard effectively. The main aim of the Criminal Procedure Rules (CPR) is to progress cases fairly and quickly.

Crown Advocate (CA)
A Crown Advocate (CA) is a lawyer employed by the Crown Prosecution Service who is qualified to appear in the Crown Court.

Crown Court
The court which deals with graver allegations of criminal offences, such as murder, rape, and serious assaults. Some allegations can be heard at either the Crown Court or the magistrates' courts.

Crown Prosecutor
A lawyer employed by the CPS whose role includes reviewing and preparing cases for court and prosecuting cases at the magistrates' courts. Crown Prosecutors (CPs) can progress to become Senior Crown Prosecutors.

Custody Time Limit (CTL)
The Custody Time Limit (CTL) is the length of time that a defendant can be kept in custody awaiting trial. It can be extended by the court in certain circumstances.

Custody Time Limit Case Progression Log
A document used by the CPS to track the progress of cases where a defendant is held in custody before trial. The log helps ensure that cases are progressed efficiently and that defendants are not held in custody longer than legally permitted. The CPS is expected to maintain these logs and update them regularly with case details, actions taken, and review dates.

Custody Time Limit Failure
When the court refuses to extend a custody time limit failure (CTL) on the grounds that the prosecution has not acted with the necessary due diligence and expedition, or when no valid application is made to extend the CTL before its expiry date.

Defendant
Someone accused of and charged with or convicted of a criminal offence.

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

Director's Guidance on Charging/DG6
Guidance issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions in relation to charging decisions. It sets out guidance for the police and CPS about how to prepare a file so that it is ready for charging, who can make the charging decision, and what factors influence the decision. The latest edition (the sixth, also called "DG6") came into effect on 31 December 2020.

Disclosure/unused material
The police have a duty to record, retain and review material collected during an investigation which is relevant but is not being used as prosecution evidence, and to reveal it to the prosecutor. The prosecutor has a duty to provide the defence with copies of, or access to, all material that is capable of undermining the prosecution case and/or assisting the defendant's case. There are various regimes, and the type of case determines which one applies.

District Crown Prosecutor (DCP)
A District Crown Prosecutor (DCP) is a lawyer who leads and manages the day-to-day activities of prosecutors and advocates.

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".

Effective Trial
Where a case proceeds to a full trial on the date that it is meant to.

Full Code test
A method by which a prosecutor decides whether or not to bring a prosecution, based on the Code for Crown Prosecutors. A prosecution must only start or continue when the case has passed both stages of the full Code test: the evidential stage, followed by the public interest stage. The full Code test should be applied when all outstanding reasonable lines of inquiry have been pursued – or before the investigation being completed, if the

prosecutor is satisfied that any further evidence or material is unlikely to affect the application of the full Code test, whether in favour of or against a prosecution.

Gatekeeper
Someone in a police force who checks the documents prepared by the case officer and makes sure they are all there and meet the standard required for them to be submitted to the CPS. Not all police forces have gatekeepers.

Graduated Fee Scheme (GFS)
The scheme by which lawyers are paid for Crown Court cases. For Counsel appearing on behalf of defendants who qualify for assistance (or legal aid), the Graduated Fee Scheme (GFS) is set and managed by the Legal Aid Agency. For Counsel appearing for the prosecution, the rates are determined by the CPS GFS, and the CPS pays Counsel.

Hate Crime
Any offence where the defendant has been motivated by or demonstrated hostility towards the victim based on what the defendant thinks is their race, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Targeting older people is not (at the time of writing) recognised in law as a hate crime, but the CPS monitors crimes against older people in a similar way.

Hearing Record Sheet (HRS)
A CPS electronic record of what has happened in the case during the course of a court hearing, and any actions that need to be carried out afterwards.

His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)
An organisation responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales.

Inclusion and Community Engagement Strategy
Sets out the CPS's commitment to promoting fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion across the criminal justice system by engaging with community groups and those at risk of exclusion.

Indictment
This is the document that contains the formal charge or charges (known as count or counts), against a defendant facing a trial in the Crown Court.

Individual Learning Account
An allowance of £350 per person, per year, which CPS employees can access for professional development.

Individual quality assessment
An individual quality assessment (IQA) is an assessment of a piece of work done by a CPS member of staff, usually a prosecutor. 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.

Ineffective trial
A case that does not proceed to trial on the date that it is meant to. This can be owing to a variety of possible reasons, including non-attendance of witnesses, non-compliance with a court order by the prosecution or defence, or lack of court time.

Local Case Management Panels (LCMPs)
A forum within a CPS Area that has a key role in overseeing complex, high risk or sensitive cases. It ensures consistent decision-making, supports prosecutors and manages referrals to specialist units.

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs)
Groups made up of representatives of the CPS, police, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and others, whose purpose is to work in partnership to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system and to improve the experience of the victims and witnesses. Local Criminal Justice Boards were originally set up in all 43 police force areas by central government and received central funding. They now operate as voluntary partnerships in most counties in England.

Local Scrutiny Involvement Panels (LSIPs)
Groups made up of representatives of the local community and voluntary sector, especially those representing minority, marginalised or at-risk groups. They meet regularly with their local CPS Area to discuss issues of local concern and provide feedback on the service the Area provides, with a view to improving the delivery of justice at a local level and to better supporting victims and witnesses.

Manual of Guidance Form 3 (MG3)
One of a number of template forms contained in a manual of guidance for the police and CPS on putting together prosecution files. The Manual of Guidance Form 3 is where the police summarise the evidence and other information when asking the CPS to decide whether a suspect should be charged with a criminal offence, and the CPS then records its decision.

National File Standard (NFS)
A national system that sets out how the police should prepare criminal case files. It allows investigators to build only as much of the file as is needed at any given stage – whether that is for advice from the CPS, the first appearance at court or the trial. The latest version was published in December 2020.

No Further Action (NFA)
When a criminal allegation has been reported to the police, the police may decide at any stage during an investigation that there is insufficient evidence to proceed, so they will take no further action. Alternatively, they may refer a case to the CPS who may advise the police that no further action should be taken, either because there is not enough evidence or because a prosecution is not in the public interest.

Paralegal officer
A CPS employee who provides support and casework assistance to CPS lawyers and attends court to take notes of hearings and assist advocates.

Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing (PTPH)
The first hearing at the Crown Court after the case has been sent from the magistrates' courts. The defendant is expected to enter a plea to the offence(s) with which they have been charged. If the defendant pleads guilty, the court may be able to sentence them immediately, but if not, or of the defendant has pleaded not guilty, the court will set the next hearing date and, for trials, will also set out a timetable for management of the case.

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.

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)
Allegations of rape and other serious sexual offences perpetrated against men, women or children. In the CPS, the prosecution of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) cases is undertaken separately from other cases, in RASSO units or teams.

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.

Review
The process whereby a CPS prosecutor determines that a case received from the police satisfies, or continues to satisfy, the legal test for prosecution in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. This is one of the most important functions of the CPS.

Senior Crown Prosecutor (SCP)
A lawyer employed by the CPS with the necessary skills and experience to progress to a more senior legal role, which includes the functions of a crown prosecutor but also includes advising the police on charge. It is not a role that includes managing staff.

Senior District Crown Prosecutor (SDCP)
A lawyer employed by the CPS who holds a senior legal role with responsibility for managing staff. A Senior District Crown Prosecutor will often have responsibility for a casework unit.

Special measures
The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 provides for a range of special measures to enable vulnerable or intimidated witnesses in a criminal trial to give their most accurate and complete account of what happened. Measures include giving evidence via a live TV link to the court, giving evidence from behind screens in the courtroom and using intermediaries. A special measures application is made to the court within set time limits and can be made by the prosecution or defence.

Standard operating practice (SOP)
The CPS has a range of standard operating practices which set out how to complete a particular task or action and cover legal and business aspects of the running of the CPS. They are standard across the organisation and seek to apply consistency to business practices and key steps needed in all prosecutions.

Suspect
Someone accused of or believed to have committed a criminal offence but not charged or convicted of an offence.

Triage
In the context of this report, triage is a check carried out by a member of CPS staff, either an administrator or legal manager, to make sure that what the police have sent to the CPS includes the right documents and other items. If an administrator triage, then the check is normally for the presence of the required material, not the quality of their contents. If a triage by a legal manager, this will often check both the presence of required material and the quality of its contents.

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
Sets out a victim's rights and the minimum standards of service that organisations must provide to victims of crime. Its aim is to improve victims' experience of the criminal justice system by providing them with the support and information they need. It was published in October 2013 and last updated on 29 January 2025.

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, and vulnerable or intimidated victims must be notified of a decision within one working day.

Victim Liaison Unit (VLU)
The team of CPS staff in an Area responsible for communicating with victims under the Victim Communication and Liaison scheme and the Victims' Right to Review, and for responding to complaints and overseeing the service to bereaved families.

Victim Personal Statement (VPS)
When a victim explains to the court how a crime has affected them. If a defendant is found guilty, the court will take the Victim Personal Statement into account, along with all the other evidence, when deciding on an appropriate sentence.

Victims' Right to Review (VRR)
This scheme provides victims of crime with a specifically designed process to exercise their right to review certain CPS decisions not to start a prosecution, or to stop a prosecution. If a new decision is required, it may be appropriate to institute or reinstitute criminal proceedings. The right to request a review of a decision not to prosecute under the Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme applies to decisions that have the effect of being final made by any crown prosecutor, regardless of their grade or position in the organisation. It is important to note that the "right" referred to in the context of the VRR scheme is the right to request a review of a final decision. It is not a guarantee that proceedings will be instituted or reinstituted.

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