

Scoping Document

An inspection of the Serious Economic Organised Crime and International Directorate (SEOCID) 2026

A. Introduction

We set out in the HMCPSI business plan 2025-2026¹ that we aimed to conduct an inspection of how the CPS Serious Economic, Organised Crime and International Division (SEOCID) has developed since its creation in 2022.

The CPS created SEOCID in response to the growing complexity and interconnected nature of serious economic and organised crime. Previously, this work was spread across three separate CPS divisions: International Justice and Organised Crime Division (IJOCD), Specialist Fraud Division (SFD), and Proceeds of Crime Division (POCD).

In our 2019 inspection of IJOCD² we found that while stakeholders thought highly of the division and the quality of its work, staff turnover was a challenge and there was no effective system in place to manage risk. In 2021, we inspected the CPS and SFO Proceeds of Crime Divisions³, and in CPS POCD we found that staff were professional, very capable, and highly motivated. We noted that POCD Standard Operating Procedures, digital case handling systems and standard case strategy documents were all used to ensure efficiency and a standardised approach to case management.

Over recent years, evolving criminal methods, increasing digital evidence and multi-jurisdictional demands highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to dealing with serious economic and organised crime. Guided by the Government's refreshed Serious Organised Crime strategy (SOC)⁴ and the CPS's own Changing Nature of Crime project and Economic Crime Strategy⁵, the CPS restructured their divisions to strengthen capability, flexibility, and national coordination.

As a result, SEOCID was launched in April 2022, bringing together the three former casework divisions under one directorate, comprising International, London and South-East Division (ILSED), Regional and Wales Division (RWD) and Proceeds of Crime Division (POCD)⁶. ILSED and RWD work alongside POCD, which focuses on recovering assets obtained from criminal activity.

¹ [Business-Plan-2025-26.pdf](#)

² [CPS IJOCD: An inspection of governance, leadership, resilience and stakeholder relationships](#)

³ [HMCPSI - An inspection of the operation of CPS and SFO Proceeds of Crime Divisions - August 2021](#)

⁴ [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ [Economic Crime Strategy 2025 | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)

⁶ ILSED includes International and Extradition Units, and both ILSED and RWD contain multidisciplinary teams dealing with complex organised and economic crime.

We understand that SEOCID is currently undergoing structural changes. A new Chief Crown Prosecutor is due to join RWD, and the three fraud hubs currently based in CPS Wales, CPS Wessex, and CPS Mersey Cheshire are being consolidated into a Central Fraud Team within RWD. While we recognise this means there will be a period of transition within the Directorate, it remains timely to conduct an inspection, as our findings will inform and enhance the management, governance and assurance arrangements in place as SEOCID embeds its new structure as the existing structure will be in place at the point of inspection.

Given ILSED and RWD have limited interaction with POCD, POCD will be out of scope. As the Organised Child Sexual Abuse Unit (OCSAU) will be moving from RWD to align with CPS Wales it will also be out of scope. Given its highly specialised remit and the nature of its overseas postings, the international unit within ILSED will likewise not form part of this inspection. By focusing on London and the South East Division, and RWD, we will assess both the management of casework and the assurance mechanisms in place for these serious and complicated cases.

B. Inspection Question

Does SEOCID efficiently manage serious economic and organised crime casework, with effective assurance and governance in place to promote high quality legal decision-making and keep pace with the changing criminal landscape?

C. Objective

To examine whether SEOCID provides the resilience and expertise needed to make robust, high-quality and timely legal decisions. We will review existing systems and processes to understand how effectively they support assurance and governance.

D. Inspection Criteria

The aim of the inspection is to answer the following questions:

1. Casework Quality and Delivery

- Does the structure of SEOCID deliver high-quality casework in a timely manner?
- Are the use of standard case management documents and recording of casework on case management systems consistent across the breadth of SEOCID work?

2. Governance, Oversight and Assurance

- Does the current system of assurance and reporting provide sufficient oversight of SEOCID casework?
- Do Local and National Case Management Panels (LCMPs and NCMPs) and quality assessments provide the information the CPS need to manage casework risk?

3. People and Skills

- Has the creation of SEOCID built a workforce that is skilled in handling the most complex economic and organised crime cases?
- How does SEOCID attract, recruit and retain staff?
- Do SEOCID staff have the training, skills and tools together with support from managers to provide them with the confidence to prosecute serious economic and organised crime cases?

4. Stakeholders

- Does SEOCID have mature and effective relationships with investigators to effectively manage its cases at all levels?
- Does SEOCID have mature and effective relationships with HMCTS to ensure effective case progression at court?
- Are there effective internal and external relationships to ensure relevant information is shared in a purposeful and timely manner between SEOCID, the Directors of Legal Services and the Attorney Generals' Office?

E. Methodology

We will request and consider documents, hold real time observations of casework to understand systems and processes, interview relevant individuals, observe LCMPs and NCMPs where practicable and hold focus groups.

CPS interviews

We will engage relevant SEOCID staff and wider CPS staff, including both legal and non-legal personnel, as well as management.

Stakeholder interviews

SEOCID interact with a wide variety of stakeholders due to the nature and complexity of the cases the Directorate deals with. We will speak to those stakeholders with whom SEOCID routinely engages.

Documents

To support the inspection, we will request documentation prior to the onsite phase to provide evidence and enable targeted questioning during interviews with staff and stakeholders. This will include documentation associated with governance, assurance and training, and interaction between SEOCID and key stakeholders.⁷

F. Proposed timescales and resources

The inspection team will consist of the lead inspector and three legal inspectors.

The following timescale sets out the anticipated stages of the inspection:

March 2026 – scope finalised and shared with SEOCID

March 2026 – commissioning letters to SEOCID

April 2026 – inspection commences

April/May/June – document review and onsite activity

July/August – analysis and report writing

Winter 2026 – publication of report

G. Equality Impact Assessment

A preliminary screening for an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed. Given the nature of the inspection and its methodology, no impacts on individuals or groups with protected characteristics have been identified. A full EIA is therefore not anticipated, though this position will be kept under review throughout the inspection.

⁷ Documents will be requested when the inspection is commissioned, however, there may be additional document requests as the inspection progresses. We aim to keep any additional requests to a minimum.