

HMIC/HMCPST Thematic Inspection Report – Getting Cases Ready for Court

Leicestershire Police response

Whilst Leicestershire's performance was better than others in some areas, we recognise the general themes that have emerged from this inspection. They replicate themes to come from earlier inspections including the "Stop the Drift 2" report.

Many recommendations within the report are aimed at addressing national issues. These include

- College of Policing to review national training to meet needs identified
- Amending the national MG file forms
- Reviewing CPS prioritisation of case file reviews
- CJ Efficiency Programme Board to address the National File Standard and IT issues to improve the quality of information within reports
- CJ Efficiency Programme to review the management and administration of witness care to ensure required information is available for listing purposes

In Leicestershire, a comprehensive File Quality Improvement Plan has been developed. The implementation of this plan is being led by D/Supt Criminal Justice. The plan addresses a number of issues including:

- Developing a comprehensive performance framework including auditing of files, feedback to officers and supervisors and feedback to BCU/Dept SMTs on areas of good/poor performance
- Developing a communication plan for officers and staff to increase awareness of key issues at a strategic and operational level
- Continuing to develop the recently launched File Quality Website as a central point of information for staff
- Launching the new E-file application that will assist officers in completing the correct forms and reducing overbuild of files.
- Reviewing local Witness Care arrangements with CPS and the Courts
- Reviewing current training provision, especially for supervisors. Ad hoc group and one to one training is already offered for those with identified needs through Criminal Justice but may need further impetus.
- Reviewing partnership performance arrangements to ensure that joint issues are managed.

Regional considerations

As regional collaboration may develop within the Criminal Justice arena, it is likely that regional responses could be developed to address issues identified within this inspection. This is likely to include a regional approach to IT, training, witness care and case preparation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the recently published “Getting Cases To Court” report has identified ongoing issues around the preparation of cases for prosecution. These are national themes that are reflected in Leicestershire.

Criminal Justice Department has a File Quality Improvement Plan in place to address issues identified and will provide feedback on performance through the new performance framework.

As the regional Criminal Justice Collaboration develops, there will be scope for regional solutions to some of the issues identified.

ACC(C) Roger Bannister accepts the HMIC Report – Getting Cases Ready for Court.

PCC Sir Clive Loader’s Comments

I note the criticisms in the HMIC report regarding the quality of Court files provided by Leicestershire Police. It is particularly disappointing that the report found a lack of understanding on behalf of Police Officers as to what is required in a file and in relation to which witnesses are key and which are not. However, I have had sight of a report from the Force highlighting the actions it has already taken to rectify these problems and I have also raised the issue at the Strategic Assurance Board. For the moment I am satisfied that the action the Force is taking to improve the quality of prosecution files is adequate, but I will continue to monitor the results of the File Quality Improvement Plan.