

Have you got what it takes?

Working with criminal justice inspectorates

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Important facts

Criminal justice inspectorates

The criminal justice (CJ) inspectorates (of constabulary, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), prisons and probation) are separate organisations set up to inspect the relevant individual statutory agencies – independently of those agencies and of the Government.

Each inspectorate publishes:

- **a yearly business plan setting out their programme of activity;**
- **individual inspection reports; and**
- **a chief inspector's annual report, setting out achievements and the effects inspections have had.**

Unless exceptional circumstances apply, all inspection reports are published openly on each inspectorate's website.

As well as these individual programmes, the CJ inspectorates also work together to deliver a programme of joint inspections – targeted at issues that cut across the criminal justice system (CJS) which might not otherwise be scrutinised (examined) in individual programmes.

There is a long history of voluntary collaborative working between the CJ inspectorates, and it was made a legal requirement under the Police and Justice Act 2006. The Act created responsibilities including drawing up and publishing a joint inspection programme.

This joint work is governed by a business plan, published each year, and ongoing publication of completed joint inspection reports, which appear on the CJ Joint Inspection (CJJI) website – at www.hmcpai.gov.uk/cjji.

More information

See [HM Inspectorate of Constabulary \(HMIC\)](#) for information about working with HMIC.

HM CPS Inspectorate (HMCPAI) is the independent inspectorate for the CPS. (The CPS is the main prosecution authority for criminal cases in England and Wales.) It also inspects the work of some other prosecuting agencies. Its purpose is to improve the quality of justice by carrying out independent inspections and assessing prosecution services so they improve their efficiency, effectiveness and fairness. HMCPAI produce reports that help reassure Ministers, officials and the public on the standard of the service delivered.

HMCPAI is the first independent quality assurance body for a prosecuting authority in the world. It was set up under the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000.

HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) is an independent inspectorate which reports to the Secretary of State for Justice on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public. This applies to whoever carries out this work under the National Offender Management Service or the Youth Justice Board. It also reports on

the effectiveness of the arrangements for this work, working with other inspectorates when this is necessary.

HMI Probation contributes to improved performance by the organisations it inspects and also to improving policy and delivering services effectively, especially in public protection. It does this by providing advice and passing on good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, officials, managers and practitioners.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) is an independent inspectorate which reports on the treatment and conditions for those held in prisons, young offender institutions and immigration facilities (in custody) as well as a number of other settings. Inspections independently examine custody and promote the idea of a healthy environment, which makes sure that the institutions are safe and promote respect. They should also be places where staff work effectively to support those held to reduce reoffending or achieve other agreed outcomes.

Together with HMIC, HMI Prisons inspects police custody conditions and, with HMI Probation, examines arrangements for managing offenders in custody.

The work of HMI Prisons is an important part of the UK's responsibilities under the 'Optional

Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment'. This includes the need to have regular independent inspections of places of custody

More information

Focus for CJ joint inspection

CJJI tackles issues that involve more than one CJ agency and directly affect the public as users of the CJS. Working together produces a more rounded examination of issues that cut across the system and allows CJJI to achieve more than if just one inspectorate acted alone.

CJJI focuses on:

- **tackling issues affecting the CJS as a whole;**
- **identifying and driving down costs within the system;**
- **tackling risks and improving public safety;**
- **looking at the system end-to-end and the role each agency plays;**
- **universal issues, standards and restrictions within the CJS; and**
- **public reassurance and confidence.**

The main areas of joint focus relate to four high-level processes.

- **Community safety – involving police, probation and youth offending teams (YOTs)**

- **Bringing offenders to justice – police, CPS, courts and YOTs**
- **Managing offenders – probation, prisons and YOTs**
- **Custodial conditions – prisons, police, courts and immigration services**

CJJI also has to take account of three important issues which are essential to the success and effectiveness of the above activities. These are:

- **the quality of experience of victims and witnesses;**
- **actively promoting equal opportunities and diversity; and**
- **achieving value for money and efficiency.**

There is also focus on CJS outcomes, the user experience and rights of victims and accused as members of the general public.

Delivering the programme

CJJI work to a rolling two-year programme, with a yearly review of priorities which allows inspectorates to re-prioritise where necessary. Each work stream has a 'lead inspectorate' and others support as appropriate. Most inspections are 'thematics' – meaning an important cross-cutting issue is examined in a number of criminal justice areas to highlight good and poor practice. There are also a small number of rolling programmes, inspecting all areas over a longer period.

All CJJI work is 'singly led but jointly owned' – meaning that the lead inspectorate is responsible for managing the inspection, setting the method for carrying it out and writing and publishing reports. The supporting inspectorates provide team members and resources, make written contributions and agree and 'own' the final report and any recommendations.

Recent joint inspections included:

- **rape investigation and prosecution;**
- **out-of-court disposals (using cautions, fixed penalty notices and other options to avoid prosecution at court); and**
- **appropriate adult provision and children in custody after charge.**

Duties to co-operate

The joint inspection programme will be of interest to police and crime commissioners, whether in highlighting good practice or identifying where the various agencies need to improve their joint working to serve the public. This will then feed in to discussions locally.

Inspections can directly shape the agencies' work to reduce reoffending. For example, inspections of youth offending (IYO inspections – led by HMI Probation) focus on the risk of harm presented by any young person to others, their own vulnerability and the likelihood of them reoffending. Other inspections are examining resettlement, looking at how the accommodation, employment, training and education needs of adult prisoners are identified and dealt with while offenders are in custody and when they are released. Joint inspection examines value for money and efficiency, looking at operational improvement in the criminal justice system to identify and pass on good practice.

Your regional HM inspector of constabulary will be pleased to discuss further how the joint inspection programme could help you, or you can contact any of the CJ inspectorates directly.

You can get more information, including recent inspection reports, at:

Joint inspectorate website: www.hmcpai.gov.uk/cji

Inspectorates: www.hmic.gov.uk

www.hmcpai.gov.uk

www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-probation

www.justice.gov.uk/inspectorates/hmi-prisons