

# Have you got what it takes?

Working in partnership with  
the Crown Prosecution Service



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### Important Facts

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecution authority in England and Wales, and is responsible for:

- advising the police on cases for possible prosecution;
- reviewing cases submitted by the police;
- determining any charges in more serious or complex cases;
- preparing cases for court;
- presenting cases at court.

The CPS is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Alison Saunders. The DPP is superintended by the Attorney General who is accountable to Parliament for the service.

The CPS is divided into 13 geographical areas, each led by a Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP). CPS Direct provides charging support for areas in the daytime and all out-of-hours charging decisions. The CPS also has central casework divisions, which handle serious organised crime, terrorism, fraud and other cases requiring specialist experience.

CCPs have responsibility for geographical areas larger than those that police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will cover, but this will not prevent them from working effectively with PCCs.

### Background

#### Code for Crown Prosecutor and Casework Quality Standards

The Code for Crown Prosecutors sets out the basic principles to be followed by crown prosecutors when they make casework decisions. Before charging a defendant and proceeding with a prosecution, Crown Prosecutors must first review each case against the Code. Those principles are whether:

- **there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction against each defendant on each charge; and if so,**
- **a prosecution is needed in the public interest.**

The CPS will only start or continue a prosecution if a case has passed both stages.

The CPS undertakes its work in line with the Casework Quality Standards (CQS), introduced in March 2014. These succeeded the Core Quality Standards which were initially introduced in 2010 to set out the quality of service that the public are entitled to expect from those who prosecute on their behalf. The CQS set out in plain language the key requirements for a successful prosecution and inform members of the public about the level of service they can expect from the CPS. The changes in 2014 clarified the CPS's

focus on good casework as the cornerstone of its service delivery, whilst maintaining the benchmarks of all-round quality established in the original Core Quality Standards.

Copies of these documents can be found here: [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/code\\_for\\_crown\\_prosecutors/index.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/code_for_crown_prosecutors/index.html)

[www.cps.gov.uk/publications/casework\\_quality\\_standards/index.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/casework_quality_standards/index.html)

#### Key Figures

As of 31st March 2015, the CPS had 5,817 FTE staff, including 2,483 prosecutors and 2,927 legal caseworkers and support staff. This means 93% of staff were engaged in, or directly assisting, frontline delivery.

In the financial year 2014-15, the CPS made 314,835 charging decisions and completed more than 660,000 cases, with 100,865 of these in the Crown Court and the remaining 563,625 in the magistrates' courts.

Of those cases prosecuted, there were 80,095 convictions in the Crown Court and 474,687 in the magistrates' courts. In total 83.5% of prosecutions resulted in a conviction.

More information on the CPS can be found at: [www.cps.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/index.html)

## Further Information

### How does the CPS work with the police?

The relationship between the police and the CPS plays a pivotal role in the criminal justice system and is fundamental to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

Under statutory charging arrangements, the police are responsible for deciding the charge for around three quarters of all criminal cases (all summary only and either way offences suitable for sentence in the magistrates' court where a guilty plea is anticipated). The CPS is responsible for determining the decision to charge in the remaining, more serious and complex cases.

Working with the police, CPS prosecutors can assess a case at an early stage so that where it is appropriate to prosecute they can ensure that there is the best chance of obtaining a successful outcome. This joint approach by the CPS and police has led to the development of the "Prosecution Team" ethos and closer working relationships between the organisations.

The CPS, police and other criminal justice system partners continue to work together to bring improvements across the whole of the criminal justice system.

### What are the 13 Areas that the CPS is divided into?

East of England, East Midlands, London, Mersey Cheshire, North East, North West, South East, South West, Thames and Chiltern, Wales, Wessex, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and Humberside. Information on the boundaries of each Area is available here:

[www.cps.gov.uk/your\\_cps/our\\_organisation/the\\_cps\\_areas.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/your_cps/our_organisation/the_cps_areas.html)

### How much flexibility is there to deliver a prosecution service to meet local needs?

The CPS is a national organisation that delivers prosecution services locally. CCPs have authority in criminal justice matters locally and are able to use their resources flexibly to meet local priorities and concerns within the national framework.

### What control do Chief Crown Prosecutors have over local budgets?

CCPs are responsible for their area budget through the area's business plan. This includes responsibility for decisions to work on joint planning with local CJS partners, but this is within the overall national framework.

### Who makes decisions on individual cases for prosecution?

Casework decisions are the sole responsibility of the CPS and must be made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and CPS guidance and policies. It is a fundamental principle that prosecutors must be fair, independent, and objective. Prosecutors must not be affected by improper or undue pressure from any source.

### Why is prosecutorial independence so important?

Although the prosecution service works closely with the police and other investigators, it is independent of them. The independence of prosecutors is essential. The decision to prosecute is a serious step. Fair and effective prosecution is essential to maintaining law and order. It is the duty of prosecutors to make sure that the right person is prosecuted for the right offence and to bring offenders to justice wherever possible. Casework decisions taken fairly, impartially and with integrity help to deliver justice for victims, witnesses, defendants and the public.