



Crown Court Data Assurance

Ministry of Justice

December 2024

01 - Executive Summary

Background

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is responsible for Courts, Tribunals, Prisons, Probation services and Attendance Centres. HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is an executive agency of MoJ and is responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts in England and Wales, as well as the reserved unified tribunals across the United Kingdom. The Department is seeking an independent review of the methodology and process it uses to produce the Crown Court caseload statistics. This is in response to a discrepancy identified in the Crown Court open caseload data in June 2024 which resulted in the suspension of publication of the Criminal Court Quarterly Statistics. Remedial work has been undertaken internally to address the issue. The Criminal Court Quarterly Statistics highlight the type and volume of cases received and processed through the criminal court system of England and Wales, including statistics on case timeliness.

Objectives of this assessment

- Provide an overall assessment of the confidence that MoJ should have in the Crown Court caseload statistics.
- Review the design of the methodology used by the MoJ for the compilation of Crown Court caseload statistics, including the approach to defining cases and calculating the size of the open caseload.
- Review the operational validation of cases that HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are undertaking, and Quality Assurance (QA) processes in place at both HMCTS and MoJ, to inform confidence levels in the statistics being presented.

Conclusion

- **The MoJ can have a significant level of confidence in the Crown Court caseload statistics, though we have identified minor improvement opportunities.**

We have reviewed the design of the methodology used by the MoJ for the compilation of Crown Court caseload statistics, including the approach to defining cases and calculating the size of the open caseload. We have reviewed the operational validation of cases that HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are undertaking, and Quality Assurance (QA) processes in place at both HMCTS and MoJ, to inform confidence levels in the statistics being presented.

This assessment has been informed by our understanding of the processes and controls in place at the time of this review, and not from validating the caseload data, or the logical integrity of the data pipeline (i.e. code base). We have gained our understanding of the processes and controls through the following activities:

- Interviews with key stakeholders in HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and MoJ analytical teams, and Operations Crime Service Team;
- Reviewing the MoJ logic map detailing data inputs, transformation, to outputs (data architecture map) across the Xhibit, Common Platform and MIS databases, including the open cases (and receipts and disposals);

01 - Executive Summary (cont.)

Conclusion (cont.)

- Walkthroughs of the data pipeline from case management systems to data teams through to publication against documented processes;
- Undertaking an assessment of whether data processing and analytics undertaken by data teams is in accordance with documented processes;
- Walkthroughs and limited sample testing of the Quality Assurance processes and operational validation undertaken by both HMCTS and MoJ;
- Undertaking a desktop review of OneCrown project documentation and review of existing processes to confirm alignment with the OneCrown methodology; and
- The review and consideration of internal remedial work completed to date to rectify historic issues in the Crown Court data.

This review has not considered those areas deemed 'out of scope' as detailed on slide four.

Findings and Recommendations

Having completed the activities identified above, we have raised a small number of 'Low' findings, which are considered risks that MoJ should seek to address by the date set by management but have no material impact on the confidence MoJ can have in the Crown Court caseload statistics. We have also identified a number of 'Continuous Improvement' recommendations that MoJ should consider implementing by way of good practice.

01 - Executive Summary (cont.)

Out of scope

The scope of this review has included the processes and controls in place regarding the production of Crown Court caseload statistics. Methodology regarding the data and statistics relating to other criminal courts has not been reviewed.

The assessment of the confidence that the MoJ can have in the Crown Court caseload statistics is limited to the activities undertaken during this review, the processes and controls in place at the time of the review and does not provide an assessment of our confidence in future activities or controls implemented by MoJ over the quality of Crown Court caseload data.

We have not completed detailed testing of the operating effectiveness of the controls in place for the compilation of Crown Court caseload statistics.

We have not completed any validation testing on Crown Court caseload data and therefore have not provided a judgement on whether the caseload data is free from error or on the completeness or accuracy of the data. Likewise, we have not assessed the logical integrity or the 'verification of' the supporting data pipeline and its associated code base.

This review has not included an evaluation of the IT General Controls (ITGCs) across the Crown Court caseload data pipelines. We have therefore not assessed the design or effectiveness of the controls that may support the pipeline in the preparation and publication of the Crown Court caseload statistics.

We have not undertaken any review of the Code supporting the Crown Court caseload data pipelines.

02 - Disclaimer

This Report has been prepared on the basis set out in our Call Off Order Form to the Framework Contract RM6188 Lot 4 (reference: ITT_9037) as set out in the contract (reference: Con_24522) dated 18 November with the Ministry of Justice (the “Client”) and its attachments (together the “Agreement”), and should be read in conjunction with the Agreement. We have not conducted an audit and accordingly the scope of our work is different from that of an audit and does not provide the same level of assurance as an audit. This engagement is not an assurance engagement conducted in accordance with any generally accepted assurance standards and consequently no assurance opinion is expressed. We have not verified the reliability or accuracy of any information obtained in the course of our work, other than in the limited circumstances set out in the Agreement. Nothing in this report constitutes a valuation or legal advice.

This Report is for the benefit of the Client only. This Report has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the Client. In preparing this Report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the Client, even though we may have been aware that others might read this Report. We have prepared this report for the benefit of the Client alone. This Report is not suitable to be relied on by any party wishing to acquire rights against KPMG LLP (other than the Client) for any purpose or in any context. Any party other than the Client that obtains access to this Report or a copy (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, through the Client’s Publication Scheme or otherwise) and chooses to rely on this Report (or any part of it) does so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, KPMG LLP does not assume any responsibility or liability in respect of this Report to any party other than the Client.



kpmg.com/uk



This report is provided pursuant to the terms of our contract dated 18/11/2024. We have not conducted an audit and accordingly the scope of our work is different from that of an audit and does not provide the same level of assurance as an audit. This engagement is not an assurance engagement conducted in accordance with any generally accepted assurance standards and consequently no assurance opinion is expressed. Nothing in this report constitutes a valuation or legal advice. In addition, our work is not an investigation and the scope of our work has not been designed specifically to detect instances of fraud. We have not verified the reliability or accuracy of any information obtained in the course of our work, other than in the limited circumstances set out in our engagement letter.

This Report is for the benefit of the Client only. This Report has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the Client. In preparing this Report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the Client, even though we may have been aware that others might read this Report. We have prepared this report for the benefit of the Client alone. This Report is not suitable to be relied on by any party wishing to acquire rights against KPMG LLP (other than the Client) for any purpose or in any context. Any party other than the Client that obtains access to this Report or a copy (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, through the Client's Publication Scheme or otherwise) and chooses to rely on this Report (or any part of it) does so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, KPMG LLP does not assume any responsibility or liability in respect of this Report to any party other than the Client.

This report has been prepared solely for the Ministry of Justice in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in our contract dated 18/11/2024. We do not accept or assume any liability or duty of care for any other purpose or to any other party. This report should not be disclosed to any third party, quoted or referred to without our prior written consent.

© 2024 KPMG LLP, a UK limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organisation of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved.

The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organisation. | CREATE: CRT143233B

Document Classification: KPMG confidential