



Working together for justice

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



Introduction

The Criminal Justice System (CJS) works to help create a safer, fairer and more just society by maintaining law and order, and administering justice.

The CJS strives to provide a high quality service to the public and to do everything possible to ensure crime is tackled, victims and witnesses are supported and offenders are punished and rehabilitated. It is committed to delivering justice fairly to people of all communities and driving out all forms of discrimination and unequal treatment. The CJS must be fair in its delivery of services and must also be seen to be fair.

This leaflet looks at how the pieces of the CJS fit together and what is being done to:

- Prevent and detect more crime.
- Respond better to the needs of victims and witnesses.
- Punish and rehabilitate more offenders.

Some results are already evident:

- 97,000 more offences were brought to justice in the year to September 2004 compared to the 12 month period ending in March 2002.
- Between 2001/2 and 2003/4 the number of ineffective Crown Court trials was reduced by a third.
- Public Confidence in the CJS rose 4% between March 2003 and September 2004.

Key to building on these changes is better co-operation between agencies, at both a national and local level. The work that is done to tackle crime and protect victims and communities makes a real difference to people's lives. If it can be done better, the positive contribution the CJS is making to create a safer society will be even greater.



The CJS in action

Criminal Justice System process



The CJS is one of the major public services in the country. With more than 400,000 people working in it, it includes everyone involved in the delivery of justice, from judges and Crown Prosecution Service lawyers to police and prison officers.

Within central government, three departments are jointly responsible for the Criminal Justice System and its agencies. They are the:

- Home Office – which oversees the Police, the Prison Service and the National Probation Service, and sponsors the Youth Justice Board, Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority and the Criminal Cases Review Commission.
- Department for Constitutional Affairs – which oversees the Magistrates' Courts, the Crown Court, the Appeal Courts and the Legal Services Commission.
- Attorney General's Office – which oversees the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Co-ordinating the efforts of these organisations to ensure effective co-operation is the job of the National Criminal Justice Board, which is made up of ministers, senior civil servants and heads of service. Locally, 42 Local Criminal Justice Boards co-ordinate activity and share responsibility for delivering criminal justice in their area.

These national and local arrangements are supported by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR). OCJR is the cross departmental team that supports all criminal justice agencies in working together to provide an improved service to the public. Some services and initiatives within the CJS are run by

a number of voluntary groups like Victim Support and Nacro, the crime reduction charity.

Shared responsibility

It is vital that the different agencies within the CJS do their bit in dealing with criminal cases and work together to see them through to a successful conclusion, and to ensure that together they serve England and Wales' diverse communities fairly.

This leaflet shows some of the key events that might occur in the CJS by following a crime from report to sentencing and rehabilitation. It doesn't cover the role of every agency in full – but focuses on how they work together to tackle crime, bring offenders to justice and provide a better service to victims and witnesses.

Local Criminal Justice Boards

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) bring together the chief officers of the CJS agencies. Accountable for local targets and working together to improve the whole of the CJS in their area, the local boards are a landmark in developing solutions across the whole of the system.

Each of the 42 LCJBs has a Performance Officer – a dedicated resource for local boards to assist in managing and monitoring performance. Their role is to help areas develop local delivery plans and monitor performance against them. Performance Officers are also instrumental in helping to disseminate good practice and local solutions to national problems.

Crime reported

What happens if a crime is committed?

A member of the public – usually the victim – contacts the police. If they phone, they're passed to a call handler who takes the details of the crime, establishes the urgency of the situation and dispatches officers to the scene or takes details to be investigated at a later stage.

Response times can be critical – often the police can disrupt a crime in progress or arrive in time to arrest the offender and prevent further harm or distress to victims and witnesses.

Crime Prevention – Working with other partners

The CJS also works with a number of other partners to tackle crime. An example of this is the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. There are 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Wales. They are made up of the police, local authorities and other local agencies and organisations. These multi-agency partnerships work at a local level to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder in their area, and have a central role in reducing crime and fear of crime.

Roy Evans Police Call Handler

"I'm a 999 call handler and, if it's busy, I can deal with around 20 calls an hour. It's important to get the right information from the caller: who, where, what's happened. That can be difficult as callers may be distressed, confused and traumatised. Being able to calm and reassure callers is a vital – and also rewarding – part of my job."



Force Communication Centre, Kent Constabulary

Case study

Criminal Justice System process timeline

Crime committed



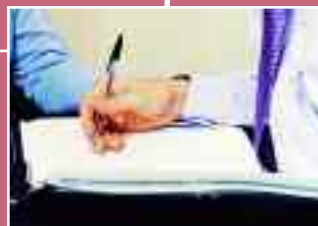
Police contacted



Situation assessed



Police dispatched or crime recorded



Investigation and arrest

Emma Murray
Volunteer Co-ordinator

“Victim Support is an independent national charity, which offers emotional and practical support to victims of all crime. We work closely with both statutory and community agencies supporting victims, witnesses and their families and friends before, during and after a trial while working for greater awareness of the effects of crime. As a Volunteer Co-ordinator, my role entails the management, support and supervision of up to 30 volunteers together with managing my own client caseload. I find the balance of working with clients, staff and volunteers in this environment both challenging and satisfying. I feel heartened that so many people want to give something back in our communities.”



Victim Support Westminster

When a crime is reported, the first people involved are the police, who have responsibility for investigating the crime and catching suspects.

They'll begin by making a crime report. They may then take statements from victims and witnesses, and search the crime scene for evidence. As the investigation proceeds, they'll aim to identify a suspect, who may then be arrested for questioning. A decision, in most cases now by the Crown Prosecution Service, will then be made as to whether the person should be charged or summoned to appear before a court.

The Police

There are 43 police forces in England and Wales. The Home Secretary is responsible for the organisation, administration and operation of the police service. Chief Constables are responsible for the 'direction and control' of each police force, with police authorities overseeing their work. Following a successful recruitment drive, England and Wales now have a record number of police officers. The introduction of more police staff – including neighbourhood wardens and community support officers – is also helping put more resources on the streets to reassure the public and help tackle crime.

If someone with mental health or learning difficulties is arrested, the police will ask an 'appropriate adult' – like a parent or social worker – to sit in on the interview. Likewise, an appropriate adult is required if a juvenile is arrested. Members of the Youth Offending Team may also be called in to offer advice and support.

Once the investigation is complete, the police will either:

- charge the suspect
- summon them to return at a later date
- give them a formal warning (a 'caution')
- release them.

A new approach which involves the police submitting details of their investigation to the CPS prior to charging is now operating throughout the country. The CPS consider the case and decide what charges should be made.

Once charged, suspects are either bailed to appear in court at a future date or, if the offence is serious, remanded in custody. The CJS is getting tougher on enforcing bail and ensuring defendants turn up in court.

Further information: www.police.uk and www.policereform.gov.uk

Street Crime Initiative

In April 2002, the Street Crime Initiative was launched in certain areas of the country to cut street crime. At a local level the police, CPS, Court Service, Youth Offending Teams (Yots), schools, local authorities, probation, prison and youth services are working together to make it happen and we have already seen positive results across the country.

Youth Offending Teams

Youth Offending Teams (Yots) are multi-agency partnership organisations, made up of staff seconded from local authority social services and education departments, the National Probation Service, police and primary care trusts.

Yots work with young offenders (aged 10-17), from the point they first come into contact with the justice system, through to sentence at a Youth or Crown Court. They also provide intensive community supervision of young offenders.

They also work with young people (aged 8-13) who are deemed to be at-risk of offending, matching them with the services and support they need to improve their life chances. Yots contact victims of youth crime and, where possible and appropriate, involve them in mediation or reparation.

Police investigate



Interview witnesses



Arrest suspect



Interview suspect



Decision to charge



Preparing for court

Harry Ireland
Chief Crown Prosecutor

“Ensuring witnesses attend court is crucial in bringing offenders to justice. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 provides the legislative framework for implementation of Special Measures for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. The CPS can apply to the court for the provision of measures which include: the use of screens round the witness box, clearing the public gallery in sex offences and intimidation cases; assistance in communication; video recorded evidence in chief; live TV links; and the removal of wigs and gowns in the court room. Witnesses can have increased confidence in the criminal justice system that their needs are considered as an individual to allow them to have the necessary assistance to give their evidence.”



Staffordshire Crown Prosecution Service

What happens once someone has been charged?

When the police have concluded their investigation, the case is handed to the Crown Prosecutions Service (CPS). There, a Crown Prosecutor, who is a lawyer employed by the CPS, will review the prosecution file and witness statements. They will then decide whether or not the case should proceed and what the correct charge should be. The new Criminal Justice Act 2003 gives responsibility for charging most suspects to the CPS. The police will retain charging responsibility for less serious offences, such as motoring offences.

Why the change? Early involvement of the CPS should help the police identify which cases to proceed with, and free up more of their time for investigation. This should mean the charge is right first time, resulting in more guilty pleas and fewer cases dropped in court.

The CPS is also responsible for:

- preparing cases for court
- prosecuting cases at the Magistrates’ Court
- directing prosecution in the Crown Court and higher courts.

Most prosecutions in the Magistrates’ Courts are dealt with by Crown Prosecutors or by agents (local barristers or solicitors) appointed by the CPS. CPS Designated Caseworkers provide administrative support, prepare cases for court and may handle straightforward guilty pleas.

In the Crown Court, only ‘Higher Court Advocates’ are allowed to prosecute and defend cases. This right to conduct cases is known as ‘rights of audience’ and is granted only to barristers and solicitors who have gained a Higher Court Qualification.

For more information about the CPS, visit: www.cps.gov.uk

The Crown Prosecution Service

The CPS is organised into 42 geographic areas and employs around 8,000 people. Each area has its own Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP) who manages a team of lawyers and caseworkers. They report to the Director of Public Prosecutions but are accountable to the local community for their performance. CCPs are also members of the Local Criminal Justice Boards.

Augustina Tetsola
Co-located CPS lawyer

“I’ve been co-located with police case administrators and evaluators since March 2003. Co-location means that we can speak directly to one-another and I can access police files for information. This helps to make the charging process much more effective – and has also helped us to develop a much better working relationship.”



Trials Unit, CPS Brighton

Case passed to CPS



Case heard



Support for victims and witnesses throughout



Verdict



Case study

Case study

The Court – Magistrates' Court

So what happens once a case gets to court? And who are the different people involved in a trial?

There are three types of cases that come to Magistrates' Courts:

- Summary offences – where the defendant is not entitled to trial by jury. These offences include motoring offences and minor assaults.
- Either-way offences – where the defendant can be tried either at the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court (see p10). Such offences include theft and handling stolen goods.
- Indictable-only offences – such as murder, manslaughter, rape and robbery, which must be heard at Crown Court.

If the case is an indictable-only offence, the involvement of the Magistrates' Court is brief. A decision will be made on whether to grant bail and other legal issues, like media reporting restrictions, will be considered. The case will then be passed to the Crown Court.

If the defendant is charged with a summary offence, or an either-way offence that is being dealt with in Magistrates' Court, they will have to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty. If they plead guilty or are convicted after pleading not guilty, the magistrates have the power to pass a sentence of up to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5,000.

Joanne King Magistrate

"I decided to become a magistrate because of my combined interest in the upholding of laws and being able to put something directly back into the community. In my experience, people are often surprised to know that magistrates are volunteers. But they see this as a good thing – knowing that an 'ordinary person' is involved in the judicial system helps them to feel better connected to the CJS."



Case study

Lewes Magistrates' Court and Brighton Magistrates' Court

If they are acquitted, and provided there are no other cases pending against them, they should be able to leave immediately, judged innocent in the eyes of the law.

For the courts system to work properly it is crucial that victims and witnesses feel able to come to court and give evidence. The Witness Service provides dedicated support to people through this sometimes challenging and intimidating experience.

The Government is also introducing measures to make sure victims and witnesses have easier access to information about the progress of their case.

It is also vital that defendants appear in court, and a range of measures have been put in place to enforce their attendance and to deal with non-attendance.

Over 95% of all cases put before the courts are dealt with in Magistrates' Court. Cases are heard either by three lay magistrates or one District Judge. The lay magistrates, or 'Justices of the Peace', as they are also known, are local people who volunteer their services. They don't have formal legal qualifications, but are given legal and procedural advice by qualified clerks who handle the general administrative court work.

District Judges, however, are legally qualified. They are paid, full-time professionals and are usually based in the larger cities.

For more information about Magistrates' Courts, visit: www.courtservice.gov.uk and www.magistrates-association.org.uk

If you are interested in becoming a Magistrate, visit: www.dca.gov.uk/magistrates.htm or telephone **020 7210 0667**

Youth Court

Youth Courts handle most cases involving minors. They are presided over by specially trained magistrates and sit in private to protect the identity of those concerned.

Operation of the courts

In April 2005 all courts below the House of Lords, including Magistrates courts will be integrated into the new single agency of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS). This will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts, removing unnecessary duplication and ensuring a more consistent approach across the courts.

Day-to-day management of a court is handled by a number of different people. Deciding which cases will take place on a given day is the responsibility of the **listings officer**. They are assisted by **ushers**, who are the public face of the court, and whose job it is to make sure the right people are present when needed. Another key position is **court clerk**, who makes sure the proceedings run smoothly and gives advice to lay magistrates.

Defendant appears at
Magistrates' Court



Passed to Crown Court
go to p10

Defendant pleads



Case heard



Support for victims and
witnesses throughout



Verdict



The Sentence
go to p12

The Courts – Crown Court

Frances Woodley
Court Usher

“My job is important because I work with the public, defendants and barristers and I keep the Court Clerk informed about who’s ready. This saves time and the court runs efficiently – you have to be on the ball. I bring the judge in, open court with a short speech, call in the jury and swear them in. I always check with them before which religious oath or affirmation they wish to take. If someone can’t read, they can repeat the oath after me. I love my job; it’s something different everyday.”



Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court

Because of the seriousness of offences tried in the Crown Court, these trials take place with a judge and jury. The Crown Court deals with:

- Indictable-only offences like murder, manslaughter, rape and robbery.
- Either-way offences transferred from the Magistrates’ Court.
- Appeals from the Magistrates’ Court.
- Sentencing referrals from the Magistrates’ Court.

Sentencing referrals happen when someone is convicted in a Magistrates’ Court but the magistrates believe that the offence requires a stronger punishment than they can impose. In situations like this, the case is sent to Crown Court where the judges have the power to pass a more appropriate sentence.

If the defendant is found not guilty, they are discharged without a conviction being recorded against their name.

If the defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty by the jury, the judge will sentence them. Sometimes this will happen immediately after the verdict. In other more complex cases, for example, if there are questions about the defendant’s state of mind or what kind of sentence would be suitable, the judge may delay sentencing and ask bodies like the Probation Service to submit a report on the case.

Since 1995, the Court Service has been responsible for the administration of the Crown Court. However, this will change with the introduction of Her Majesty’s Courts Service (see p9). The Department for Constitutional Affairs is responsible for policy issues relating to the criminal courts and judicial appointments.

For more information about the Crown Court, visit www.courtservice.gov.uk and www.dca.gov.uk.

For further information see www.cjsonline.gov.uk, www.crimereduction.gov.uk and www.victimsupport.org.uk

The Courts Act 2003

The aim of the Courts Act 2003 is to reorganise key elements of the court system to reduce delays, increase community engagement and further improve the courts’ power to enforce financial penalties.

Courts of Appeal

If, after being convicted, someone is unhappy with how their trial was conducted or feels their sentence was unduly harsh, they can make an appeal to a higher court. Individuals convicted by the Magistrates’ Court can appeal to the Crown Court. Individuals convicted by the Crown Court can appeal to the Court of Appeal and finally to the House of Lords.

The 35 Court of Appeal judges – known as Lord Justices of Appeal – hear about 6,000 criminal appeals and applications for appeal each year. Only about a quarter of cases put forward for appeal will actually be heard and, even then, there is no guarantee that the appeal will be successful.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) was established to consider whether alleged miscarriages of justice should be referred back to the Court of Appeal. The commission began operations on 31 March 1997, when the Home Secretary’s powers to refer suspected miscarriages of justice came to an end. For more information on CCRC visit www.ccr.gov.uk

Defendant appears at Crown Court



Defendant pleads



Case heard



Support for victims and witnesses throughout



Verdict



The sentence

When deciding what sentence to impose, magistrates and judges have to take account of both the facts of the case and the circumstances of the offender. To help them, they may ask the Probation Service to produce a report about the offender including a proposal regarding the sentence.

In sentencing an adult offender the court needs to consider:

- fair and appropriate punishment of the offender
- reduction of crime (including by deterrence)
- reform and rehabilitation of the offender
- protection of the public
- making amends to the victim, their family or the community.

There are four types of sentence available to the courts, depending upon the seriousness of the offence:

- discharges
- fines
- community sentences
- custodial sentences.

Community sentences, which combine punishment and rehabilitation and making amends, can include 'restorative justice' – making amends directly to the victims of crime.

Custodial sentences, including suspended sentences, are only used for the most serious offences and offenders. As well as sentencing guidelines, which judges and magistrates are given, all imprisonable offences have a maximum term laid down by Parliament. There are also mandatory minimum sentences for some serious repeat offenders.

Community Justice Centres

The first Community Justice Centre is being piloted in North Liverpool. Bringing courts and communities together, its purpose is to serve the local community by focusing on specific community priorities/quality of life crimes that have a detrimental effect on local people. It tailors punishment and rehabilitation schemes to meet the needs of the local neighbourhoods as well as the offender. The offender reparation programme could involve offenders taking action locally, such as graffiti clean ups, to make amends and contribute something to their community thereby making reparations to their victims and helping them understand the consequence of their actions.

Home Detention Curfew

The Home Detention Curfew Scheme (HDC) is an early release scheme that aims for smoother, more effective resettlement by letting prisoners live and work in the community while remaining under restrictions. Suitable prisoners are tagged and electronically monitored to enforce a curfew. If they breach this curfew, they can be recalled to prison immediately.

Conviction



Court reports



Sentence passed



Punishment and rehabilitation

The new National Offender Management Service has been created to oversee the integration of prisons, probation and partner organisations which deal with offenders' punishment and rehabilitation. It ensures that court sentences are effectively implemented across organisational boundaries and that the focus is on the "end-to-end management" of the offender during their sentence, whether it be in the community, in custody, or both (e.g. those on parole). It has the responsibility for reducing re-offending.

At any one time those people working within NOMS will be dealing with some 225,000 offenders, around 75,000 in custody and 150,000 in the community. NOMS targets are to reduce re-offending by 5% by 2007-08, rising to 10% by the end of the decade.

HM Prison Service

When someone is convicted of an offence and sent to prison, they pass into the care of the Prison Service. For a long sentence, they could be held in a prison anywhere in the country. For shorter sentences, however, they are likely to remain in their local area.

Currently the service has 47,000 staff looking after a prison population of around 75,000.

Glyn Grace
Prison Officer

"I've been a prison officer for 15 years now. I head-up the Resettlement Unit, which helps prisoners nearing the end of their sentences prepare for their release. As part of this, we find them work outside of prison, starting in charity shops and from there in jobs such as bricklaying, mechanics, fast food and plumbing. Reading was the first prison to work with national businesses and we have developed a particularly successful relationship with TRANSCO who sponsor forklift truck courses and the Gas Distribution Class 1 Course. Where we have done work to link up with employers, we've seen a dramatic reduction in re-offending rates. I find my job both exciting and rewarding."



Her Majesty's Prison and Youth Offender's Institution, Reading

Case study

The Prison Service is responsible for the security, supervision, training and rehabilitation of offenders. This can involve carrying out security checks and searches, maintaining proper order and supervising visits.

While public safety is paramount, everyone in prison has to be treated with fairness and humanity. As well as trying to reduce crime by promoting law-abiding behaviour, the Service aims to provide productive activities that will educate and rehabilitate prisoners so that they won't re-offend when they are released.

One such activity is the Prison Service Drug Strategy Programme. Drug misuse is a major factor in offending and re-offending. The drug strategy aims to reduce the supply of illegal drugs into prisons through a range of supply reduction initiatives and to reduce the demand for drugs amongst prisoners through effective treatment interventions such as:

- reducing dependence through detoxification
- providing drug rehabilitation and support
- mandatory and voluntary drug testing programmes to encourage prisoners to remain drug-free.

Since the strategy was introduced in 1995, the level of positive mandatory drug tests has halved from 24.4% in 1997 to 11.7% in January 2003.

Take a virtual tour of a prison at www.cjsonline.gov.uk/offender

For more information about the Prison Service, visit www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

Reducing Crime and Drug Misuse

As well as the Prison Service Drug Strategy Programme, there are a number of other initiatives designed to tackle drug misuse and reduce drug-related crimes throughout the criminal justice process. More facilities are being made available for those involved in drug misuse, and a programme called **The Criminal Justice Interventions Programme** is encouraging more people into drug treatment as they pass through the CJS, focusing on "throughcare" and "aftercare" – helping to break the link between drugs and crime.

Custodial sentence



Community sentence



Punishment and rehabilitation

Mohammed Farooq
Senior Probation Officer

“I manage a team of front line probation staff who supervise offenders on community sentences. We have to perform the difficult task of getting offenders to face up to the consequences of their actions whilst ensuring that society is protected from future harm. I enjoy the job’s

variety – which takes me from advising judges and magistrates on sentencing to sitting in joint meetings with the Police and Social Services, making critical decisions about managing dangerous criminals. It is a pivotal role in the fight against crime.”



National Probation Service, Lancashire

National Probation Service

Many offenders will, at some stage of the Criminal Justice System, come under the supervision of the National Probation Service (NPS). In court, the probation staff provide advice and reports on sentencing and assess re-offending risk. The NPS provides the courts with a robust, flexible and enforceable *community order*. Judges and magistrates can include a number of requirements into the order.

There are requirements that restrict liberty, like a curfew or exclusion from certain places. Other requirements can make sure an offender participates in drug, alcohol or mental health treatment. It can also compel offenders to attend programmes to tackle aggression or drink driving, or to teach the problem solving skills law abiding people take for granted, like thinking through the consequences of our actions. A requirement is available to do compulsory unpaid work as reparation to the local community. Last year over five million hours of supervised, unpaid labour was directed towards good causes in this way.

Clear enforcement means that any offenders who do not attend or otherwise comply are *breached* and returned to court for an additional punishment or re-sentencing. In the last full year that figures are available over 8,000 people were sent to prison as a consequence of breaching their community order, dispelling the myth that probation is a soft touch.

Requirements of community orders encourage offenders to understand the consequence of their actions and give them the means to change their behaviour and attitudes. These are often combined with measures to tackle issues like illiteracy, unemployment or homelessness that can contribute to re-offending. These are often specific to the offence, like drink driving or domestic violence.

When potentially dangerous offenders are due for release, the NPS works with the police and other partners to increase levels of public protection.

The NPS keeps over 30,000 victims of serious violent or sexual crime informed about their offenders’ release from prison and can convey the views of victims to those setting the release conditions.

For more information about the National Probation Service, visit www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk

Voluntary Sector Involvement

One of the largest of these is NACRO, the crime reduction charity, which works with more than 60,000 people each year. Nacro gives resettlement advice to prisoners, ex-offenders and people working with them; trains ex-offenders, helps them find work and provides housing; and works with families and communities to cut crime.

Making Amends and Restorative Justice

Each year, the courts order over seven million hours worth of community punishment to be supervised by the National Probation Service. Ranging from painting schools to landscaping public parks and cleaning graffiti, this enforced, unpaid work benefits the community as well as punishes the offender. Restorative Justice (RJ) processes also provide an opportunity for victims, offenders and, sometimes, representatives of the community, to discuss an offence and how to repair the harm caused. This can help offenders to understand the consequences of their actions and encourage them to make reparation. Research shows that RJ can deliver higher victim satisfaction and community confidence than traditional criminal justice approaches. More information on RJ including guidance issued to Local Criminal Justice Boards is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/victims/restorative/

Passed to
probation service



Making the CJS work better

So far we've looked at how the Criminal Justice System operates – the different stages and agencies involved, and the ways the many different professionals involved contribute to making this country a safer and fairer place to live.

Of course, things aren't perfect; there's plenty of room for improvement in the way the CJS works. In 2004, the government announced a strategic vision for the CJS in 2008. Its priorities are to:

- drive up levels of public confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of the criminal justice system;
- provide victims and witnesses with a consistently high standard of service throughout the criminal justice process;
- detect and bring more crimes to justice by making the different parts of the system work better together;
- rigorously enforce sentences and orders of the court; and
- make the CJS a modern, well run service which is an excellent place to work for people from all backgrounds.

Work to deliver these priorities is led by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR), the cross-departmental team that supports all criminal justice agencies in working together to provide an improved service to the public. Some of the major initiatives underway are detailed below.

Criminal Justice Act 2003

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 sets out a wide-ranging programme of reform for the entire Criminal Justice System (CJS) in England and Wales. It focuses on four key elements:

- Detecting crime – including extending the collection of fingerprints and DNA samples and stronger stop and search powers.
- Bringing offenders to court – including giving police powers to impose conditions on a suspect's bail during the period before the charge.
- Convicting the guilty – including the use of 'hearsay' evidence and the admission, where appropriate, of previous convictions.
- Proper Sentencing – including extending magistrates' sentencing powers and the creation of generic community orders that can be tailored to the offender.

Race

Race continues to be a big issue in the Criminal Justice System. Annual section 95 statistics have shown disproportionality against people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds year on year.

The new Criminal Justice Reassurance and Confidence PSA target to increase the percentage of people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities who think that the CJS agencies will treat people of all races equitably, has been set to ensure that the confidence of BME people in the Criminal Justice System is addressed.

The programme of work includes looking at ways to reduce disproportionality in the use of stop and search, commissioning research into sentencing decisions, and reviewing the section 95 statistics with the aim of producing robust statistics that drive change. Further work will commence looking at how bail decisions are made and improving the recruitment, retention and progression of BME people in the CJS.

If you want to know more about Race and the CJS, contact CJSRace@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Criminal Justice Information Technology

The organisations that make up today's Criminal Justice System (CJS) use a variety of information management systems to meet their individual needs. Unfortunately these systems were not designed to share information with different criminal justice agencies. Over the years, this has meant that agencies have unintentionally duplicated each other's efforts, and they have missed out on the benefits of information sharing.

This is why the CJS Information Technology Programme was originally set up. Its task is to provide anyone involved in criminal justice – and that includes victims and witnesses as well as justice professionals – with easy access to all available information relating to their part in the criminal justice process. It aims to do this by March 2008. This is more than just being able to share information, but about freeing up resources right across the system so that professionals can really add value.

The first stage in this programme was providing the CJS with a modern and secure email system which, at the click of a mouse, replaces processes that used to take days and weeks, with paper files passing between agencies.

The CJS Exchange, one of the key components of the programme, forms the next stage and is creating a centralised information integration process that allows different organisations within the Criminal Justice System to exchange information electronically and securely via the Web. For the first time this is allowing criminal justice professionals to see all the relevant details of a case from across the whole CJS. This not only allows those professionals to be much more effective but also provides clear benefits to society as a whole.

For more information: www.cjit.gov.uk

Criminal Case Management

As well as giving staff the tools to improve communication, we're reforming the way we manage cases. In future, we hope for a more co-ordinated approach that runs from charging through trial management and support services to the conclusion of a case.

The Criminal Case Management Programme is a key component of criminal justice reform. Its aim is to join up the improvements being made across different agencies, ensuring a coherent and more co-ordinated approach to criminal case management as a whole. The three key components of the programme are Charging, Effective Trial Management and No Witness, No Justice:

Charging is the most significant development in the way criminal cases are handled since the establishment of the Crown Prosecution Service in 1986. It means that the courts, the police, and prosecutors will all use their time more productively and more efficiently. It brings police and prosecutors together as never before, with Crown Prosecution Service prosecutors determining the charge in all but the most minor of cases; working effectively towards the common goal of bringing offenders to justice by building strong cases from the start and ensuring that cases where there is not enough evidence to bring a prosecution are weeded out as quickly as possible.

Effective Trial Management builds on the work of Charging by improving the preparation and progression of cases through the courts, so that delays are reduced and cases go ahead on time and when they are supposed to.

'No Witness, No Justice' introduces dedicated Witness Care Units across the country, bringing police and the Crown Prosecution Service together for the first time to jointly meet the individual needs of victims and witnesses. This will make it easier for people to come forward in the first place and should make giving evidence in court a much less daunting experience.

Making the CJS work better

What do you think?

Now you've heard what we have to say, tell us what you think.

If you have any comments on this leaflet or suggestions for improving the CJS, contact us at cjsinbrief@cjs.gsi.gov.uk or visit the CJS website at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

Further information

Useful web addresses, for further information:

CJS Online
www.cjsonline.gov.uk

The CJS Online website has been redesigned to provide those coming into contact with the Criminal Justice System better information and support. The site is now divided into five sections: Victim, Witness, Defendant, Offender, and Juror. Each section explains what will happen next, which organisations are involved in the process and where to go for help and support. A sixth section, 'the CJS' gives more background information about the Criminal Justice System.

Home Office
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Department for Constitutional Affairs and information on becoming a magistrate
www.dca.gov.uk

Law Officers' Department
www.lso.gov.uk

Police Service
www.police.uk
www.policereform.gov.uk

Crown Prosecution Service
www.cps.gov.uk

Magistrates' Court
www.courtservice.gov.uk

Crown Court
www.courtservice.gov.uk

HM Prison Service
www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

Nacro
www.nacro.org.uk

National Probation Service
www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk

Youth Justice Board
www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

Victim Support
www.victimsupport.org

Witness Service
www.victimsupport.org.uk/services/witness_services.html

Criminal Justice Information Technology
www.cjit.gov.uk

Crime Reduction
www.crimereduction.gov.uk



Criminal Justice System: working together for the public

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