

Connecting Criminal Justice

A REVIEW OF THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
BY CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORGANISATIONS
THROUGH THE CAUSEWAY PROGRAMME

July 2006

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
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CONNECTING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

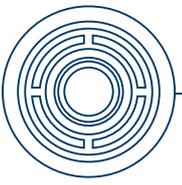
A review of the exchange of information
by Criminal Justice Organisations through
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July 2006

Presented to the Houses of Parliament by the
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under
Section 49(2) of the Justice (Northern Ireland)
Act 2002

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List of abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
BIS	Business Information System
CA	Compensation Agency
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CJIT	Criminal Justice Information Technology
CJO	Criminal Justice Organisation
CJS	Criminal Justice System
DCU	District Command Unit
DSM	Data Sharing Mechanism
FPT	File Preparation Team
FSNI	Forensic Science Northern Ireland
FSS	Forensic Science Service
Horizon	PSNI project preparing for DSM 1
ICIS	Integrated Criminal Information System
ICOS	Integrated Court Operations System
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IS	Information System
ISCJIS	Integration of Scottish Criminal Justice Information Systems
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
OPONI	Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
PBNI	Probation Board Northern Ireland
PITO	PSNI Information and Technology Organisation
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSR	Pre-Sentence Report
RFI	Request for Further Information
RMS	Records Management System
RPA	Review of Public Administration



Chief Inspector's Foreword

“Our Age of Anxiety is, in great part, the result of trying to do today's jobs with yesterday's tools.”
(Marshall McLuhan)

This is an interim report on the implementation of the Causeway programme for sharing information electronically among the agencies of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

The programme is divided into a number of phases, and will not be complete until 2008. We decided that it would be useful, however, to take stock at this early stage to see how it was progressing and whether there were any lessons to be learnt that might facilitate the latter stages. CJI will re-visit the programme with further inspections and progress reports at annual intervals. This reflects the high importance which Causeway has for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

This report highlights the positive engagement by Criminal Justice Organisations (CJOs) with the Causeway programme resulting in closer working relationships across the criminal justice system. It also recognises the work of the Causeway programme team in providing the early benefit of an electronic criminal record retrieval system which is used by many of the CJOs.

The PSNI has completely changed how case files are prepared and transmitted moving from a paper based system to electronic in under three years. For an organisation of over 7,000 officers this has been a significant achievement.

The Causeway programme is at an interim stage. The first element is in place and organisations are preparing for the next phase. During the next stage the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is on the critical path of the programme. It is imperative that all CJOs are fully committed to ensuring the success of the programme so that the public and the criminal justice system can fully realise the benefits of Causeway.

I am grateful to all the agencies involved for their co-operation and particularly for the participation and openness of the Causeway programme team during the inspection. I am also grateful to those who served on the Steering Group for the review: Mandy Kilpatrick (Court Service), Chief Supt Tom Haylett (PSNI), Anthony Harbison (PPS) and Peter Leitch (Causeway programme). They served in a personal and advisory capacity, and bear no responsibility for any deficiencies in the resulting report.

The Inspection Team led by Bill Priestley of CJI received valuable assistance from Paul Latham of the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO).



Kit Chivers
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland

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Executive Summary

The scope of this review was limited to an examination of;

- how information is placed on the system
- business change
- how organisations are moving to facilitate Causeway
- emerging and anticipated benefits
- lessons learned by existing ‘Causeway’ organisations and their application to preparatory work across the criminal justice sector.

The report is focused mainly on how the PPS and PSNI delivered the first stage of the Causeway programme, Data Sharing Mechanism zero (DSM 0) and lessons learned as a result of going through that process. The report also outlines the preparation made for the second stage of the programme, DSM 1 by the PSNI, the PPS, Northern Ireland Court Service (NICtS) and the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). The report comments on one of the earliest benefits of the programme, the development of a Criminal Record Viewer (CRV) and its use by constituent CJOs.

Inspectors found that the programme team and partner CJOs have been successful in many areas.

- The PSNI has moved from a paper based case preparation system to an electronic one for the majority of case files in a period of under three years.
- In Causeway’s first full year of operation, over 50,000 case files were transmitted electronically by the PSNI through the hub and over 21,000 shared with the PPS.
- The CRV is being used extensively and successfully by the PPS, the PSNI and to a lesser extent the Compensation Agency (CA), Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Youth Justice Agency (YJA).
- The provision of live case management information through the Causeway Business Information System (BIS) has been of benefit primarily to the PSNI.
- A major intangible benefit of the Causeway programme is that there are now much closer relationships between the CJOs that are working together to deliver this single programme.

Organisations worked hard to ensure that the DSM 0 stage of the Causeway programme became a reality but they know that more work is required as the programme moves forward into the more complex issues of DSM 1.



Areas for improvement include:

- Better case file processing between the PSNI and the PPS particularly with regard to the processing of replies to Requests for Information (RFIs¹) and applications to waive statute barred dates (Form 1 applications²).
- Introduction of independent external validation of CJO projects that directly impact on the implementation of Causeway.
- More focus on the quality of information added to the Causeway hub by the PSNI in line with recommendations made in the CJINI Avoidable Delay report.³
- The recent work done by the PPS in planning for DSM 1 in partnership with the other participating organisations needs to continue.
- The information contained on the CRV should be as accurate and comprehensive as possible.
- Having the right members on the Causeway Programme Board from each CJO so that decisions can be made at programme board meetings on behalf of the participating organisations.

1 A RFI is a procedure which enables the prosecutor to ask the PSNI for additional evidence/supporting information.

2 These are forms that are required to protect some potential prosecutions which would otherwise become statute-barred after six months from the date of the alleged offence

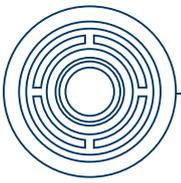
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Recommendations

This is the first of a series of reports therefore as recommendations from each report are likely to be linked each starts with the number 1, referring to the report number, followed by consecutive numbers for each recommendation. The paragraph reference for each recommendation is also included.

- R1.1 It is recommended that the PSNI use the results of their training needs analysis to inform the design of training for users of the Niche RMS case preparation system. Training should be delivered as close to roll-out as possible and a test system should be made available (para 2.7).
- R1.2 To aid the drive for quality it is recommended that the PSNI puts in place a system of monitoring how supervisors carry out quality checking of files submitted through them (para 2.9).
- R1.3 Inspectors reiterate that the PSNI should implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 6.12; 6.14; and 6.16 of the CJINI report 'Avoidable Delay' which was published in May 2006 (para 2.9).
- R1.4 In the interim period it is recommended that the PPS and PSNI continue to work together to ensure that replies to RFIs and case file updates are handled without delay prior to inclusion of the processing of RFIs in DSM 1 (para 2.11).
- R1.5 It is recommended that the PPS and the PSNI should work together to review the processing of Form 1 applications to reduce the number of cases being discontinued due to being out of time (para 2.12).
- R1.6 It is recommended that the Causeway team continue their efforts to baseline and review benefits of the Causeway programme and that these are communicated across the whole of the CJS (para 3.1).
- R1.7 It is recommended that the Causeway team introduces a system of case priority marking for requests transferred between the PSNI and FSNI (para 3.3).
- R1.8 It is recommended that CJOs implementing projects that directly impact on the Causeway programme that are not already subject to independent validation, should seek guidance from the NIO OGC Gateway co-ordinator on engagement with the OGC Gateway process (para 3.7).
- R1.9 It is recommended that the Causeway team continues to work towards an appropriate direct link with the Police National Computer to ensure that information held on the CRV is as comprehensive and accurate as possible (para 5.8).



- R1.10 It is recommended that the PPS continue to review and implement their planning for DSM 1 in partnership with the Causeway Programme Board (para 6.2).
- R1.11 It is recommended that the Causeway team produce a publication outlining good practice in implementing the programme and that this is disseminated to all CJOs (para 6.4).
- R1.12 All participants should ensure that their representation on the Causeway Programme Board should be their appointed senior responsible officer for the programme (para 6.5).

PART



Inspection Report



What is Causeway?



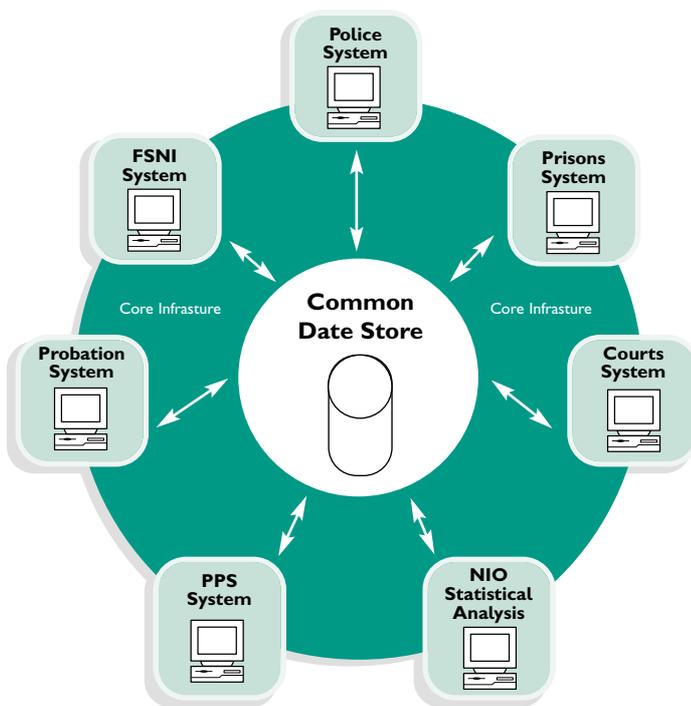
- 1.1 The Causeway Programme is a joint undertaking in the effective exchange of information by the CJOs in Northern Ireland. It aims to improve the administration of criminal justice through the development of new ways of working and better information systems. Causeway can best be regarded as a conduit through which information is shared across the Criminal Justice system by each organisation's unique and separate electronic case management systems.
- 1.2 The use of electronic systems designed to successfully integrate criminal justice is in the process of being implemented across many jurisdictions. In December 2001 the £2bn CJIT programme was established in England and Wales to facilitate joined-up justice. The object of the CJIT programme is to create a virtual case file that allows the independent agencies of the criminal justice system to share case details electronically and securely.
- 1.3 The 'Integration of Scottish Criminal Justice Information Systems' (ISCJIS) is a similar programme which aims to, 'facilitate communication between the IT systems of the various Scottish Criminal Justice Organisations (SCJOs), so that agreed information can be passed electronically from one organisation to another, saving repeated data entry, increasing speed and improving quality (both of the data, and the service provided), without sacrificing confidentiality.' ISCJIS is a much smaller programme than CJIT with a total spend to date of under £10m.
- 1.4 Both of these programmes have adopted an approach that focuses on the linkages between separate CJOs enabling organisations to communicate data between each other securely.
- 1.5 The approach of the Causeway programme to data sharing is different in that a central hub of information is shared securely between participating organisations. Data is entered onto the system once by the originating organisation and it is then automatically available to those other CJOs with access rights to it. Data entered by one organisation is used to automatically populate the electronic systems of other CJOs eliminating the repeat keying in of information.
- 1.6 All these programmes anticipate the delivery of sustainable benefits to the justice system in the longer, rather



than the short term. The provision of the CRV by the Causeway programme has been a significant early benefit of the programme.

1.7 Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the Causeway programme. It illustrates the main participating CJOs and how information is shared between those CJOs through a secure Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM).

Fig 1 Causeway Programme Concept of Operations



1.8 The Causeway programme is a major piece of work designed to deliver benefits to the Criminal Justice System (CJS) at staged intervals and in the long term. Expenditure by the Causeway programme to date is around £20m with a projected total spend of £43m. These figures do not include the separate expenditure of

each of the CJOs. The 2006/2007 budget for Causeway is £6,993,000, a breakdown of which is as follows.

- Administration – Staff Costs £355,000.
- Administration – GAE Costs £3,198,000
- Administration – Non Cash Costs £753,000
- Capital Expenditure £2,687,000

1.9 Overall responsibility for the Causeway programme rests with the Criminal Justice Directorate of the Northern Ireland Office. The programme itself is overseen by a Programme Board made up of senior management representatives from each of the participating organisations and a steering group. Each individual agency manages and resources the development of their own business applications that link to the Causeway programme, though this is co-ordinated through the programme support office.

1.10 CJOs retain their independence and impartiality within the programme. Issues such as resourcing appropriate business change within organisations lies outside the remit of the Causeway programme team and in some cases this has led to problems, including delaying the implementation of components of the programme. Progress is interdependent across the CJOs and can only be at the rate of the slowest member of the programme. Therefore, if one organisation experiences delay in implementing agreed change the whole programme is affected.



1.11 The programme is being implemented in numbered stages aligned with each of the data sharing mechanisms. Hence DSM 0 is the first such mechanism, DSM 1 the second and so on. DSM 0 involved the two main players in the system, the PSNI and the PPS, securely sharing case file information with each other through the Causeway hub. This stage also saw Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) linking with the PSNI through the Causeway hub. FSNI are in a different position to the other organisations involved with the programme in that they are an agency that supplies a service mainly to one other organisation, the PSNI. The involvement of FSNI in the Causeway programme is further examined in Chapter 3.

1.12 Further development of the Causeway programme will see the Court Service and the Prison Service joining the information exchange at DSM 1. At later DSM stages the other CJOs will join as contributors to and users of the data store. The programme has been inclusive of all the main CJO organisations since inception and all are represented at strategic level on the Causeway Programme Board. This has been a positive step as it has meant that later participants in the programme have been party to early decisions that may have implications for their organisation.

1.13 The Causeway programme objectives are divided into two classes;

1. Effectiveness;

- quicker processing of cases and with fewer errors;

- improvement of accessibility of data;
- improvement of management information;
- quicker response to enquiries from the public, lawyers and other organisations.

2. Efficiency;

- eliminating duplication and replication in information capture and storage;
- eliminating the cost of correcting errors introduced when records are retyped;
- reducing the cost of handling ad hoc enquiries from the public and other organisations;
- reducing the copying and movement of paper.

1.14 This scope of this review of the Causeway programme is limited to:

- how information is placed on the system;
- business change;
- how organisations are moving to facilitate Causeway;
- emerging and anticipated benefits;
- lessons learned by existing 'Causeway' organisations and their application to preparatory work across the rest of the criminal justice sector.



CHAPTER 2:

Information sharing



- 2.1 As a criminal case progresses, the same information is often used by different Criminal Justice Organisations (CJOs). Information passes from one CJO to another in order to develop cases to a point where there is sufficient information to bring the case to a satisfactory conclusion. This information has been shared between the CJOs in the form of paper files and documents meaning that sometimes large amounts of information were physically transported, as described to Inspectors, 'in the back of a van', from one CJO to another. Some of the CJOs have had Information Communication Technology (ICT) that supported their own work, but information entered onto one of these systems has had to be re-entered into each of the others as there have been no mechanisms for effectively transferring information electronically.
- 2.2 The use of paper-based records has many disadvantages. For instance, it is often difficult to locate files and establish whether the papers in it are up to date. Having a system of multiple keying of the same data by different users across the system also increases the likelihood of mistakes being made and inaccurate data being recorded. There is therefore a possibility of discrepancies in the case records held at different CJOs. These problems cause delay and mistakes, which undermine public confidence in the criminal justice system.
- 2.3 Causeway aims to address these issues by reducing the number of paper-based records in the system by using the electronic storage, transfer and retrieval of information. Information is captured once at the point of origin and then shared and re-used by all CJOs. If effective, information will always be consistent and up to date, will be easily accessible to those who need to use it, and will move quickly between organisations.
- 2.4 Initial information placed on Causeway usually originates from the PSNI. When an incident is escalated to a crime report for investigation with a view to prosecution information relating to that incident is generated and in most cases is electronically placed on the system. There are cases recorded by the PSNI that are not entered onto Causeway. These are mainly serious and complex crimes, where there is agreement with the PPS that hard copy files continue to be the method



of communicating case files for prosecutorial decisions. An interim solution is in operation within the PSNI to interface with the Causeway hub. Initially it had been thought that the existing Integrated Criminal Information System (ICIS) system could be adapted to enable the delivery of the benefits anticipated in DSM 0 however, this proved not to be the case.

- 2.5 The PSNI interim solution is a home grown product and whilst it has performed well it has limitations. These limitations have meant that whilst the PSNI have been able to realise some of the benefits expected at DSM 0 stage, including the ability to re-deploy some officers to front-line tasks, PSNI has not as yet been able to fully realise the expected benefits. It would be wrong to attribute the benefit of freeing up officers for front line duties entirely to the Causeway programme and the whole issue of benefits is examined in more detail in Chapter 5.
- 2.6 The PSNI, through Project Horizon are implementing the Niche Record Management System (RMS), a commercial IT system that will replace, amongst other elements, their interim solution for case preparation. The RMS was bought in line with the PSNI Information System (IS) strategy. The PSNI has moved ahead to introduce the Niche RMS within the phase of DSM 0 which should reduce the risk of a change of system negatively impacting on DSM 1. There are some concerns about the training implications for large numbers of officers some of whom are just beginning to come to

terms with the 'interim solution' approach to electronic case file preparation. However, on balance it was probably the right decision to implement DSM 0 using the 'interim solution' as the interface tool as failure to do so could have led to considerable delay in the initial stages of implementation of the Causeway programme. The full benefits of the Causeway programme will not be realised by the PSNI until the Niche RMS is fully deployed, the PPS is functioning in all areas of Northern Ireland and DSM 1 has been fully implemented.

- 2.7 The problem with the PSNI training for the initial execution of electronic case file preparation was that it was delivered based upon implementation dates that then slipped. This resulted in a long gap between personnel being trained and actually using the system with a consequent negative impact on the effectiveness of the training despite the provision of a dedicated help desk. The number of users inputting electronic case file data using the Niche RMS will be over 5000 when the system is fully rolled out. Methods of delivering effective training for users are under discussion and the Information Communication Systems (ICS) team has the responsibility for such training. A training needs analysis is being conducted as part of the Niche training strategy. Inspectors feel that there needs to be an innovative approach to training to ensure that file quality does not suffer with the change of system. PITO has previously recommended that the PSNI makes available a test system for users to practice their skills



without accessing the 'live' system. Inspectors have been told that at present a suitable location for the test system is being sought. The provision of a test system would be a positive step in ensuring that the possible impact of any time lag between training delivery and system implementation is reduced. Ideally there should be a combined approach of delivering Niche RMS case preparation training as close to roll-out as possible together with the provision of a test system.

It is recommended that the PSNI use the results of their training needs analysis to inform the design of training for users of the Niche RMS case preparation system. Training should be delivered as close to roll-out as possible and a test system should be made available.

- 2.8 At present the quality of some of the information being placed on the Causeway system by PSNI officers is also an area of concern. File quality has been raised as an issue previously by CJINI⁴ as has the focus on internal timeliness targets rather than on quality. Individual officers place information directly onto the system, at times without a robust quality checking tier, though there is a dedicated help desk. Some PSNI District Command Units (DCUs) have rigorous quality checking systems and a pro-active focus on quality and timeliness. For example, officers in Omagh build the evidential

sections of their case files on the local PSNI computer hard drive. These are then checked for completeness and accuracy before being placed onto the interim solution case preparation system and shared via the Causeway hub with the other CJOs. The PSNI and the PPS have continued their efforts to address case file quality and have recently conducted joint quality workshops to ensure that specific quality issues are properly identified and communicated. More such workshops are planned. Inspectors were told that the PPS plans to introduce a system of validation checks of the data forwarded to them and to respond with a detailed message when validation rules are broken which should also have a positive effect on file quality. There are around 580 authorised PSNI users of the Causeway Business Information System (BIS) and DCU Commanders are increasingly accessing this valuable case monitoring information to help address quality and timeliness issues. Technical issues of ease of accessibility to the Causeway BIS by the PSNI users have now been resolved. At present there is a requirement within the PSNI that case files pass through a supervisor before being shared on the Causeway hub.

- 2.9 It is essential that there are adequate quality controls in place that enable the transfer of case files of good quality. The PSNI 'Get it right first time, on time' policy is a laudable attempt to drive up the quality of case files submitted by officers. It is aimed at compelling supervisors to

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check case files before they are submitted and at investigators, to ensure that their evidence is correct first time. Whilst Inspectors understand the concept that officers who prepare case files should bear responsibility for their quality, it nevertheless is a supervisory and management role to ensure that the goods leave the factory floor in a serviceable condition and the performance of supervisors and managers in this respect should be closely monitored. The improved accessibility of the Causeway BIS should greatly assist in this process.

To aid the drive for quality it is recommended that the PSNI implements a system of monitoring how supervisors carry out quality checking of files submitted through them.

The CJINI Avoidable Delay Inspection report makes recommendations to address issues of file quality and these are as relevant to this review of the Causeway programme as they are to addressing delay in the CJS.

Inspectors reiterate that the PSNI should implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 6.12; 6.14; and 6.16 of the CJINI report 'Avoidable Delay' which was published in May 2006 (Appendix 2).

- 2.10 When PSNI officers place information onto the 'interim solution' screen they will be unaware that the information is being shared through the Causeway hub. The process is seamless. However, if the information is incorrect or later becomes

outdated and requires changing, Inspectors were told of a potential blockage in the system that is outlined in the following paragraph.

- 2.11 The process of changing details in criminal cases is subject to some delay. In some cases information placed on the Causeway hub by the PSNI that has been shared with the PPS cannot be changed by anyone other than the originating officer or their supervisor. Where changes are required, this is done by the originating officer or supervisor and administered via the PPS PSNI liaison office. Therefore, the process of updating data may be subject to delay in transmitting the data back to officers who may be on annual leave or on rest days that may extend to 4 or 5 days. There is a PSNI liaison officer within PPS who administers all RFIs for the Belfast County Court area and a limit of 21 days to reply is imposed on the originating officers. When new or updated information is placed on the Causeway hub by the originating officer in response to a RFI, the PSNI liaison officer informs PPS and the Causeway system flags up the fact that new information has been added. These 'flags' should appear on the internal PPS Case Management System (CMS) simultaneously. However, there have been blockages in the system and it seems that the PPS system is not being populated with the new information speedily, causing a backlog. The build up of information was investigated by the PPS and their IT partner. They found that around 58% of the backlog was due to systems faults beyond the control of the PPS. Of the remaining 42% one



identified cause was that criteria set by the PPS business function meant that Causeway messages were not processed automatically. These messages were paused in line with PPS criteria to allow manual intervention before being loaded into the CMS. This means that an updated version of the case file may be present on the Causeway hub whilst a version that has not been updated exists simultaneously on the PPS CMS. Since the time of inspection fieldwork substantial progress has been made by the PPS working closely with the Causeway team and the PSNI in reducing the numbers of paused messages and therefore backlogs in the system. RFIs were not included in the design of DSM 0 but are now planned to be part of DSM 1.

In the interim period it is recommended that the PPS and PSNI continue to work together to ensure that replies to RFIs and case file updates are handled without delay prior to inclusion of the processing of RFIs in DSM 1.

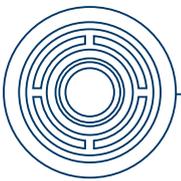
- 2.12 The PSNI have been informed of cases being discontinued by the PPS due to them being out of time (statute barred). However, Inspectors were told that the backlog of electronic information at the PPS end of the system is partly to blame for this. It appears that Form 1 applications from the PSNI (waiving the statute barred date), are not being effectively processed through the PPS CMS. There are undoubtedly cases that are submitted to the PPS late in the day with little time remaining to

process a Form 1 application and there are also applications that are out of scope⁵. However, the Causeway system makes information available instantaneously at the time it is uploaded so this situation should be improving. Figures from Fermanagh and Tyrone obtained as part of the CJINI Avoidable Delay inspection indicate that over 80 cases were lost there due to passing their statute barred date for various reasons. Cases have been discontinued on the basis that they are out of time rather than for evidential deficiencies. These are major concerns as the benefits of the swift transfer of data anticipated by using the Causeway hub are not being realised as they should.

It is recommended that the PPS and the PSNI should work together to review the processing of Form 1 applications to reduce the number of cases being discontinued due to being out of time.

- 2.13 FSNI are in a unique position within the CJ system as they are an agency supplying services to one main customer, the PSNI. FSNI respond to requests through a PSNI submissions unit. The link between the PSNI and FSNI now appears to be working reasonably well following initial problems (Para 3.3) with over 300 cases being dealt with through the system since June 2005. All DCUs

⁵ Requests from the PSNI to the PPS to take out form 1 applications in areas where the PPS is not rolled out and therefore are not processing form 1s on behalf of the PSNI



and departments submitting requests for forensic examination of evidence use the electronic case file prep system. The PSNI submissions unit based at FSNI receive faxed requests from officers and these are then matched with the electronic case file on the Causeway hub. The submissions unit then makes the request to FSNI via Causeway. On completion of any requests FSNI return their report or statement via Causeway which generates the appropriate witness to the case automatically. There have been problems with the supply of statements and reports from FSNI as regards the signing of their reports to evidential standards. Inspectors were told that FSNI are taking steps to address this issue.

Business change



3.1 Identifying what organisational business changes are as a result of Causeway, and what would have taken place anyway given the major change in business practices of the PSNI and PPS with regard to the handling of prosecution cases, has been problematic. The PPS recognise three main categories of business change. Those changes brought about as a direct result of the roll-out of the PPS, e.g. issuing summonses, changes occurring as a direct result of the roll-out of the Causeway programme, e.g. electronic receipt of case files and changes enabled by DSM 0 e.g. electronic evidence management. The PSNI has a Benefit Management Strategy in line with the benefits policy delivered to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) by PITO which incorporates the work undertaken by Project Horizon. Whilst a benefits analysis had been completed prior to the completion of the Causeway programme business case, the Causeway team has now begun work to baseline the benefits and to review those benefits achieved. This is a difficult but important area of work as it has the potential to impact on the level of commitment an organisation gives to the programme. If benefits can be identified and Causeway is shown to

have been one of the enablers, then it is more likely that CJOs will sufficiently resource future development of the programme.

It is recommended that the Causeway team continue their efforts to baseline and review benefits of the Causeway programme and that these are communicated across the whole of the CJS.

3.2 Both the PSNI and the PPS have undergone major change in the last four years. Most change with regard to prosecution of cases has been as a result of the transfer of decision making on prosecutions to an independent body, the PPS, from the PSNI. The Northern Ireland Court Service (NICtS) has also undergone major change with the implementation of its own electronic case file management system (ICOS). FSNI has made significant business change as a direct result of the Causeway programme.

3.3 As stated previously, FSNI is an agency delivering a service to its main customer, the PSNI. FSNI has made many internal business changes to facilitate the throughput of electronic case files. In the past the PSNI faxed



information requests to the PSNI submissions unit co-located with FSNI. These requests were then processed by the submissions unit placing the information directly onto the FSNI system. Inspectors were told that this system appeared to work well. The change to a business system that supports electronic case files has incurred some delays and Inspectors were given examples of PSNI officers turning up at the laboratory believing that information on the case has been shared with FSNI. There have been numerous occasions when the information has not come through the system sometimes due to some delay in data exchange relays, but at other times, due to a lack of understanding of procedures by the PSNI officers. The result is that FSNI have turned away officers who arrive at their premises with samples for analysis because the required information to enable processing of the case has not been shared through the Causeway hub. Instances where this has occurred have now decreased significantly. Inspectors were also told that the ability of the PSNI to indicate case priority to FSNI no longer exists with the advent of electronic data sharing which is of concern to FSNI. This issue is scheduled for inclusion in DSM2 which is some time away bearing in mind the likely delays to DSM 1. FSNI have introduced two different business systems at significant cost to cope with the electronic file transfer system and the remaining hard copy based files submitted by the PSNI. However, not all cases are forwarded to FSNI for analysis. There are significant numbers of cases that are referred to

Forensic Science Service (FSS) in England and Wales without the benefit of electronic transfer. These cases do not appear to be causing significant unnecessary delay in the system.

It is recommended that the Causeway team introduces a system of case priority marking for requests transferred between the PSNI and FSNI.

- 3.4 The NICtS introduced their Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS) in 2001 with the intention of delivering family and civil modules first. The decision to delay the implementation of the criminal module was as a direct result of the introduction of the Causeway programme and changes arising from it. The approach of the NICtS to enabling their own electronic management system to effectively link with the Causeway programme is worthy of note. A joint ICOS and Causeway implementation board was established to oversee the delivery and roll out of both IT systems. At present NICtS have nine staff engaged with ICOS and Causeway and a detailed programme is scheduled for the internal roll out of both systems. A similar approach had been taken by the PPS through a single project team that managed the delivery of all ICT change in DSM 0 as well as the ICT changes supporting the roll out of the new prosecution service. Delay in the roll out of the Causeway programme was frustrating for NICtS, but has not had a significant impact on the ICOS programme as the additional time available was used for internal testing and adjustment. The

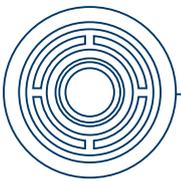


NICtS will be making some minor business changes that they had not anticipated such as printing off charge sheets for court. This shift in responsibility for printing has occurred previously in DSM 0 when there was no longer a need for the PSNI to print off case files to supply the PPS and the resultant reduction in printed files is a direct benefit of the Causeway programme (para 5.6).

- 3.5 The PSNI has made major business changes, some as a result of Causeway. The implementation of the Niche RMS case management system by September 2006 is being driven by the PSNI IS strategy and the need to have a nationally compliant custody and case writing system. At the early stages of the Causeway programme there was a need for an electronic case file system that would interface with the Causeway hub. The introduction of an 'interim solution' for case file preparation to facilitate Causeway has been largely successful but there have been some problems. The training issues have already been mentioned but some DCUs moved away from having File Preparation Teams (FPTs) and placed responsibility with the individual officer for the quality of their case files. This has impacted negatively on the CJS as the information being placed on the Causeway system is sometimes poor and is not sufficiently quality assured.
- 3.6 The Causeway team does not have the remit to control the internal business decisions of the partner organisations. The team has offered advice and given support at times, for example, aiding the PSNI with the

production of awareness leaflets. The management of projects within each of the CJOs is a matter for them alone. This causes difficulties and has been one of the causes of delay to the programme thus far. Delay to the programme is further examined in paragraph 4.6. The Causeway team would admit that during the planning stages for DSM 0 they gave the partner organisations a lot of leeway with their implementation plans. Although the CJOs were answerable to the Programme Board there was little power to deal with risks such as CJOs deploying too few resources to the programme. Planning for DSM 1 has been more structured with partner CJOs working towards joined up plans and delivery dates and external consultants were engaged by the Causeway team to assess arrangements for DSM 1 in each of the CJOs.

- 3.7 The resources required to deliver the DSM 0 phase of the programme were more than at first anticipated. Both the PPS and PSNI have worked towards properly resourcing their elements of the programme. The PSNI now has two separate teams working on Niche RMS and the existing interim solution. The teams anticipate some problems with the change over from the interim case file preparation system to Niche RMS but are confident that they are sufficiently resourced to deal with these. The implementation of the Niche RMS case preparation element will be of critical importance to the progress of the Causeway programme. The PPS are putting together a project team for DSM 1 to work on the build, testing and implementation phases.



Projects within all CJOs that link with the Causeway programme are important as they have the potential to delay the whole programme. The PSNI IS strategy is subject to independent validation by PITO. Validation follows the process of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Reviews similar to those conducted by the OGC with the Causeway programme. The PITO validation examines the progress of implementation of the whole IS strategy and it looks at the links of projects such as the interim solution and Project Horizon with the Causeway programme. The most recent PITO validation report was in April 2006. Inspectors believe that there is scope for a more focused review of those PSNI projects that have direct bearing on the Causeway programme such as the implementation of the Niche RMS case preparation module. NICTs also uses the OGC Gateway process for their projects. However, a similar validation process is not evident within the PPS as they continue to expand their business and adapt their CMS to deliver the benefits envisaged through the Causeway programme.

It is recommended that CJOs implementing projects that directly impact on the Causeway programme that are not already subject to independent validation should seek guidance from the NIO OGC Gateway co-ordinator on engagement with the OGC Gateway process.

3.8 Change within organisations can be a source of discontent and frustration and should be managed effectively. In a programme such as Causeway which involves many interdependent elements across the CJS, the impact of failing to manage change effectively is magnified. Change has to be managed within each constituent organisation as well as across them all to prevent frustration and to facilitate effective communication. Each participant within the Causeway programme should have in place effective ways to communicate known and potential changes to staff. If staff are aware of the bigger picture they are more likely to embrace change rather than reject it. Similarly, a method of communicating change across organisations is essential. The Causeway programme has already achieved success in enabling organisations to work more closely together but tensions still exist. These tensions can be lessened by effective cross organisational communication. As the participating organisations move towards DSM 1 it is essential that communication and change management is as effective as possible.

Facilitating Causeway



- 4.1 Programmes such as CJIT and ISCJS have experienced many of the same difficulties as Causeway. The use of electronic systems that process criminal cases raises the issue of the acceptance by criminal courts of electronic signatures. This issue has not been resolved as yet. A paper has been forwarded to the Lord Chief Justice for consideration to allow electronic signatures in criminal cases. This procedure has been agreed for civil case paperwork but criminal cases may prove more problematic.
- 4.2 A positive element of the Causeway programme is that the participating CJOs have been actively engaged in pursuing solutions to facilitate its implementation. Inspectors were given examples of pro-activity to facilitate DSM 0 within the CJOs. The NICtS has been pro-active in proposing a solution for the electronic exchange with the PSNI of all verified court results, court results on appeal and bail orders across Northern Ireland. This electronic exchange of information is currently only available in a limited way for Belfast and is provided in the form of a spreadsheet. This results exchange would not be feasible once ICOS is fully operational in Belfast from July 2006. In the original DSM 1 plan the ICOS Criminal Module and DSM 1 implementation dates were aligned but due to delays, this is no longer the position. The DSM 1 slippage has led the NICtS in conjunction with the PSNI to develop the solution outlined above. This will see verified results forwarded to the PSNI on a daily basis as an interim solution for all courts across Northern Ireland. These would include DVLNI results which are currently not received or entered onto CRV. This proposal has recently been agreed. The future implementation of DSM 1 should enable court results to be actioned through the Causeway hub. The PPS has funded and carried out work to their CMS ensuring that the NICtS had all relevant information included on documentation within the system.
- 4.3 There is concern as to how the PPS is moving to facilitate DSM 1. A recent example given to Inspectors of a two-month delay to the Causeway programme due to insufficient resources being allocated to a particular task by the PPS goes some way to illustrate this concern. Whilst the PPS had a dedicated team in place for DSM 0, it was unable to deliver the design specification for DSM 1 by the agreed date which resulted in



delay to the overall programme. Concern has also been raised regarding capacity issues within the PPS and its IT partner to enable delivery of DSM 1. A capacity performance review of the PPS CMS is being conducted by external consultants and this will further inform the PPS preparations for DSM 1. Since the time of the inspection fieldwork, the PPS has worked with the Causeway team, their own IT supplier and the NIO procurement branch to attempt to resolve these issues.

- 4.4 The interface of the PPS electronic case management system with the Causeway hub was led by the head of ICT who oversaw a team comprised of external consultants and permanent members of staff. Both the PPS and the PSNI have encountered problems delivering to the timescales agreed by the Causeway Programme Board. However, the PSNI now appears to be moving more swiftly to a position where the Causeway programme will be fully facilitated through the deployment of their Niche RMS and Inspectors are told that appropriate resources are in place to ensure that this happens. The PPS consultancy contract used in part to manage the Causeway interface finished at the end of May 2006 and is not due to be renewed. In the interim period the PPS intend to use existing staff to carry on these functions and build a project team for DSM 1.
- 4.5 The PPS uses a relatively small IT supplier for their CMS. The supplier is believed to have the experience and expertise to enable the interface

with Causeway but Inspectors were told of concerns about their capacity as the PPS expands across all areas of Northern Ireland. This contract is due to expire soon. The PPS have worked with their supplier to address capacity issues and have required them to resolve the issues and to submit detailed DSM 1 plans, technical design and costings by the end of July 2006. Together with the Causeway team the PPS have developed an options paper outlining how these issues are to be taken forward. If there is to be a new IT supplier then approval is in place from the NIO to extend the existing contract to service a handover period if required. At the time of inspection fieldwork, the extent of any detailed planning for DSM 1 by the PPS was not made clear to Inspectors and concerns were also expressed by the Causeway team and other CJOs that if planning was not sufficiently advanced there would be a significant risk to the implementation of DSM 1. At the time of drafting this report the PPS would not agree to an overall DSM 1 implementation plan until all the issues with their IT supplier had been resolved. Inspectors were also told that the PPS is in the process of building a DSM 1 project team and has delivered a presentation on DSM 1 for senior managers.

- 4.6 A lessons learned paper analysing what happened during the implementation of DSM 0 was produced by the Causeway team in February 2005. The report identified many causes of delay to the programme such as design, technical difficulties and testing delays. As a result of the report, the Causeway



team is to take a much tighter approach during DSM 1 planning and implementation to ensure that targets are met. For DSM 1 there has been agreement that the Causeway team will have a right of access to each CJO project manager's plans and reports, something that was not in place for DSM 0. However, the damage has been done and the whole programme will slip significantly.

DSM 1 is now not likely to be delivered until very late in 2007 or even 2008, compared with the projected roll-out originally scheduled for April 2007.

- 4.7 It would be wrong to attribute all delay in the implementation of the Causeway programme to lack of resourcing by any of the CJOs. There were more difficulties with the technical aspects of the programme than had been foreseen and testing took longer than anticipated. In addition the lessons learned report also identified design and project management issues as contributors to delay in the implementation of DSM 0. Any delay in the implementation of the Causeway programme has cost implications and has the potential to put the programme over budget. Delay could also adversely affect the realisation of benefits from Causeway by all the participating CJOs.
- 4.8 Inspectors understand that the Causeway programme is just one element of many major changes taking place within CJOs, but whilst organisations cite Causeway as being a future significant factor in reducing delay⁶ they then should take responsibility to ensure that the programme is not affected by their own resourcing issues. As it is,

6 Avoidable Delay. A thematic inspection of delay in the processing of criminal cases in Northern Ireland CJINI May 2006



CHAPTER 5:

Emerging and anticipated benefits



- 5.1 Benefits have been difficult to link directly with the Causeway programme due to the level of change under way in each of the CJOs. The programme manager from the Causeway team is at present investigating ways of identifying those benefits directly attributed to Causeway.
- 5.2 One of the intangible benefits of the programme has been the significant progress in development of relationships between members of the Programme Board and Steering Group since their inception in 2002. At that time some members believed Causeway was unlikely to deliver; now they are more convinced. Inspectors were told that following initial difficulties, in general, relationships between the main CJOs had improved as a direct result of their working closely together on the Causeway programme. CJOs are now less likely to operate in separate silos. The benefits to the justice system and the public of closer working relationships between CJOs should not be underestimated.
- 5.3 There had been a disbenefit to FSNI when the PSNI 'interim solution' produced over 7000 messages per week instead of the anticipated 1,000.
- Each change to data was being forwarded to FSNI as a separate message, effectively clogging the FSNI system. The messages are now more controlled. However, there are still some instances of multiple messages generated by minor detail changes. This was also an issue within the PPS system and in part was responsible for the paused messages issue referred to at paragraph 2.11.
- 5.4 There are now 33 fewer PSNI officers involved in Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) work. This should enable the PSNI to redeploy staff to other duties. Though the removal of entire FPTs has caused some quality problems with the data being entered onto the Causeway hub, it is anticipated that a case file quality assurance mechanism could function with many fewer staff than previously, especially after the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and future restructuring of the PSNI. As outlined above, attributing this benefit entirely to Causeway would be inaccurate. The changes in business processes and the roll out of electronic case preparation also contributed substantially. The Causeway programme is inextricably linked with ongoing organisational change in each of the CJOs and it is



suggested that it would be more appropriate to measure benefits across the whole CJS rather than try to attribute those benefits to one particular action, business change or system.

- 5.5 Possible potential benefits with regard to the speeding up of the progress of entire cases through the criminal justice system have not as yet been realised. High numbers of RFIs from the PPS and the time taken to process these mean that a reduction in case processing times is not being fully realised. The CJINI Avoidable Delay report identified increased delays for Crown Court and adult magistrates' court cases and much longer processing times compared to England and Wales. Bottlenecks in parts of the system, particularly in the updating of information, Form 1 applications, and processing RFIs all contribute to the dilution of this anticipated benefit. Indirectly the poor quality of some of the information placed on the system initially is also lessening any benefit of electronic case file handling.
- 5.6 It had been anticipated that there would be a reduction in the need for printed documents as a result of electronic case file handling. Whilst the PSNI has realised these benefits other CJOs have not. Whereas previously the PSNI supplied three copies of a case file to the PPS, they now are supplying only one electronic copy. However, when taken as a whole across the system the need for printing shifted from the PSNI to the PPS and in some cases will shift in the future, for example, the printing of charge sheets by the

Court Service. The benefit to the CJS is that there has been a reduction in the need to print multiple copies and there are now many fewer hard copies of case files. The reduction in printing has come from the change in business processes within the PPS who now no longer print off all cases. The PPS estimate that in 37% of cases their decision makers refer to electronic case files only. Complex files (often the largest) are still produced in hard copy and dealt with entirely in this way.

- 5.7 There have been benefits to both PSNI and the PPS by the use of electronic forms as opposed to hard copy however none of the CJOs or the Causeway team itself has been able to provide the Inspectors with anything but anecdotal evidence of this, although anticipated savings in cost terms had been identified in the critical success factors for the programme. The identification of benefits derived from the use of electronic forms should form part of the work being done by the programme manager as outlined in paragraph 5.1.
- 5.8 The Criminal Record viewer (CRV) is seen by most users as a success. The viewer is used mainly by the PPS and the Probation Board (PBNI) but also by the CA, OPONI, NIPS and the YJA. The use of the CRV has impacted positively on the speed of production and accuracy of Pre Sentence Reports (PSRs) written by the PBNI. However, there are some questions over how comprehensive and accurate the CRV information is. For example, it is populated directly from the PSNI ICIS system and during



testing some inaccuracies were found. There is also no direct link with the Police National Computer (PNC) which gives rise to the risk of someone being sentenced on the basis of incomplete information where previous convictions have been outside Northern Ireland. The Causeway team has now established that in theory a link with the PNC is possible and when this occurs, the PSNI may use the system as their primary retrieval system for criminal records.

It is recommended that the Causeway team continues to work towards an appropriate direct link with the Police National Computer to ensure that information held on the CRV is as comprehensive and accurate as possible.

This is a matter that should be discussed and resolved through the Causeway Programme Board and decided on by the programme sponsor.

- 5.9 There have been differences of opinion between CJOs as to where the responsibility should lie to update the information on the CRV once a case has been decided. NICtS see this as an issue in which they should maintain their independence and believe the matter should rest with the PSNI or a criminal records bureau. In England and Wales it is the police who update the PNC though probation keep their own records. PITO provide the infrastructure support in this regard. Ownership of the information is not at issue however the management and updating of information is. It may be possible for the system to be managed and updated from within the Causeway team as part of its maintenance of the system. To date this matter has not been resolved.



CHAPTER 6:

Lessons learned



- 6.1 The lessons learned report of February 2005 set out the main failings of the approach to DSM 0. Inspectors do not propose to repeat that document here. However there follows a summary of the findings of CJI Inspectors and an assessment as to whether CJOs are implementing the findings of that report.
- 6.2 Clear commitment from all the participating CJOs is an early requirement for DSM 1 together with a control strategy in the event of anticipated slippage. At the time of inspection fieldwork, that commitment was not clear across all the participating organisations. At that time Inspectors found that the PPS were not using the lessons learned from the DSM 0 report to inform their planning for DSM 1. Since the inspection fieldwork, Inspectors have been told that the PPS have been reviewing all aspects of their resourcing and planning for DSM 1.
- It is recommended that the PPS continue to review and implement their planning for DSM 1 in partnership with the Causeway Programme Board.**
- 6.3 Adequate resources should be allocated to the Causeway programme by each of the CJOs. This means a commitment in respect of continuity of staff as well as numbers deployed. During DSM 0 there were many changes to the PSNI team including the project manager and stability was only restored late in the process with quantifiable benefits. The PPS team also experienced changes in those personnel directly involved with the Causeway programme. Inspectors understand that personnel are liable to move on at any time. However, it would be useful if there was some contingency planning to account for this. Alternatively, a system of an agreed time commitment of staff allocated to the programme by all participants should be introduced.
- 6.4 Lessons learned are being shared with the other CJOs who will be joining the Causeway hub after DSM 1 which should enable them to begin their planning in anticipation of DSM 2 and beyond. However a short publication outlining 'good or best practice' would be helpful to those organisations joining Causeway at a later stage and to those smaller organisations with aspirations to join.



It is recommended that the Causeway team produce a publication outlining good practice in implementing the programme and that this is disseminated to all CJOs.

- 6.5 The Causeway team have learned from their previous approach to DSM 0 and have in place agreements on accessibility to information held by each of the participating CJOs. The experience in the early stages of DSM 0 was a lack of openness by the CJOs towards the Causeway team. This manifested itself in some CJOs taking decisions without first consulting other Programme Board members leading to delays and frustration. Whilst this has to a large extent been overcome there are still elements of it present. This approach is at best unhelpful and at worst obstructive to the furtherance of the programme. There will always be conflicting and competing interests within and between CJOs. However, these should be addressed through the Programme Board to enable the overall programme to be fully implemented within agreed time scales. To enable such issues to be addressed at meetings of the Programme Board it is important that representatives should be sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of their organisation.

All participants should ensure that their representation on the Causeway Programme Board should be their appointed senior responsible officer for the programme.

PART



Appendices





Appendix 1

METHODOLOGY

Following a preliminary meeting of interested parties with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in January 2006 it was agreed that inspection of Causeway should commence with this interim review followed by annual inspections that will follow as closely as possible its phased implementation across the criminal justice system. Causeway is already subject to regular gateway reviews by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). The last OGC review was published in April 2005.

The inspection consisted of the following main elements:

1. Consultation - Stakeholder submissions
2. Research and document review
3. Fieldwork
4. Refinement and final accuracy checking

Consultation- Stakeholder interviews and submissions

Letters were sent to organisations inviting comment on their interactions with the Causeway programme. They were offered interviews with CJINI Inspectors or the alternative of making written submissions to inform the inspection. Some written submissions were received, and some telephone interviews were conducted. The following organisations or individuals contributed to the inspection process by way of written or verbal submissions:

NSPCC

PSNI Federation for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission

PSNI Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

CJIT

ISCJIT

Serious Fraud Office

Benefit Investigation Services

Assets Recovery Agency

Northern Ireland Policing Board

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Youth Justice Agency



Research and document review

The main CJ organisations and the Causeway programme itself were requested to make available documents and electronic files relating to the Causeway programme for a short visit to them by the lead and assistant Inspectors. Inspectors examined these documents at the offices of each organisation and at the offices of CJI. In addition Inspectors were given access to all the Causeway programme documentation held on Projectplace.com, a service for professional project management and team collaboration, including minutes of the programme board meetings, OGC Gateway review reports, risk logs and risk reviews. Inspectors were also given access to the ISCJIS website and carried out basic comparative research on electronic systems in other jurisdictions. Based on this research, Inspectors formulated hypotheses on the five elements of the interim review as outlined above.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork consisting of visits to the participating organisations took place between March and April 2006. A selection of staff from the PSNI and PPS were interviewed. They represented users of electronic systems at a variety of levels within each of the organisations. Interviews were also conducted with those members of staff or consultants having organisational responsibility for the delivery of Causeway related elements. A selection of senior managers and Causeway Programme Board members from the other CJOs were also interviewed. Members of the Causeway team, the programme manager and deputy manager were interviewed as part of the inspection process. Follow-up fieldwork was conducted during April and early May with other organisations and individuals based on the results of the initial interviews.

Details of interviews;

PSNI

11 interviews including 3 focus groups

PPS

7 interviews including 4 focus groups

Causeway team

4 interviews including one focus group

FSNI

Focus group representing users at all levels

NICtS

2 interviews

PBNI

Focus group of senior users

NIPS

Interview with Causeway programme board representative



Refinement and final accuracy checking

Paul Latham, head of the Best Practice, Programmes and Projects Group at PITO assisted the inspection by advising on any cross-over with the reviews carried out of the PSNI information system strategy and by commenting on emerging findings.

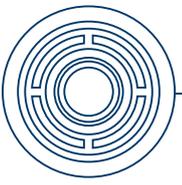
Members of some of the main organisations involved with the Causeway programme at DSM 0 and DSM 1 were invited to join a small Steering Group for the duration of the inspection. The first meeting of the group resulted in agreement on a revised Project Initiation Document and proposals for interim and annual reviews.

A further meeting of the Steering Group was held following the drafting of the inspection report to discuss findings and to gauge reaction prior to final publication.

The Steering Group for thematic inspections advise the Chief Inspector on how their organisation would be likely to respond to findings and proposals which are emerging though such advice is not given on behalf of the organisations themselves. The Steering Group members receive drafts of reports for early comment but in any case findings are sent to the Chief Executives of the agencies for formal clearance.

Steering Group members

Tom Haylett	PSNI
Anthony Harbison	PPS
Stephen Smyth	PPS
Mandy Kilpatrick	NICtS
Peter Leitch	Causeway programme
Kit Chivers	CJINI
Brendan McGuigan	CJINI
Bill Priestley	CJINI
Ann Duncan	CJINI



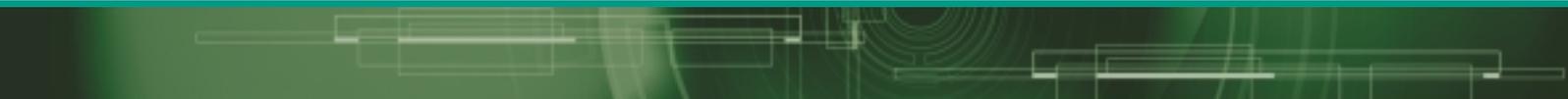


Appendix 2

CJINI AVOIDABLE DELAY REPORT

Recommendations relevant to the review of the Causeway Programme

- Para 6.12 The PSNI should urgently address its problems with file preparation and address the widespread issue of non-compliance on file quality and timeliness. Individual performance should be linked to individual assessment reviews and ultimately to overall remuneration (e.g. Competency Related Threshold Payments).
- Para 6.14 An urgent review of training on file preparation should be undertaken and appropriate training should be implemented as soon as possible. The PPS should provide an input to the development of this training and also be involved in its delivery.
- Para 6.16 It is critical that more robust quality control mechanisms and processes are put in place, and that supervisors who are the gatekeepers between the investigating officer and the PPS, are targeted for enhanced training provision.





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First published in Northern Ireland in July 2006 by
CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND
14 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7BA
www.cjini.org

ISBN 1-905283-12-1

Typeset in Gill Sans
Printed and bound in Northern Ireland by Commercial Graphics
Designed by Page Setup