



Freedom of Information Officer
Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
Block 1, Knockview Buildings,
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SJ.

12 October 2017

[REDACTED]

Our reference: FOI180917/037

RE: Request for information under Freedom of Information Act.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your recent Freedom of Information request submitted via email to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) on 18 September 2017 in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Our understanding of the information you have requested is as follows:

Question 1) The CJNI published three reports in 2006, 2010 and 2012 all examining "Avoidable Delay" in the criminal justice system. The reports all recommended the introduction of "Statutory Time Limits" for action by various parts of the system. What were the exact recommendations to the PPS? I wish a copy of any report, e-mails or minutes of any meeting with representative of the "justice system" and the CJNI where the matter was discussed.

Question 2) The CJNI used the term "justice system".

- 2.1) What bodies make up the "justice system" you mentioned?*
- 2.2) Who were the representatives of each part of "justice system" who responded or received recommendation for the introduction of "Statutory Time Limits" in the 2012 report?*
- 2.3) What were their individual responses"?*
- 2.4) What were the rank, role or responsibilities of the persons you made the recommendation too in each part of the "justice system."?*

Question 3) The CJNI report "Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report" published in January 2012 stated that the response of the "justice systems" to the suggestion of the introduction of "Statutory Time Limits" was that they would "keep the issue under review."

3.1) Since your 2012 report, what review has the justice system taken, in particular the PPS?

3.2) Since your 2012 report, what form did any review take place?

3.3) Since your 2012 report, what were the results of the review?

I would also like a copy of reports and communications between the CJNI and the PPS reference this review since 2012.

Question 4) The CJNI has made the recommendations in the 2006, 2010 and 2012 reports. What power if any does the CJNI have to require the "justice system" to introduce "Statutory Time Limits."?

Question 5) In the 2012 report the CJNI recommended that "Statutory time limits should be introduced on a phased basis, starting with the implementation of Youth Court cases within the next two years."

5.1) Has this been done?

5.2) If this has not been done why not?

Question 6) Has the CJNI considered any "Delay" by the "justice systems" a breach of the human rights of the accused and the victims of crime?

Question 7) The 2012 Report stated it was "welcomed" by the then justice minister. What action did the justice minister state they were going to take if any to require the "justice system" to reduce delays.

Further correspondence received by CJI requested the following additional information.

Question 8) I would be grateful if you could supply the details of the members of Criminal Justice Board and the Delay Action Group.

In response to your request I can confirm that the following information is being released:

Question 1

CJI Inspectors made a number of recommendations in its three inspection reports on Avoidable Delay which relate specifically to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). These recommendations can be found within CJI's published inspection reports on Avoidable Delay from 2006, 2010 and 2012 which are available to view or download from the 'Inspection Reports' section CJI website -

<http://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports>.

With regard to your request that for any report, e-mails or minutes of any meeting with representative of the "justice system" and the CJI where the matter was discussed, the following material is being released.

- Appendix A - Briefing for the Justice Committee Report Final 16 Sept 2010; and
- Appendix B - Briefing for the Justice Committee 09 February 2012.

Questions 2.1; 2.2; 2.3 and 2.4

2.1 The criminal justice system is a term used by CJI to refer to the group of agencies/ organisations which operate within the criminal justice arena and fall within the inspection remit of CJI. This includes amongst others the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI); Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI); Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). It also includes The Youth Justice Agency; The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland; Forensic Science Northern Ireland; The State Pathologist's Department; The Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland; The Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland; Community-based restorative justice schemes; Probation and Bail hostels (Approved Premises); Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) - Central Investigation Service; and DAERA - Veterinary Service Enforcement Unit.

While outside of CJI's inspection remit, members of the judiciary, the Department of Justice (DoJ) the Minister of Justice and Committee for Justice could be deemed to be part of or contributors to the criminal justice system.

2.2 Recommendations for improvement made by CJI were directed on behalf of each body to the head of each respective organisation in post when the inspection was completed, who would then have directed how responsibility for the delivery of accepted recommendations was assigned.

2.3 Recommendations made by CJI in relation to the introduction of statutory time limits were accepted in principle by the organisations within the criminal justice system to which they were directed.

Following the publication of the CJI 2012 inspection Avoidable Delay: A progress report, on 6 February 2012 the Minister of Justice, David Ford, MLA announced in the Northern Ireland Assembly his intention to introduce Statutory Time Limits for youth court cases in Northern Ireland.

2.4 Please see response to question 2.2 above.

Questions 3.1; 3.2 and 3.3

3.1 CJI is aware that research in relation to statutory time limits in Northern Ireland, England and Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland was conducted by the Northern Ireland Assembly. CJI is also aware the matter was discussed in front of the Committee for Justice in June 2012 and September 2012. Copies of the research paper and transcripts of these discussions are publically available from the Northern Ireland Assembly website Official Report (Hansard) of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Committee for Justice and may be accessed via these links:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2012/justice/10812.pdf>

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/committee-minutes-of-evidence/session-2011-2012/june-2012/criminal-justice-system--progress-on-reducing-avoidable-delay/>.

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/justice/2012-2013/120913_statutorytimelimits.pdf

3.2 In addition to the information provided in response to question 3.1, please see the Northern Ireland Assembly website Official Report (Hansard) of the Committee for Justice from where progress was reviewed:

April 2013

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/justice/2012-2013/130411_statutorycasemanagementconsultationresponses.pdf

July 2013

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/justice/2012-2013/130704_reducingavoidabledelayprogressreportonthemultiagencyprogrammetospeedupthejusticesystem.pdf

13 March 2014

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/justice/2013-2014/140313_speedingupjusticeandservicesforvictimsandwitnesses.pdf

24 September 2014

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/minutesofevidencereport.aspx?AgendaId=9978&evelID=6470>

25 March 2015

<http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/committee-12994.pdf>

3.3 Please see response to question 3.2 above.

Since the publication of CJI's 2012 report on Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report CJI has written to the Public Prosecution Service to advise of its intention to carry out further work in this area. A copy of this correspondence has been provided in response to question 1.

- Appendix C - Letter to PPS for the Justice Committee 09 February 2012.

Question 4

CJI has a remit to inspect a wide variety of organisations and bodies under s.46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, and s.45 of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007, as amended by Schedule 13 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

It does not have power to require the justice system to introduce statutory time limits or any recommendations made by the Inspectorate in the course of its work.

Questions 5.1 and 5.2

5.1 CJI is not aware that statutory time limits have been introduced on a phased basis, starting with the implementation of Youth Court cases in the two years since the publication of the CJI 2012 report or in subsequent years.

5.2 CJI understands the introduction of statutory time limits requires primary legislation to be passed to amend the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. A consultation exercise on how the 2003 Order could be amended and the type of statutory time limit scheme which could be introduced was commenced by the Department of Justice in December 2015 and ended in March 2016.

As CJI has not published additional inspection work in this area the Inspectorate is unable to provide any further information in response to this question.

Question 6

CJI has not carried out any specific inspection work where it has considered whether delay by the justice system is a breach of the human rights of an accused person or a victim of crime.

Question 7

CJI does not hold the information that you have requested in relation to what action the Minister of Justice stated they were going to take if any to require the "justice system" to reduce delays in response to the CJI 2012 report on Avoidable Delay. You may wish to refer your question to the Department of Justice or review the Official Report (Hansard) of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Question 8

The Criminal Justice Board comprises the heads or senior representatives of the main criminal justice agencies. CJI however does not hold further information or details of the members of the Criminal Justice Board or the Delay Action Group. You may wish to refer your question to the Department of Justice who may be able to assist.

I hope this information satisfies your request. Should this not satisfy your request for information, please contact in the first instance CJI's Freedom of Information Officer.

Their address is Freedom of Information Officer, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, Block 1, Knockview Buildings, Belfast, BT4 3SJ or email info@cjini.org.

Yours sincerely,

A large, irregular black redaction mark covering the signature area.A horizontal black redaction mark covering the name of the signatory.

Chief Executive
Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all



Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Avoidable Delay Report
published June 2010

Briefing paper for the Committee for Justice

16 September 2010

Introduction

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) published its first thematic inspection report on delay in the processing of criminal justice cases in Northern Ireland in May 2006. The inspection found that despite the best efforts of many working in the criminal justice agencies, delays in the criminal justice system had become excessive. The initial response of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland was positive in that an avoidable delay strategy was developed and a range of actions to improve performance were identified. This included the setting-up of a Delay Action Team to support the work of the Criminal Justice Board and the introduction of specific timeliness targets known as performance standards, which formed part of the Public Service Agreement between the Northern Ireland Office¹ (NIO) and Government.

CJI undertook a follow-up inspection in 2009-10 to assess progress against recommendations and to consider the extent to which improvements had been delivered. It also incorporated an inspection of the interface between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS). The inspection was led by CJI with specialist help from Inspectors from the Inspectorates of Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service. The inspection involved extensive interviewing of agency personnel, data analysis and review of case files. Interviews were also conducted with victims and their representatives, defendants and prisoners to consider the impact of delay on individuals.

Key Findings – Impact of Delay

The overall finding of the inspection was that despite the major efforts made to deal with the problem of delay, there had been limited improvements in the time taken to process criminal cases and avoidable delay remained a significant challenge for criminal justice agencies.

At the time of the inspection, performance against standards had flat-lined and performance data indicated that just one of the five standards would be achieved by the Public Service Agreement deadline of April 2011. The time to deal with youth defendants was a particular concern as it took an average of 148 days to process a charge case² and 283 days for a summons case³ in 2009-10. Comparisons with the timescales recorded in the most similar justice system in England and Wales, showed that Northern Ireland remained significantly slower. This was a similar finding to the 2006 inspection. Over all, the length of time it took the justice system to process individuals through to disposal by a court was too long.

¹ The criminal justice remit and responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Office were devolved to the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland on 12 April 2010.

² A charge case is usually a more serious offence where an individual is charged by police with an offence to appear before a court on a specific date.

³ A summons case, such as cases of theft, minor criminal damage and motoring offences such as no insurance commence when an individual is informed by police that a report will be prepared for submission to the PPS who then take the decision on prosecution.

The impact of delay can be severe for victims and witnesses. The quality of evidence declines overtime which can often put victims and witnesses under additional pressure in Court. It can also undermine confidence in the justice system and contribute to a reluctance to report crime or to act as a future witness. There was also the more personal negative impact of avoidable delay. Inspectors found evidence of deep frustration among victims, witnesses and their representatives due to the number of adjournments, and consequently unnecessary attendances at Court, leading to increasing personal pressure and the additional costs associated with travel and taking time off work.

There are also problems with the number of defendants remanded in custody and waiting trial. Data provided to Inspectors showed there were 506 prisoners on remand in November 2009, which represented 35% of the prisoner population (this represented around 59% of prisoners in Maghaberry Prison). The Northern Ireland Prison Service has limited scope to address the offending needs of remand prisoners as their guilt has not been established.

There is a general acceptance that youths - whether they are defendants, victims or witnesses - are more negatively impacted by avoidable delay. Inspectors are of the view that the reduction in avoidable delay should be prioritised for youth cases where the impact is most apparent and most evident.

The additional costs incurred by avoidable delay were also considerable. These relate, for example, to the costs of ineffective hearings⁴, the costs for victims and witnesses and in police overtime. The PSNI has undertaken some assessment in terms of file preparation and more specifically attendance at court. In 'H' District, which covers Coleraine, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Moyle and Larne council areas, it was estimated that from 1 January – 31 July 2009, 6589 hours of overtime was attributed to attendance at Court.

The current situation is not sustainable – a step change is required

The question examined by the inspection was what needed to be done differently to make a difference in the performance of agencies in the processing of criminal cases. The view taken by the Inspection Team was that the current position was not sustainable, and a step change was required in the performance of organisations to meet the challenges of reducing avoidable delay.

The inspection report identified three key areas for change.

Improve joined-up working

The first relates to the need for justice organisations to work more closely together in the delivery of a joined-up approach to criminal justice. The report concludes there is a need to improve the working relationship or interface between the PSNI and the PPS. The way that these two organisations work together to deliver a common service has significant implications for the overall workings of the justice system. It is necessary to identify a common vision which encompasses issues such

⁴ Ineffective hearings occur when a case does not proceed as envisaged.

as pre-prosecution advice, police discretion on disposals and the streamlining of the process for the submission of criminal case files to the PPS.

It is also necessary to deal with the problem of adjournments before they get to Court. The inspection found that there were 130,500 adjournments in Northern Ireland an average 4.7 for youth defendants⁵ and 2.2 for adult defendants in magistrates' courts. This compares with an average of 1.35 for youth and adult defendants in England and Wales magistrates' courts. A reduction in the number of adjournments requires not only the focus of justice organisations (police, prosecution and forensic science) but also linkages with other departments such as Health, with the provision of timely and quality medical advice.

The importance of inter-agency case progression was covered in some detail in the last CJI inspection of Avoidable Delay with recommendations to establish case progression officers and develop joint case progression groups. The former was delivered by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), but the latter was not implemented due to resource constraints. Inspectors supported the decision of the Criminal Justice Board to re-assess the contribution of locally-based case progression groups as this is a model which has worked effectively in England and Wales. Case progression groups would be required to be supported by live and regionally available case data, preferably through the Causeway IT project.

Inspectors identified a need to undertake a review of performance targets in the context of the expiry of current performance standards in 2011. An end-to-end measurement of performance should be the overarching objective of the criminal justice system on the basis of a common data set with the same counting rules.

Deal with operational blockages

Secondly, there is a need for each of the justice agencies to deal now with those issues directly contributing to the causes of delay within the system. For the PSNI, the main task is to realise its vision of 'getting it right first time' for case files. This has the potential to improve the overall end-to-end times for cases as it aids the decision-making in the PPS and helps to address the causes of adjournments in the courts. It also requires greater prioritisation in the PSNI including enhanced quality assurance checks on files, targeted training of officers, dedicated resources and more meaningful rewards and sanctions based on performance.

Whilst performance times have improved in the PPS, there is scope to further reduce avoidable delay, particularly in addressing the dead time when files are waiting to be allocated to a prosecutor or further information is needed before a decision can be taken. Data produced by the justice system at the time of the inspection showed that it took about 28 days for a decision on an adult summons and 41 days for a youth summons.

The summons process is of particular concern due to the fact that when this inspection was conducted, it was taking over three months from issue of all summonses to first appearance in court. This is well outside the proposed target

⁵ Youth defendants include young people of 17 years or under.

times set by the Criminal Justice Board. While primary responsibility rests with the PPS in terms of their issue and service (postal), other justice organisations have a key role in terms of the summons process.

The length of time that cases spend in court is determined by a number of factors. This can involve issues such as the readiness of the prosecution team or defence to proceed with the case or the timing of a plea by the defendant including the need to set a contest. These matters contribute to the high numbers of case adjournments and the length of court lists. Inspectors observed the recent pilot project in Londonderry/Derry magistrates' court which recorded each application, and see merit in extending this approach to other court areas in order to analyse and deal with the problem of adjournment before they get to court. There is also a need to establish a network of case progression personnel within the three main justice agencies to ensure a more effective case progression process.

More focused oversight

Delivering the required change on the ground is a key challenge for the justice system. This will require strengthened accountability and leadership with a post devolution replacement for the joint ministerial Strategy and Delivery Group and direct political oversight for the Minister of Justice. The Department of Justice and the Criminal Justice Board should facilitate the work of the inter-agency project groups in areas such as case management and case progression and ensure delivery on the ground. The remit of the Delay Action Team should be re-focused towards a decision support role, through the provision of timely and regular performance information.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations have been identified by the Inspectorate as key.

- The PSNI and the PPS should incorporate the joint Criminal Justice Performance Standard into their respective corporate/business plans.
- The PSNI and the PPS should develop a shared vision on future co-operation which should seek agreement on (though not exclusively):
 - the scope and resources for pre-charge advice, including areas of integrative working (e.g. prosecutors working within Occurrence and Case Management Teams);
 - categorisation of offence types/offenders deemed eligible for PSNI decision on 'no prosecution' bearing in mind the findings of the pilot project;
 - a bespoke file format, based on minimum standards, for case files which are sent to the PPS;
 - the terms of agreement should form the basis of a new joint protocol which should be disseminated to all relevant staff; and

- the PSNI and the PPS should utilize Request for Further Information data to identify the specific causes of poor quality files and implement a joint action plan
- For the PSNI:
 - quality assurance checks need to be systematic and clearly understood and implemented at agreed points;
 - the points of quality assurance checks need to be adequately resourced with appropriately skilled staff and adequate priority accorded to this role; and
 - enhanced linkages should be developed between police districts and training departments within the PSNI.
- An end-to-end measurement of performance, which is currently monitored by the Delay Action Team, should be the overarching objective of the criminal justice system.
- Strengthened accountability and leadership with a post devolution replacement of the joint ministerial Strategy and Delivery Group and direct political oversight for the Minister of Justice.
- The establishment of a network or cadre of case progression personnel within the three main justice organisations should be expedited.
- The Criminal Justice agencies should develop a joint Action Plan to address the specific problem of avoidable delay with regard to youth defendant cases.

A full list of the recommendations and issues to address identified by Inspectors can be found in the inspection report which can be viewed or downloaded from the CJI website – www.cjini.org. Additional hard copies of the report can be obtained from CJI.



Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report

Published January 2012

Briefing paper for the Committee for Justice

9 February 2012

Introduction

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) published its second thematic inspection report on delay in the processing of criminal justice cases in Northern Ireland in June 2010. The report showed that despite the major efforts to address the problem of avoidable delay since the first inspection report in 2006, these initiatives had made a relatively limited impact. Inspectors made 13 recommendations and an additional 8 issues to address by the criminal justice agencies.

Following publication of the 2010 report, it was agreed that CJI would provide an interim progress report to the Minister. This report would focus on actual performance, examine activities and initiatives to date and identify any emerging issues or concerns. The actual assessment of progress against each of the recommendations will be separately undertaken by CJI through a formal follow-up review in late 2012.

Performance

The overall finding of the progress report is that despite the major efforts made to deal with the problem of delay, actual performance has deteriorated for Crown Court cases and also for Magistrates' Court cases which commence through report and summons. These cases constitute the largest proportion of cases completed within the justice system. On the positive side, performance has continued to improve with regard to adult and youth cases which commence through a charge.

The most recent available data (April to September 2011) for Crown Court defendants show that it took 439 days on average from charge to disposal. This was 39 days more than for 2010-11 (Table 1).

Table 1: Performance of Crown Court cases

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Charged to file received by PPS	62	70	69	74	68
File received by PPS to PPS decision issued	104	98	108	121	138
PPS decision issued to date of committal	65	74	72	31	36
Committal to start of hearing	120	131	114	121	141
Conviction to disposal	49	46	43	53	56
Total	400	419	406	400	439

Performance on adult summons cases has deteriorated from an average of 220 days in 2009-10 to 233 days in 2010-11 and 270 days in the first six months of 2011-12 (Table 2). A similar negative trend is evident in relation to youth court summons defendants which now stands at an average of 290 days (Table 3). The stage from PPS decision on a prosecution to a defendant's first appearance in court is clearly the time period where delays have worsened. This includes the processes of issuing and serving a summons and ensuring a defendant attends court for the first hearing.

Table 2: Performance of magistrates' court (adult summons cases)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Accused informed to file received by PPS	54	67	55	45	40
File received by PPS to PPS Decision issued	33	24	28	29	30
PPS decision issued to first appearance	87	94	92	115	151
First appearance to disposal at court	49	53	45	44	49
Total	223	238	220	233	270

Table 3: Performance of magistrates' court (youth summons cases)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Accused informed to file received by PPS	60	61	61	47	42
File received by PPS to PPS Decision issued	37	39	27	27	25
PPS decision issued to first appearance	88	86	86	104	140
First appearance to disposal at court	87	105	82	80	83
Total	272	291	256	258	290

A positive development has been the continuation of a positive trend in relation to charge cases which has improved by 9 days for adult defendants and 12 days for youth defendants (relative to 2009-10). The current average of 91 days for adults and 118 days for youths are the best figures over the six years of comparative data (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Performance of magistrates' court (adult charge cases)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Charged to file received by PPS	29	26	18	19	17
File received by PPS to PPS decision issued	21	18	15	12	12
PPS decision issued to disposal at court	95	83	67	64	62
Total	145	127	100	95	91

Table 5: Performance of magistrates' court (youth charge cases)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Charged to file received by PPS	29	24	22	22	20
File received by PPS to PPS decision issued	26	24	20	15	13
PPS decision issued to disposal at court	119	123	88	86	85
Total	174	171	130	123	118

Initiatives and activities since June 2010

There has been much activity across a number of organisations over the past 18 months. This has been led by the Criminal Justice Delivery Group and coordinated through the Criminal Justice Board with a focus on four work strands: governance and accountability; case preparation; case management; and youth cases.

The case preparation work strand is founded on partnership working between the PSNI and PPS with the aim to streamline processes and improve file quality. As many of these initiatives are currently being introduced, any evidence on improved file quality is tentative.

The aim of the case management work strand is to develop better ways to improve the conduct of criminal cases through the court process. It is chaired by the NICTS and has representation from the Office of the Lord Chief Justice. Case management is supported by case progression personnel in each of the main justice organisations. The review of adjournment reasons which was initiated at the time of the last inspection has continued though it has been limited in its roll-out. The main challenge is to utilise the available information to reduce the number of unnecessary adjournments across each of the Magistrates' Courts.

The Youth Justice Agency has taken the lead on developing an action plan for youth cases which has linked into existing initiatives such as the multi-agency Reducing Offending in Partnership Project and to the more general delay actions such as case progression and prolific offenders. There is however recognition expressed in the most recent joint action plan that a renewed multi agency push on youth cases is required.

Looking Forward

The response of the criminal justice system to the problems of avoidable delay can be described as comprehensive but conservative. It is comprehensive in that new governance and accountability arrangements have been established and a broad range of inter-agency and agency specific initiatives have been developed. The overall strategy is based on incremental performance improvement which has delivered a steady improvement in Magistrates' Courts charge cases. It has not delivered performance improvement in Crown Court cases and the deterioration in summons cases remains a concern.

It is the view of CJI that a more radical approach is required to deliver the required step change. The starting point, as recommended in the past two CJI inspection reports on avoidable delay, should be a decision to introduce statutory time limits.

Statutory time limits should be introduced on a phased basis, starting with the implementation of Youth Court cases within the next two years.

The time limits should facilitate the implementation and delivery of current improvement initiatives and also help to sustain performance improvement. They are not a substitute for performance targets. Statutory time limits are in effect a set of minimum standards which should apply to all cases.

The report can be downloaded from the CJI website – www.cjini.org.

11 June 2014

██████████
Director
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Dear ██████████,

Follow-up review of Avoidable Delay

CJINI intends to conduct a Follow-Up Review of Avoidable Delay. We do not develop formal terms of reference for follow-up reviews as the work involves an assessment of the progress made in delivering recommendations. The 2010 inspection report had 13 recommendations of which 4 were specifically related to the PPS while others required a PPS input to a wider criminal justice response.

I led the original inspection for CJI and will be conducting this follow-up review. I have asked the Department of Justice to coordinate a joint response in relation to progress against each of the recommendations. The DOJ will also provide the overall end to end case timeliness data.

It is our intention to arrange a number of meetings with each of the main criminal justice agencies to address specific aspects of progress against the original recommendations. I am therefore requesting a liaison person to facilitate meetings and supporting material.

The timing of this review is intended to support the planning and implementation of the proposed pilot project, which has resulted from the recent Crown Court Cases report commissioned by the Criminal Justice Delivery Group. It also coincides with new legislation and policy around speedy justice.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this important review.

Yours sincerely

James Corrigan
Deputy Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland