



## Who we are

### What else do I need to know?

#### Other Information

The CCRC was created by the Criminal Appeal Act 1995. This Act sets out the CCRC's powers and duties.

The Court of Appeal can ask the CCRC to look into cases that have come directly to it, or to find out more information about specific aspects of cases referred by the CCRC.

The CCRC also has a wider role to inform the development of the criminal justice system and build public confidence in that system.

The CCRC has power to advise about the issuing of Royal Pardons, although this power is seldom if ever used.

Further information about the CCRC, including case statistics and contact details for lawyers, is available on our website at [www.ccr.gov.uk](http://www.ccr.gov.uk).



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## Introducing the CCRC

### What is the Criminal Cases Review Commission?

The CCRC is the independent public body that reviews suspected miscarriages of justice. The CCRC was set up in 1997 after growing public concern about miscarriages of justice like the Birmingham Six case.

The CCRC is based in Birmingham and employs more than 100 staff including Commissioners.

### Who can apply?

Anyone convicted of a criminal offence in England, Wales or Northern Ireland can apply, but they must usually have gone through the normal appeals process first. Scotland has its own CCRC.

### Whom do we represent?

We are an independent body and do not represent the prosecution, defence, police, courts or any other part of the criminal justice system. This means we do not represent applicants either.

### What do we do?

We review cases to decide if they should be referred to an appeal court to be considered again. It is not our role to consider “innocence” or “guilt” or re-try cases.

### When are cases referred?

Cases can only usually be referred if there is some new evidence or argument, which was not heard at the original trial or appeal, which may cast doubt on the safety of a conviction or fairness of a sentence. We can only refer cases if we find that there is a “real possibility” that the appeal courts would change the original decision.

About one in 25 cases is referred to appeal courts. If a case is referred it is listed for a hearing at a future date so that the appeal courts can decide whether a conviction is unsafe or a sentence unfair.

## The work of the CCRC





## How cases are reviewed

### How do we begin a review?

We obtain all the necessary material from the original case, using our unique powers to access information held by any public body, such as the police or health service.

Cases are then assessed for complexity. Cases that can be dealt with relatively quickly join a waiting list for allocation to a caseworker. More complex cases join a different queue for allocation. Priority is given to applicants in custody or if there are other special circumstances.

### How long do reviews take?

Once allocated, reviews can be very time-consuming. Complex cases can take months or even years to complete. Thoroughness is our priority.

Where necessary, we can arrange for tests to be carried out or seek the views of experts. Sometimes we need to interview witnesses or others involved in the original case.

We can also direct bodies such as police forces to investigate specific issues on our behalf, usually in complex or sensitive cases.

### How do we deal with applicants?

The CCRC receives about 900 applications a year. We encourage applicants to get legal representation, but you do not need a lawyer to apply. Legal Aid is usually available. Applying to the CCRC is free and we will pay for any tests or reports which we think are necessary. If we need to see applicants in person, we do.

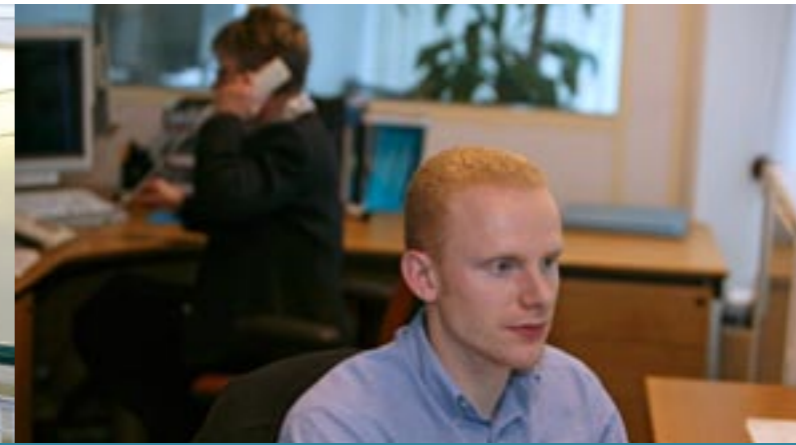
### Are applicants kept informed about the progress of a review?

We are always as open as possible with applicants but sometimes information must remain confidential. We are committed to helping applicants understand what can be a complex process.

Some applicants are understandably distressed when their case is not referred but we ask that staff are treated with respect at all times. We have a procedure to deal with complaints.

## Dealing with applicants





## The Case Review Process

