

Independence

Integrity

Professionalism

Impartiality

Accountability

Transparency

Business Plan 2008-09

June 2008

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Aims

Overall aims

The overall aims of the Commission are to:

- investigate cases as quickly as possible and with thoroughness and care
- work constructively with our stakeholders and to the highest standards of quality
- treat applicants, and anyone affected by our work, with courtesy, respect and consideration
- promote public understanding of the Commission's role

Strategic aims

The Corporate Plan for 2008-2011 identifies three strategic aims through which the overall aims will be realised. These are:

① Casework

“To review and decide cases efficiently and effectively, and with the minimum of delay consistent with the circumstances of individual cases.”

② Resources

“To ensure that the core activities of the Commission are supported by the appropriate use of available resources, and that value for money is delivered.”

③ Corporate matters

“To ensure that the Commission's activities are properly planned and monitored, that it achieves an appropriate public profile, and that a positive contribution to the criminal justice system is made.”

Business Plan Objectives

Strategic aim ① - casework

“To review cases efficiently and effectively, and with the minimum of delay consistent with the circumstances of individual cases.”

Case intake is expected to be about 1,040 cases (2007/08 – 984). The forecast for the pattern of cases and number of cases closed in the plan period (see page 10 for details) has been based on experience since the new caseworking processes were introduced in October 2006.

The focus of the Commission’s strategy is to:

- **Attempt to maintain the casework position in the face of reducing budgets.** This aim is supported by objective 1.3 below and monitored under **KPI2 – age of next case for allocation** and **KPI4 – caseload balance**.
- **Strive to reduce the time taken to complete cases.** This aim is supported by objective 1.2 below and is monitored by **KPI3 – case completion times**.

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective	Performance indicator	Ownership
Improve efficiency of casework process		
1.1	Map all existing casework processes and identify where changes to Vectus are required to meet casework management objectives and improve the reliability of data held	Project complete with recommendations for changes by 07/08 Director of Finance & IT
1.2	Reduce the time taken to complete more complex cases once allocated to a case reviewer	KPI1 – cases in progress
		KPI3 – case completion times
1.3	Maintain waiting times before allocation at an acceptable level	KPI2 – age of next case for allocation Director of Casework
1.4	Evaluate the casework process changes made to ensure the expected benefits have been realised	Evaluation complete by 06/08 Director of Casework
1.5	Explore the practicalities of introducing a quality assurance process for single Commissioner decisions	Proposals complete by 08/08 Director of Casework

	Objective	Performance indicator	Ownership
1.6	Explore ways of improving knowledge management	Proposals evaluated and costed by 12/08	Director of Casework
1.7	Plan for the extension of jurisdiction to courts-martial	Planning complete by 11/08	Director of Casework

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

Strategic aim ② - resources

“To ensure that the core activities of the Commission are supported by the appropriate use of available resources, and that value for money is delivered.”

The resource DEL for the plan year totals £7,174k, of which £6,661 is represented by near-cash. A separate capital DEL budget of £100k has also been granted. These budgets are indicative as the delegated budget has not yet been received, but it is thought that the actual budget is unlikely to be different from the indicative amounts.

Many of the costs of the Commission are fixed (at least for the plan period). Although economies are planned wherever possible, this means that the amount remaining to fund staff costs is dependent on how well the fixed costs can be managed.

All staff posts are being reviewed as they fall vacant, and only filled if they are critical to the operating of the Commission. This is to avoid staff cost commitments arising for future years when our budget will be reduced and the current staffing level will no longer be sustainable. This policy was in place throughout 2007/08 as well, and the result is that we are generating an underspend, shown as unallocated budget on page 13. This spare budget will be utilised during the year as far as possible to augment our caseworking capability, and a number of projects are in the planning stage. A longer term view of our budgetary situation and the strategy we are adopting is contained in the Corporate Plan 2008-11.

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Management of human resources			
2.1	Manage staff absence	KPI8 – staff absence	Director of Admin & HR*
2.2	Complete a review of the pay and grading structures following job evaluation	Completed by 07/08	Director of Admin & HR*
2.3	Prepare an Equality Scheme for the Commission	Completed and approved by 06/08	Director of Admin & HR*
2.4	Develop a full training and skills strategy	Strategy complete and approved by 09/08	Director of Admin & HR*
2.5	Introduce an appraisal scheme covering all staff	Scheme designed and approved by 10/08	Director of Admin & HR*
2.6	Procure a new payroll service on expiration of the existing contract	Contract signed and transition complete by 09/08	Director of Admin & HR*
Provision of appropriate IT			
2.7	Update the current IT strategy	Strategy updated and agreed by ISG by 09/08	Director of Finance & IT
2.8	Plan the next major hardware and software refresh	Outline plans complete and agreed by ISG by 12/08	Director of Finance & IT

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Security			
2.9	Implement the recommendations of the security review	All major recommendations implemented by 12/08	Departmental Security Officer
2.10	Refresh awareness amongst staff of security issues	Campaign complete by 10/08	Departmental Security Officer
Finance and procurement			
2.11	Ensure spending is within delegated DEL levels	KPI7 – expenditure against budget	Director of Finance & IT
2.12	Actively manage cash resources	Monthly cash balances maintained within agreed limits	Director of Finance & IT
2.13	Ensure suppliers are paid in accordance with terms of trade	95% of supplier invoices (by number and value) paid within terms	Director of Finance & IT
2.14	Upgrade the electronic payments system	Upgrade complete by 10/08	Director of Finance & IT

* The post of Director of Administration & HR remains unfilled for the time being. During this period, these actions will be owned by the Principal Director.

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

Strategic aim ③ - corporate matters

“To ensure that the Commission’s activities are properly planned and monitored, that it achieves an appropriate public profile, and that a positive contribution to the criminal justice system is made.”

The delivery of this strategic aim will be through the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Planning and monitoring			
3.1	Monitor performance against the business plan objectives	Performance monitored throughout the year and appropriate action taken	Senior management team
3.2	Communicate business plan objectives to staff	Presentation by end 06/08	Senior management team
3.3	Formulate a plan to ensure expenditure remains within indicative budgets for 2009/10 and 2010/11	Plans complete and approved by Commission by 11/08	Director of Finance & IT / Budget Strategy Group
3.4	Maintain relationship with sponsor	Schedule meetings in accordance with the appropriate protocol	Chairman and senior management team
3.5	Complete the revision of the Business Continuity Plan	Revised plan in place by 06/08; plan tested by 10/08	Departmental Security Officer
Communications			
3.6	Analyse applicant feedback questionnaires and formulate action plan	Action plan complete by 10/08	Head of Communications
3.7	Review and revise the website	Complete by 12/08	Head of Communications
3.8	Implement a revised publication scheme in accordance with new guidance	Complete by 12/08	Head of Communications
3.9	Undertake a programme of at least 6 prison visits during the year	Six visits achieved in 2008/09	Head of Communications
3.10	Design, complete, analyse and provide feedback on staff survey	Completed by 12/08	Head of Communications
3.11	Review and update the application form (to include courts martial)	New forms printed by 01/09	Head of Communications
3.12	Review the content of standard letters sent to applicants	Revisions complete by 09/08	Head of Communications
3.13	Achieve an overall increase in the proportion of applicants who say it is ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to find out about the Commission.	Number of applications falling into this category in 2008/09 at least 5% greater than for 2007/08	Head of Communications

Objective		Performance indicator	Ownership
Wider contribution			
3.14	Continue to develop systems and procedures for identifying and reporting, both internally and externally, on matters of law, practice and procedure arising from case reviews	Evaluation of systems completed by 12/08	Director of Casework
3.15	Continue to grant access for research on the Commission's casework data	At least one new research project accepted by 03/09	Chairman of Research Advisory Group
3.16	Respond to consultations on issues of criminal justice	As required	Chairman
3.17	Seek opportunities to participate in appropriate criminal justice forums	As appropriate	As required
Governance			
3.18	Devise revised governance arrangements and review structures	Completed by 03/09	Chairman
3.19	Review risk management processes	Complete by 09/08	Director of Finance & IT

Budget & projections

① Casework

2007/08 Actual

Cases in Progress at 30 Nov 2007			Twelve-month Intake to Stage	Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2008			Four-month Decisions at Stage						
Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review		Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review	Total	Progress to next Stage No	Progress to next Stage %	Refer No	Refer %	Not Refer No	Not Refer %
Stage 1			984	136	13	123	1,000	349	35.9%			651	64.1%
152	25	127											
Categorisation			349	69	69	0	403	403	100%				
123	123	0											
							Total	Receive from Catgn %					
Category A			244	161	46	115	254		60.5%	11	4.3%	243	95.7%
171	38	133											
Category B			113	162	57	105	102		28.0%	11	10.8%	91	89.2%
151	65	86											
Category C			35	115	9	106	68		8.7%	6	8.8%	62	91.2%
148	32	116											
Section 15			11	1		1	12		2.7%	0	0.0%	12	100.0%
2		2											
Totals:			984	644	194	450	1,087			28		1,059	

2008/09

Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2008			Twelve-month Intake to Stage	Cases in Progress at 31 Mar 2009			Twelve-month Decisions at Stage						
Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review		Total	Waiting in Tray	Under Review	Total	Progress to next Stage No	Progress to next Stage %	Refer No	Refer %	Not Refer No	Not Refer %
Stage 1			1,040	140	15	125	1,036	372	35.9%			664	64.1%
136	13	123											
Categorisation			372	75	75	0	366	366	100.0%				
69	69	0											
							Total	Receive from Catgn %					
Category A			220	151	46	105	230		60.5%	10	4.3%	220	95.7%
161	46	115											
Category B			103	142	58	84	123		28.0%	13	10.8%	110	89.2%
162	57	105											
Category C			32	95	8	87	52		8.7%	5	8.8%	47	91.2%
115	9	106											
Section 15			12	1		1	12		2.7%	0	0.0%	12	100.0%
1		1											
Totals:			1,041	604	202	402	1,081			28		1,053	

Casework projections are based on the number of anticipated available caseworking staff.

Substantial progress was made in 2007/08 in reducing the time that cases wait before allocation for review. The strategy during the year will be to attempt to maintain the current position, despite the fact that our caseworking resource is declining as a result of having to adopt a strategy of holding vacancies open to ensure that we can contain expenditure within budget in future years. A fuller discussion of this strategy is set out in the Corporate Plan 2008-11.

Progress against these projections will be monitored through **KPI1 – cases in progress**, **KPI2 – age of next case for allocation**, **KPI3 – cases completion times** and **KPI4 – caseflow balance**.

A measure of our performance in relation to how well we have handled cases from the viewpoint of our applicants is the number of upheld complaints and successful judicial reviews. These are monitored through **KPI5 – complaints and judicial reviews**. A measure of our interpretation of the 'real possibility' test is given by **KPI6 – referral conclusions**.

Details of KPIs are on pages 14 to 16

② Human resources

<i>At start of period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	11	9.2	
Case review managers + caseworkers	43+4	38.9+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17	16.7	
Other casework staff	11	10.2	
Total casework staff	86	79.0	83.1%
Admin & executive staff	18	16.1	16.9%
TOTAL	104	95.1	100.0%

<i>Average for period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	11	9.2	
Case review managers + caseworkers	41.6+4	37.5+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17	16.7	
Other casework staff	11	10.2	
Total casework staff	84.6	77.6	82.8%
Admin & executive staff	18	16.1	17.2%
TOTAL	102.6	93.7	100.0%

<i>At end of period:</i>	Headcount	FTE	
Commissioners	11	9.2	
Case review managers + caseworkers	41+4	36.9+4.0	
Casework admin staff	17	16.7	
Other casework staff	11	10.2	
Total casework staff	84	77.0	82.7%
Admin & executive staff	18	16.1	17.3%
TOTAL	102	93.1	100.0%

3 Budgets

[£k]	2008/09	2007/08 budget	2007/08 actual
Staff costs			
Salaries	3,565	3,815	3,662
Employer's NIC	291	323	298
Pension contributions	541	593	552
BBA pensions	118	145	194
Home to business travel	25	16	24
Contract staff	65	18	58
Total	4,605	4,910	4,788
Running costs			
Accommodation	702	677	712
Administration	345	317	303
HR	98	99	81
IT	513	497	485
External case related expenditure	136	110	134
Other	147	151	138
Unallocated	115	(60)	0
Total	2,056	1,791	1,853
Near-cash total	6,661	6,701	6,641
Non-cash costs			
Depreciation	186	285	275
Cost of capital	(159)	(142)	(122)
BBA pension provision	356	255	215
Dilapidations provision	26	24	25
Unallocated	104	91	0
Total	513	513	393
TOTAL RESOURCE	7,174	7,214	7,034
Capital			
Office equipt & furniture	15	15	8
IT software	38	102	54
IT development	0	0	0
IT hardware	42	33	33
Loss on disposal of assets	5	5	0
TOTAL CAPITAL	100	155	95
TOTAL BUDGET	7,274	7,369	7,129

All discretionary expenditure has been reduced as far as possible to enable the maximum amount of financial resource to be applied to funding the costs of caseworking staff.

Unallocated near-cash budget will be utilised during the year.

Key performance indicators

1 Cases in progress		
Purpose: Case reviews should be completed within a reasonable time. This KPI measures how many cases in progress are in excess of the benchmark completion time.		
Definition: The number of category B and C cases which were allocated more than 6 and 18 months ago respectively, and which have not yet reached the provisional decision stage, and the average age of these cases in months.		
Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.		
Frequency: Monthly		
Data source: Case statistics compiled from the case management system.		
Plan:		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Avg age (months)</u>
category B	<20	<10
category C	<30	<32

2 Age of next case for allocation		
Purpose: Of principal concern to applicants is the length of time they must wait before their case is allocated for review. This measure gives an indication of these delays.		
Definition: The average age (in months) of all cases not yet allocated, and the age in months of the next case to be allocated (shown separately for in-custody and at-liberty cases for categories B and C)		
Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.		
Frequency: Monthly		
Data source: Case statistics compiled from the case management system.		
Plan:		
[months]	<u>Age of next case</u>	<u>Avg age of cases waiting</u>
category A	<5	<3
category B custody	<9	<5
category B liberty	<21	<11
category C custody	<16	<8
category C liberty	<28	<14

3 Case completion times			
Purpose: In order to provide an optimum service to applicants, cases need to be completed within a reasonable time taking into account the circumstances of the case. The time taken to complete cases will of course vary widely, although benchmarks have been set for each category.			
Definition: The elapsed time in months between allocation and the sending of the statement of reasons. The calculation is made twice, once to sending of the provisional, and again to sending of the final, statement of reasons. Cases involving an Investigating Officer and section 15 orders are excluded.			
Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.			
Frequency: Quarterly and annually			
Data source: Reports generated from the case management system.			
Plan: Cases completed within time frame:			
	<u>% completed</u>	<u>Provisional</u>	<u>Final</u>
cat A	75	10 wks	20 wks
cat B	65	6 mnths	9 mnths
cat C	50	18 mnths	22 mnths

4 Caseflow balance
Purpose: A high-level measure of the time it takes to process cases efficiently is whether overall case closures exceed case intake. If they do, then backlogs will be eroded. If they do not, then cases will begin to accumulate and waiting-times will be extended.
Definition: The total number of cases closed at all stages minus the number of applications received. Applications include s15 directions from the Court of Appeal.
Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.
Frequency: Monthly
Data source: Case statistics compiled from the case management system.
Plan: Monthly: >-20 12 month: positive

6 Referral conclusions
Purpose: The proportion of referrals which result in a conviction being quashed or a sentence varied is a measure of our interpretation of the 'real possibility' test.
Definition: The number of referrals on which judgement has been given in the period which have resulted in a quashed conviction or varied sentence as a proportion of the total number of referrals heard in the period.
Calculation: Recorded for the 12 months to date and cumulative.
Frequency: Quarterly
Data source: Judgements delivered by the Court of Appeal.
Plan: >60% and <80%

5 Complaints and judicial reviews									
Purpose: The number of complaints and judicial reviews serves as a measure of the quality of service provided. However, the nature of the Commission's work means that applicants may complain or apply for judicial review simply because their case is not referred, rather than as a result of unsatisfactory service.									
Definition: 1 The number of cases re-opened as a proportion of complaints and pre-action protocol letters resolved and judicial reviews heard. 2 The number of complaints otherwise upheld as a proportion of complaints resolved									
Calculation: Recorded for the current period and for the last 12 months.									
Frequency: Quarterly									
Data source: Records of official complaints maintained by the Complaints Manager and of judicial reviews maintained by the Legal Advisors.									
Plan:									
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 Cases reopened</td> <td><3</td> <td><4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Other</td> <td><7</td> <td><9½%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number	%	1 Cases reopened	<3	<4%	2 Other	<7	<9½%
	Number	%							
1 Cases reopened	<3	<4%							
2 Other	<7	<9½%							

7 Expenditure against budget																													
Purpose: The Commission is required to operate within its delegated budget. A key indicator of financial management is the extent to which expenditure in the period is aligned with the delegated budget. Whilst overspends are not permitted, efficient use of resources requires that the budget available is fully utilised.																													
Definition: Total expenditure less delegated budget, based on DEL and measured separately for resource near-cash, resource non-cash and capital, expressed as an amount and as a percentage of budget.																													
Calculation: Forecast for the year to date.																													
Frequency: Monthly																													
Data source: Management accounts.																													
Plan:																													
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">Amount</th> <th colspan="2">Budget %</th> </tr> <tr> <th>≤</th> <th>≥</th> <th>≤</th> <th>≥</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Resource:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Near-cash</td> <td>£0</td> <td>-£135K</td> <td>0%</td> <td>-2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Non-cash</td> <td>£0</td> <td>-£15k</td> <td>0%</td> <td>-2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital</td> <td>£0</td> <td>-£15k</td> <td>0%</td> <td>-12.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Amount		Budget %		≤	≥	≤	≥	Resource:					Near-cash	£0	-£135K	0%	-2%	Non-cash	£0	-£15k	0%	-2%	Capital	£0	-£15k	0%	-12.5%
		Amount		Budget %																									
	≤	≥	≤	≥																									
Resource:																													
Near-cash	£0	-£135K	0%	-2%																									
Non-cash	£0	-£15k	0%	-2%																									
Capital	£0	-£15k	0%	-12.5%																									

8 Staff absence

Purpose:

The extent to which staff and Commissioners are absent affects the productivity of the Commission and its ability to achieve its casework targets.

Definition:

The aggregate number of days of employee and Commissioner absence (other than for normal annual leave, public holidays, unpaid leave and sabbaticals), divided by the full time equivalent number of employees and Commissioners, recorded separately for sickness absence and other causes of absence.

Calculation:

Recorded for the current period and for the year to date.

Frequency:

Monthly

Data source:

Internally generated data based on personnel records.

Plan:

Sickness absence: < 9 days per annum
Other: <3 days per annum