



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

**CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2015 – 2018**

www.copfs.gov.uk



OUR PURPOSE

Securing Justice for the people of Scotland

OUR VISION

To be the world leading public prosecution and death investigation service

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- > Improving Quality
- > Optimising Resources
- > Delivering Efficiency

OUR VALUES

- > Being Professional
- > Showing Respect

OUR OBJECTIVES

- > criminal cases are effectively and independently investigated and prosecuted or have other proportionate action taken in the public interest
- > deaths which need further explanation are appropriately and promptly investigated
- > financial gain achieved by criminal means is removed from criminals using proceeds of crime laws
- > a level of service which takes account of individual needs and characteristics is provided to all
- > victims, nearest relatives and witnesses and those accused of an offence are treated with dignity and respect

OUR ENABLERS

- > People
- > Digital
- > Improvement
- > Collaborative Working
- > Finance



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FOREWORD

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is Scotland's sole prosecution service. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and decide what action to take in the public interest, including whether to prosecute. We also look into deaths that need further explanation and investigate allegations of criminal conduct against police officers.

This Strategic Plan describes what we aim to deliver over the period 2015-2018 and the underlying priorities. These are set against the backdrop of legal reforms, both past and planned, changes in the patterns of criminal behaviour and developments in our business practices. And, in particular, the ever increasing use of technology and moving towards more functional working, with increasing use of specialists for particular types of cases.

Our purpose is to secure justice for the people of Scotland. We are committed to playing our part in making Scotland a safer place to live and we will demonstrate that by prosecuting crime independently and impartially in the public interest.

We will continue to work with other parts of the criminal justice system to develop ever more productive working arrangements, performing a key role in the implementation of the various reforms to criminal law and procedure underway and planned in the years ahead, especially improving the quality of justice for victims and witnesses.



And we want to ensure our staff are properly equipped to cope with the challenges ahead and remain skilled, motivated and engaged. To that end, improved leadership and management training, together with training in technical skills, form major strands of our people strategy.

Each element of this Strategic Plan is designed to support our purpose to secure justice for the people of Scotland and I am confident that, by working together, we will do so.

Catherine Dyer
Crown Agent

THE STRATEGY FOR JUSTICE IN SCOTLAND

We contribute both directly and by working collaboratively with other parts of the justice system to deliver the Scottish Government's Strategy for Justice in Scotland. This aims to deliver a justice system that contributes positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping to create an inclusive and respectful society, in which all people and communities live in safety and security, individual and collective rights are supported, and disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly.

The Strategy for Justice sets the following priorities:

- > reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime
- > tackling hate crime and sectarianism
- > supporting victims and witnesses
- > increasing public confidence and reducing the fear of crime.

It identifies a number of Justice Outcomes which describe what the strategy is aiming to achieve. Through its objectives, COPFS contributes to the following Justice Outcomes:

- > we experience low levels of crime and low levels of fear, alarm and distress
- > we are at a low risk of unintentional harm
- > our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities
- > our public services are fair and accessible
- > our institutions and processes are effective and efficient
- > our public services respect the rights and voice of users.

SECURING JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND

We play a pivotal role in the justice system, working with others to make Scotland safer from crime, disorder and danger. The public interest is at the heart of all we do as independent prosecutors. We take into account the diverse needs of victims, witnesses, communities and the rights of those accused of crime.

Our workload has been increasing over recent years, with reports received increasing by 5% since 2009-2010 to 303,221. The nature of the cases being reported to us has changed, with our receiving more complex cases, such as sexual offences cases, which require more investigation and more resources to prosecute than other types of cases. This trend is shown by the increased numbers of cases going to trial. Our response to this has been to enhance the prosecution of cases by the introduction of specialist prosecutors and specialist investigation units and we will continue to consider whether this can be developed further. Currently we have units which specialise in appeals, cold cases, economic crime, confiscation of the proceeds of crime, deaths that need further explanation, domestic abuse; environmental and wildlife law, health and safety matters, international cases, serious and organised crime and sexual crimes.

The world in which we operate is changing. Criminal justice will be reformed in the coming years as recommendations are implemented from the reviews by Lord Carloway and Sheriff Principal Bowen, together with the advent of the Victims & Witnesses Act and the new court structures being introduced by the Scottish Court Service. All these reforms, together with the Scottish Government's Making Justice Work Programme, the Justice Strategy for Scotland, the Justice Digital Strategy and the Scottish Justice Quality Framework, will have significant implications for how we go about our business. In addition, public sector funding is under severe pressure and this is likely to continue into the future.

The Law Officers' priorities over the period of this plan are to contribute to **IMPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY, REDUCED INDIVIDUAL HARM and ENHANCED ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING**, in line with the over-arching Justice Vision of contributing positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping to create an inclusive and respectful society in which all people and communities live in safety and security with individual and collective rights being supported and disputes resolved fairly and swiftly.

This includes tackling inequality and protecting human rights. Operational priorities make it clear that prosecutors are targeting hate crime, domestic abuse, stalking and sexual offending, all of which involve significant equalities issues for those who have protected characteristics across all sections of society.

And we are helping families of victims obtain justice by pursuing so-called “cold cases” – historic unsolved homicides – and taking advantage of the ability to prosecute cases using the double jeopardy legislation.

Given the context described above, we need to continue our transformation programme if we are going to maintain delivery of a high quality prosecution service. In making best use of digital technologies we will continue to ensure compliance with legislative and information assurance requirements governing the management, use and sharing of data and with our records management plan developed under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011. In addition, we need to ensure that our policies and practices allow us to keep abreast of changing patterns of criminal behaviour.

To deliver our objectives successfully we will be a Service that:

- > develops highly capable, skilled and specialist staff at all levels who are deployed appropriately
- > delivers casework supported by effective quality standards and consistent operating methods
- > works efficiently, supported by enhanced systems, structures and processes, making best use of digital technologies, to improve the way we operate
- > disrupts and deters criminal activity by denying serious and organised crime groups the profits of crime.

And which observes and seeks to promote our core values of:

- > **being professional:** working with pride, always acting with integrity and taking personal responsibility to provide high standards of service
- > **showing respect:** being open and sensitive to the needs and ideas of others, treating people fairly and welcoming diversity.



DELIVERY – WHAT AND HOW

What we will deliver is a world leading public prosecution and death investigation service which secures justice for the people of Scotland through our **Objectives:**

- > criminal cases are effectively and independently investigated and prosecuted or have other proportionate action taken in the public interest
- > deaths which need further explanation are appropriately and promptly investigated
- > financial gain achieved by criminal means is removed from criminals using proceeds of crime laws
- > a level of service which takes account of individual needs and characteristics is provided to all
- > victims, nearest relatives and witnesses and those accused of an offence are treated with dignity and respect.

How we will deliver is through our Guiding Principles, which we have adopted to focus our activities, and through our Enablers which will underpin and support delivery. In addition, we will work with colleagues in the justice sector and with other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve the operation of the whole justice system. Leadership has a key role in ensuring delivery of our objectives so that, in addition, we will be focusing on developing leadership and management training, to ensure staff have the skills they need.

IMPROVING QUALITY

We will continue to implement our Improvement Strategy and to streamline and simplify processes; improve the quality of work at every stage through professional competence in process delivery to defined quality standards, ensuring cases are well prepared; we will play our part in the Scottish Justice Quality Framework and the Making Justice Work programme to improve Justice Outcomes.

OPTIMISING RESOURCES

We will ensure that our resources are used to best effect so that we have the right people, doing the right things at the right time in the right way; we will undertake workforce and organisational analysis to ensure we have the structures, capability, specialist skills and professional standards needed; we will provide the leadership, training and development required to support staff.

DELIVERING EFFICIENCY

We will further improve and innovate our IT systems and services to support business delivery by enhancing our IT infrastructure, delivering efficient and dynamic platforms and technologies, developing integrated and innovative corporate and business application systems. We will review our estate, to ensure we both align with new Court structures and operate cost-effectively. And we will undertake a Change Programme to deliver enhanced efficiency and cost effectiveness.

KEY DELIVERABLES

Key deliverables over the Strategic Plan period include:

LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

We are developing a leadership and management development strategy that will provide the knowledge and skills to effectively lead change, and create a culture of continuous performance improvement delivered by managers with the skills and confidence to undertake their roles effectively.

This leadership development approach has been specifically designed to address the leadership challenges we face over the next three years at an organisational, team and individual level, as well as tackling the front-line management skills that are critical to deliver the level of service expected by our stakeholders.

The combination of strong, focused leadership and well trained, capable managers will make the difference in our ability to deliver our strategic outcomes

PUBLIC CONTACT AND INFORMATION

We will review the way in which we provide information to the public and those who come into contact with us, including the use of technology, in order to improve the quality of service we provide, meet the needs of our diverse communities and allow for changes to be made on the basis of feedback received.

VICTIMS' RIGHT TO REVIEW

Being a victim of a crime can be traumatic and have an emotional impact. Where a crime has been reported and this has been considered by the Procurator Fiscal, it is appropriate that the victim is made aware of a decision to take no action and the reason for this if they have expressed a wish to be informed of such a decision. This also applies where we have taken proceedings but thereafter decided not to continue with those proceedings. This obligation, which is now enshrined in Section 4 of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014, will be implemented in an effective and proportionate way.

REVIEW OF PROSECUTION POLICIES

We will continue to regularly review potential options around prosecution policy to ensure improved quality of decision-making, based on an outcome-focused approach so that cases are being dealt with appropriately. We will ensure that other parts of the justice system are made aware of the likely impact of any changes.

INVESTIGATING DEATHS

We are working with the National Health Service, National Services Scotland to implement the electronic reporting of deaths to us by medical staff. It is anticipated that the roll out of this new system will be complete by the end of 2015. In addition, we are working to secure access to the electronic records system used by the NHS, in order that pathologists can obtain medical records more easily, thereby speeding up processes and allowing pathologists to make best use of the information available. We are also encouraging the use of view and grant procedures in as many cases as possible, with the aim of reducing the numbers of post mortems and the distress to relatives.

INITIAL CASE PROCESSING HUB

The key function of initial case processing is to make first time autonomous decisions on crimes reported to us at summary level. The skills and competences required for that differ from those required for other aspects of our work and it has been decided that initial case processing should be provided with its own distinct leadership focused on the delivery of that activity. It is intended therefore to create an initial case processing hub to deliver an improved focus and consistency in the initial stages of handling cases reported to us. Current plans are to move to centralised management of this work from April 2015, while consideration is being given to transferring this work to one or more centralised hubs over the course of the plan period.

NATIONAL HIGH COURT HUB

With the reduction in the number of locations at which the High Court sits, we are commencing a review of how we carry out High Court work, in order to ensure the continued effectiveness and efficiency in the way in which we manage this aspect of our business. Initial thoughts are that we would move to a national High Court function before 2018 but that is dependant upon the outcome of the forthcoming review.

FUTURE SHAPE

Following the introduction of Federation and greater functional working in 2012, we have undertaken a review of those arrangements. This is to enable us to assess how far the changes made so far are supporting quality in our decision-making and efficiency and whether these arrangements will continue to provide us with the best structures in the future.

We are setting up a programme to include work on implementing proposals that arise from the review recommendations, this programme will link in to the other changes underway such as the moves to nationally managed ICP and High Court hubs (as detailed above) as well as other improvement projects.

ENABLERS

Delivery of our objectives is supported by focused activity in five areas. These describe what will be done over the period to March 2018 that will support the delivery of the guiding principles and ultimately our objectives. These activities will be kept under review to ensure that our approach and activities remain relevant.

PEOPLE

We will ensure that our staff have the knowledge, skills and capability to deliver a high quality, cost efficient service.

Key elements are:

- > **leading and managing:** preparing and delivering leadership and management development programmes to support leaders and managers in delivering our priorities and objectives and contributing to overall success

- > **developing:** ensuring staff have the skills and knowledge they require for their role and future roles
- > **recognising:** giving positive feedback to staff on work well done and supporting those who require additional training
- > **employing:** ensuring that there is clarity over job roles and responsibilities and having clear and transparent recruitment and deployment arrangements in place
- > **engaging:** ensuring that staff have confidence and are empowered and trusted to deliver a world-class, cost-effective prosecution service
- > **fairness:** maintaining and updating a suite of people policies that provide protection and fairness for staff throughout their careers, and that promotes equality and diversity in our internal and external relations.

DIGITAL

We will ensure that we deliver and support a portfolio of efficient, resilient, innovative and secure IT systems.

Key elements are:

- > **responding to business needs and strategic priorities:** providing flexible and agile IT resources and solutions that allows enhanced and sustained organisational performance
- > **corporate processes and business solutions:** implementing innovative business and applications solutions to increase operational efficiency and to deliver customer focused digital services
- > **robust and flexible IT infrastructure and information systems:** creating enterprise architecture that enables structured and seamless access to information, creating opportunities for innovative new digital business models to underpin the effective delivery of digital services
- > **people and skills:** aligning and focusing the core competencies, digital capabilities and skills of staff with the delivery of operational and strategic aims.

IMPROVEMENT

We will ensure our systems and processes are robust and fit for purpose to meet the expectations and requirements of all our key stakeholders, both internal and external.

Key elements are:

- > **tablets in court:** delivering paperless prosecution case presentation in summary courts initially, through the use of electronic tablets
- > **online secure access for victim and witness case information:** delivering applications online for our stakeholders, eg, updated case progress information for victims and witnesses, including access to their witness statements
- > **digital evidence store:** sharing images and CCTV evidence in the most efficient and cost-effective manner by providing a digital evidence store so that such evidence can be viewed from any location and inserted into appropriate documentation as required.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Successful delivery of our objectives will require effective partnership working across a range of stakeholder organisations, as part of the Strategy for Justice in Scotland. This will support the effective operation of the justice system and the achievement of shared outcomes.

Key elements are:

- > **digitised justice systems:** we will play a full part in the Digital Strategy for Justice in Scotland, including working with Police Scotland and the Scottish Court Service to encourage digital evidence presentation, the use of video links and mobile devices; we will continue to develop and innovate our existing digital systems and processes to further enhance the services we provide to customers and stakeholders
- > **equality and diversity:** working jointly to tackle under-representation across criminal justice workforces and promote criminal justice agencies as inclusive employers and service providers, delivering unconscious bias training and improving access to justice

- > **legislative changes:** work with justice bodies to deliver the planned legislative programme, including court reform, criminal justice reform and support to victims and witnesses
- > **reducing adjournments:** consider with other justice agencies ways in which repeated adjournments (commonly referred to as “churn”) can be reduced without adversely affecting the rights of victims and the accused.

FINANCE

We will support the delivery of business priorities by ensuring that the level of funding secured is distributed appropriately and that we can continually demonstrate Best Value.

Key elements are:

- > **finance skills:** ensuring all managers across COPFS are clear about their financial responsibilities and are suitably skilled to meet them
- > **financial management:** embedding Finance Business Partners who will support Budget Holders and Budget Managers to make the optimum use of the resources allocated to them to meet the business priorities
- > **finance systems and processes:** continually reviewing and streamlining all business processes to ensure that they are as efficient and effective as they can be
- > **procurement:** enhancing our procurement capability, ensuring that we seek to improve value for money and efficiency and promoting equality and diversity in our suppliers.



MONITORING DELIVERY

This Strategic Plan sets out our objectives and strategic principles over the period 2015 to 2018. Delivery plans are developed each year as part of our annual planning process and are monitored by the Executive Board at its monthly meetings and by the Strategic Board at its quarterly meetings.

Overall responsibility for delivery of this plan rests with the Executive Board. Collaborative Justice-wide initiatives will be managed and monitored through the Scottish Government's Justice Board and the associated Making Justice Work Programme.

REPORTING

A report on performance and expenditure for each financial year is provided in the COPFS Annual Report and Accounts.

To comply with our public sector general equality duty, we will report on the representation of our workforce and monitor the impact of our Employment and Prosecution policies on Protected Groups as defined by The Equality Act of 2010. We will also report on progress to meet the specific duties set by the Scottish Parliament in 2012. The Scottish Government publish a range of statistics, including hate crimes.

We also report on sustainability and how we have reduced our impact on the environment in support of the Scottish Government's Greener Scotland objectives.

OPENNESS

We will be open and transparent on the progress of the delivery of our strategic priorities and objectives: by publishing information on our website; by engaging with our stakeholders; and by communicating with the media. There will be regular communication and engagement with staff to ensure they are properly equipped and informed to deliver the Strategic Plan objectives.

RISK MANAGEMENT

We have a formal Risk Management Framework in place, with risks being monitored regularly by a Risk Management Group, chaired by a senior Risk Champion, comprising representatives of each business area and a Non-Executive Director. Risks are also reviewed regularly by the Executive Board and the Audit & Risk Committee. Responsibility for management of individual risks is delegated to specific risk owners with actions monitored and reported.

REVIEW

The Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure the strategic approach remains appropriate.

ANNEX

KEY FACTS FOR 2013-14

CASELOAD

In 2013-14 we:

- > received 303,221 reports (293,672 criminal reports and 9,549 death reports), a 4% increase on the previous year
- > had 36,552 charges with a domestic abuse aggravator reported to us, a 35% increase on 2012-13
- > had 7,479 sexual offences charges reported to us, a 12% increase on 2012-13
- > placed 10,255 cases on petition, of which 1,595 were later reduced to summary, giving a net total of 8,660, a 16% increase on the previous year
- > concluded 34 Fatal Accident Inquiries
- > had 601 disposals in the High Court, a 1% increase in total but there was a 16% increase in trials
- > had 4,750 Sheriff & Jury disposals, 2% less than the previous year but trial numbers increased by 8%
- > had 55,395 Sheriff Summary disposals, a 2% increase in total but had an 8% increase in trials
- > had 36,095 JP Court disposals, a 10% increase, with a 15% increase in trials
- > issued 7,785 Warning Letters, a 40% decrease
- > issued 753 Compensation Orders, the fourth yearly reduction
- > had a total of 121,494 non-court disposals, a 6% decrease
- > cited 341,449 witnesses, including 184,949 police witnesses
- > exceeded all our performance targets.

A range of statistics can be found on our website: www.copfs.gov.uk

FINANCES

During 2013-14 we spent £107.874m. Of this:

- > £67.542m was spent on staff;
- > £40.332m on other administration costs – of this:
 - £15.805m was spent on obtaining expert reports and witness costs
 - £9.075m was spent on office running costs, including utilities, rent, rates, etc.

STAFFING

As at 31 March 2014:

- > we had 1,532 staff in post on a full time equivalent basis (FTE), compared to 1,486 in 2007
- > of these, 68% were women, compared to 53.3% across the Civil Service as a whole
- > women represented 50% of our Senior Civil Service compared to 37.4% across the Civil Service
- > 4.9% of staff have declared themselves to have a disability, compared to 8.6% across the Civil Service
- > the level of sickness absence is currently 8.5 days per member of staff, compared with 8.7 days per person for the public sector and 7.2 days for the private sector, as reported by CIPD.

DEALING WITH REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

During 2013-14, as well as making a range of material available proactively under our Publication Scheme:

- > we responded to 333 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and carried out 47 FOI reviews
- > we responded to 59 subject access requests under the Data Protection Act
- > we answered 317 items of Ministerial Correspondence to the Law Officers, of which 183 were Official Replies.



Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service head office:

Crown Office
25 Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1LA

Email: enquiry@copfs.gov.uk

Telephone:

01389 739 557

Calls can be made through RNID Typetalk.
Please prefix our telephone number with 18001

Deaf sign language users should text on
07825 280346, specifying if you would prefer
your reply by sms, text or email.

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Our role in your community is a DVD resource which explains the
role of Scottish prosecutors and is free to download from the COPFS
website. Images from the DVD, which included actors to illustrate
scenes, have been used in this publication.