

London Criminal Justice Board - 14 June 2023

Minutes

Key information

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Attendees and Apologies

- Sophie Linden, DMPC (Chair)
- Diana Luchford, MOPAC
- Claire Waxman, MOPAC
- Will Balakrishnan, MOPAC
- Tamara Barnett, MOPAC
- Connie Stygall, MOPAC
- Kenny Bowie, MOPAC
- Brendan Charnock, MOPAC
- Paul Dawson, MOPAC
- Debbie Weekes-Bernard, GLA
- Cmdr Nick John, MPS
- DAC Ade Adelekan, MPS
- Jo Towens, HMCT
- Lionel Idan, CPS South
- Barry Hughes, CPS North
- Hesham Puri, Defense Council
- Casey Jenkins, Defense Council
- Kilvinder Vigurs, Probation
- Clare Ansdell, Probation
- Amy Hudspith, BTP

- Mo Foster, HMPPS
- Henry Smithers, YJB
- Helen Isaac, City of London Police
- Richard Riley, City of London Police
- Umer Khan, City of London Police
- Andrea Simon, EVAW
- Dr Natalie Byrom, Justice Lab
- Lee Ede, National Trading Standards
- Tim Craine, Home Office

Apologies

- Ian Bickers, London Prisons Group
- Fiona Taylor, London Councils
- Lib Peck, VRU
- Sinead Dervin, NHS London
- Althea Loderick, London Councils
- AC Matt Twist, MPS
- Stephen McAllister, HMCTS

1. Item 1 - Welcome, minutes and previous actions

There was agreement for the previous minutes and the DMPC advised that a redacted copy has been uploaded on the MOPAC website.

MOPAC Head of Partnerships went through the LCJB completed actions

2. Item 2 - Trust and Confidence LCJB Actions

Backlogs

The CPS updated that the Magistrates Court is now fully recovered from the pandemic. There are other aspects of performance in the Magistrates Court which require improvement and are not in the same place as they were pre-pandemic. Crown Court backlogs are still at a high level; now approximately double than they were at the start of the pandemic. Compared with the peak of the pandemic in 2020-2022, the London Crown Court

workload increased by about 100 cases every month, now it's decreasing by approximately 50 cases every month which is a significant improvement. However, some cases that would normally be dealt with in the Magistrates Court are now appearing in the Crown Court. London has the lowest figures in England and Wales for court first hearings and early guilty pleas, which is an area for improvement.

The CPS are rolling out a new model from the 30th June, the Operational Recovery and Improvement Programme (ORIP) Revised Crown Court Unit Operating Toolkit. This means the CPS will be required to make sure cases charged are court ready so that courts can manage cases more effectively, and the CPS can engage with the defense early.

HMCTS have been given indicative sitting day numbers for this year and it is likely that there will be similar sitting day numbers to last year. HMCTS raised that this means there could be more pressure placed on criminal justice partners, being conscious of the issue of low barrister and judiciary numbers.

HMCTS noted that ineffective trial rates are an objective of the Crown Court recovery board, and the need to prioritize this work to place the CJS in a better position to clear the backlog. The issue of prisoners being conveyed to court and the lack of use of video links/courts will also be addressed at the LCJB backlogs group.

HMCTS added that at the end of the last financial year, London bucked the national trend where cases are rising, by reducing its backlog. HMCTS highlighted that this shows how 'heavy' courts have been sitting to get to that point, recognizing that there is still a lot to do but the importance of acknowledging partnership efforts across the criminal justice system in London.

Case file quality

The CPS shared that the latest data for file quality are the lowest figures seen which show file quality is not yet improving. The Met's Criminal Justice Gold Group is addressing the issue of case file quality and reviewing problems linked to CONNECT. The MPS are also adopting good practice from the Cambridgeshire Constabulary case file quality model with trials currently taking place on 3 BCUs to assess the impact before considering up-scaling, because of the volume of cases that go through the Met compared to Cambridgeshire.

Hate Crime

The LCJB hate crime task and finish group first met in March and are due to meet for the second time in July. The first meeting was a scoping exercise, and the second meeting will look to try and address the inconsistent approach to hate crime dependent on BCU hate crime units, and good practice learning from CPS case audits.

3. Item 3 - Public Trust and Confidence in the CJS

Paul Dawson, MOPAC Evidence & Insight Unit, noted it is known from wider surveying at MOPAC that individuals that have trust and confidence in the police, are more likely to support the police and obey the law. The presentation looked at whether those principles hold true and if those people have trust and confidence in the wider CJS. The work and data discussed is driven by questions in the Public Attitude Survey (PAS) which is a MOPAC survey of around 19,200 people a year; there are a couple of questions in this on the CJS. In the Crime Survey for England and Wales there are only a couple of questions on the CJS around effectiveness and fairness. This was presented as an opportunity to set and test ambition for more types of data to look at trust and confidence across the CJS. The data presentation was circulated with the LCJB papers.

4. Item 4 - Trust and Confidence of Women in the CJS – spotlight on Domestic Abuse.

Due to time constraints, this item has been carried forward to the September LCJB.

5. Item 5 - Victims

Item 5a. Victims and Prisoners Bill

The Victims & Prisoners Bill had its second reading in the house of commons on the 15th May and is now moving onto the committee stage which starts on the 20th June and concludes on 13th July. In the initial stages, the Mayor's Office and The Victims Commissioner's Office with MOPACs support have made clear various aspects of the Bill which could be improved and strengthened.

The Independent Victims' Commissioner stated that the key issue being looked at and worked on with partners is around the lack of enforceability still within the Bill. The Independent Victims Commissioner added that another key issue that many partners including EAW are working on this campaign is Victims Right to Privacy.

EAW shared that the proposals in the Bill haven't inspired confidence in the VAWG sector as to whether it can improve circumstances for victims and survivors of VAWG and feel it needs significant revisions and amendments. EAW would like to see greater protection and support for migrant women, stronger enforcement of the Victims Code and for independent legal advice and legal protection for therapy records to be introduced within the Victims Bill for survivors of RASSO.

Dr Natalie Byrom, Justice Lab presented a proposal for a Unique Identifier number for Victims as key to delivering existing plans in London to enhance victim care and support. The next steps are to identify pilot areas to test and refine this proposal and to work with agencies to understand the operational opportunities and challenges for implementation.

Item 5b. Victim Care Hub

There was discussion about what a Victims Care Hub for London might look like, and the idea of a pilot for RASSO victims which came to light from the recent CPS strategic needs assessment. The MPS discussed plans for their end-to-end victim care programme to highlight the need to consider any duplication. There was agreement from partners to discuss the concept of a Victims Care Hub pilot further based on the need for a partnership approach to improve victim care across the criminal justice system.

Item 5c. National Fraud Strategy

The Home Office presented the National Fraud Strategy published in May 2023 and gave an overview of the work the government is doing to tackle fraud against individuals and businesses.

National Trading Standards presented on the Multi-Agency Approach to Fraud (MAAF) and the value of pursuing this in London. National Trading Standards are in the early stages of developing this in partnership with the Met's BCU South and Victim Services.

6. Item 6 - AOB

There was no other business.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 12th September, 2-4pm.

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