

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA)

- HMICA inspects and reports to the Lord Chancellor on the system that supports the business of the Crown Court, county courts and magistrates' courts and the services provided for those courts. These courts are administered by Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS).
- We are an independent inspectorate sponsored by the Ministry of Justice.
- HMICA is not empowered to inspect persons making judicial decisions or exercising judicial discretion.
- Our programme of inspections may look at a specific HMCS Area or a particular theme of the work of the courts across England and Wales, highlighting good practice and making recommendations where things could be improved.

Inspection looks at how effectively an organisation works - from its leadership and management through to the administrative processes in place - and how it delivers the services it is there to provide.

During our inspections we gather information, not only from the courts, but from those who the courts serve - partners, stakeholders and the public.

Our inspections provide assurance to Ministers and the public about the safe and proper delivery of services and contribute to improvement. A report is produced after each inspection. They are public documents and are available on our website www.hmica.gov.uk.

Scope of HMICA's Work in Inspecting Court Administration

In order to inspect court administration the inspectorate has identified the following key themes for inspection, we call this our inspection framework:

- **Leadership, Strategy and Planning** - How far the organisation and its leaders work with stakeholders to set a clear sense of direction, supported by relevant policies, plans and objectives.
- **People** - How the organisation manages, develops and releases the knowledge and potential of its staff.
- **Management of Resources** - How the organisation manages its resources to support its strategy, policies and processes.
- **Key Business Processes and Services** - How the organisation plans, manages and implements its processes to meet the needs of customers and other partners.
- **Partner and Stakeholder Services** - How the organisation understands and tries to meet the needs of its customers, partners and stakeholders
- **Performance and Impact** - How far the organisation delivers its objectives and meets or exceeds its standards and targets including delivery of Equality and Diversity objectives.

The Ten Principles of Inspection

HMICA is guided by overall government policy on inspection of public bodies.

For us this means:

- 1 Improvement** - HMICA's main priority is to contribute to the improvement of the inspected body.
- 2 Outcomes** - HMICA's focus is on the overall impact of service delivered to court users.
- 3 Perspective** - HMICA focuses on the experience of the service user.
- 4 Risk** - HMICA inspections target the greatest risks that could affect good outcomes for users.
- 5 Self-Assessment** - HMICA considers Self Assessment by the inspected body, supported by relevant evidence, to be a key element of inspection and challenges this during the inspection.
- 6 Evidence** - HMICA uses impartial evidence during inspections and ensures that the evidence used is validated and credible.
- 7 Disclosure** - HMICA will disclose the criteria used to form judgements.
- 8 Openness** - HMICA is open about the processes used in inspection, takes any complaints seriously and has robust quality assurance processes.
- 9 Value for Money** - HMICA has regard to value for money in all aspects of the inspection process.
- 10 Continuous Improvement** - HMICA endeavours to continually learn from experience in order to become increasingly effective.

HMICA Work

Improving Outcomes for Service Users

Area based Inspections - these focus on all or some court services within a particular area.

Thematic Inspections - these focus on a particular theme, in order to identify examples of good practice or see how improvements could be made. In the past topics have included: fine enforcement, custody arrangements, feedback & complaints and internal communication within HMCS.

Joint Inspections - with other inspectorates such as:

- Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Ofsted

These focus on how different parts of the criminal, civil or family justice systems work together.

Advice - the inspectorate offers advice, on how to improve outcomes for service users, to the Ministry of Justice and HMCS as well as to other professional bodies and organisations. This advice is based on our inspection framework and inspection findings.

Participation - the inspectorate meets requests for participation in appropriate professional events whenever possible, for example: speaking engagements and contributing to training events.

How to Contact HMICA

Publications - All HMICA publications are available on our website www.hmica.gov.uk. Alternatively, printed copies may be obtained, subject to availability, from:

HMICA

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This leaflet can be provided, on request, in Braille, larger print and languages other than English.

For information please contact the Communications & Knowledge Management Team at the above address.

Contributing to a better
justice system through
excellence in inspection

An Introduction

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