

## GOOD PRACTICE

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# Improving the Criminal Justice System – lessons from local change projects



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## Summary

**1** This good practice report has been produced jointly by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, and the National Audit Office. It should be of general interest to those working in the Criminal Justice System, and of particular interest to those who are looking to embark on a local improvement project involving multiple agencies.

**2** While activities within the Criminal Justice System are carried out in a relatively standard manner, there is still scope for local improvement projects whose aim is to improve the way that various agencies work together and to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. We reviewed three such local improvement projects:

- In Kent, an attempt to improve the way that the various agencies prepare for Crown Court trials.
- In Northumbria, a partnership between the Local Criminal Justice Board and a third sector body, which supports Black and Minority Ethnic women who have experienced domestic abuse, honour-based violence and forced marriage.
- In Warwickshire, the creation of the Justice Centre in Leamington Spa as a 'one-stop shop' for victims, witnesses, suspects and the wider community.

**3** The report is structured according to four standard stages of a project: planning, initiating, conducting, and measuring success. Within each stage, it sets out a number of good project management principles. The report then draws out, under each principle, specific examples of good practice emerging from the projects that we reviewed.

**4** While very few projects can claim to be completely successful in every regard, the projects that we examined have achieved some considerable successes. They have done so because of the enthusiasm of the project teams, who demonstrated:

- a structured and well-planned approach;
- strong leadership; and
- a willingness to engage with all relevant stakeholders.

**5** The report has been written for the specific purpose of drawing out good practice on the three projects. As such, it is not intended to be an evaluation of the wider performance of the local areas visited. However, where some further investment in a project could yield additional benefits, we clearly state that this is the case.

# Part One

## Background

### The Criminal Justice System

**1.1** The Criminal Justice System (CJS), overseen by the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Office, is intended to cut crime, protect the public and bring offenders to justice. It encompasses the functions of the police, prosecution, courts and judiciary, prisons, youth justice services and probation. It involves the prevention and detection of crime, bringing criminals to justice, and carrying out the orders of the court, such as collecting fines, providing rehabilitation, supervising community orders and providing custodial sentences.

**1.2** Under the current constitution and structure of government, there is no single 'owner' of the CJS. The Home Office funds and oversees police forces. The Ministry of Justice provides a range of services, including courts, prisons, youth justice services and probation, which are focused on providing access to justice and punishing and rehabilitating offenders. Responsibility for delivery falls mainly to the National Offender Management Service (prisons and probation) and HM Courts and Tribunals Service, as well as a range of other smaller specialist sponsored bodies. The Attorney General is responsible for superintending the prosecuting departments.

**1.3** The sheer number of agencies involved makes the smooth passage of criminal cases hard to achieve. Delivery partners need to work well together at national and local level, focusing on how best to achieve the overall objectives of the CJS, rather than only focusing on optimising the performance of their own organisations. Information flows can hinder the efficient passage of cases, and may not always provide sufficient information to inform future planning.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, focusing too much on the efficient passage of cases may have a negative impact on victims and witnesses.

**1.4** Until recently, it was the role of Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) to encourage more joined-up and efficient working among the CJS agencies at local level. The boards typically included representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service, police, probation, prisons and courts, and they received dedicated funding for their activities. But changed funding and accountability arrangements have led to some LCJBs merging, and others operating in a more limited way or even shutting down. It is currently unclear how the activities of local CJS agencies will be coordinated in the future, in many parts of the country.

<sup>1</sup> *Criminal justice landscape review*, October 2010, National Audit Office, available at [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1011/criminal\\_justice\\_landscape\\_rev.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1011/criminal_justice_landscape_rev.aspx)

## The authorship of this report

**1.5** The report has been prepared jointly by Her Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation and the National Audit Office.

**1.6** The remit of each of these organisations is as follows:

### **Her Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate**

Her Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate is the independent Inspectorate for the Crown Prosecution Service, the principal prosecuting authority for criminal cases in England and Wales. Its purpose is to enhance the quality of justice through independent inspection and assessment of prosecution services, and in so doing improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary**

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary is the independent Inspectorate of police forces and a range of police activity – from neighbourhood teams through to serious crime and the fight against terrorism.

### **Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation**

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation is the independent Inspectorate which assesses the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public.

### **National Audit Office**

The National Audit Office certifies the accounts of all government departments and a wide range of other public sector bodies. It also reports on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and other bodies have used their resources.

## The purpose and scope of this report

**1.7** At the most fundamental level, CJS activities are carried out in a fairly standard manner across the whole system. But there are many local variations on how specific processes are conducted, dependent on factors such as geography, organisational configuration and history, and the range of IT and other systems deployed in the area. There is therefore considerable scope to carry out local improvement projects, whose aim is to improve the way that the CJS agencies and other stakeholders work together, and ultimately to enhance efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of the public.

**1.8** This report draws out good practice lessons from three such projects. In order to provide a degree of focus, all of the projects cover the ‘front-end’ of the CJS – that is to say, crime reduction or, where a crime has been committed, the process from arrest to sentencing in court. The projects were chosen because they had achieved some combination of:

- cost reductions;
- improvements in efficiency and overall performance; and
- a better service for witnesses and victims of crime.

## Methodology

**1.9** In summer 2011, the three inspectorates and the National Audit Office decided to carry out a piece of joint work identifying lessons emerging from local CJS improvement projects. In October 2011, we wrote to the Chair and Business Manager of each LCJB, inviting them to submit potential good practice projects for consideration. We received details of ten projects in total. In December 2011, we selected three projects to be taken as case studies for this report. This selection was based on a preliminary assessment of which projects appeared to fit the review criteria. The projects that we selected were as follows:

- **Kent – Crown Court Trial Readiness and Listings Project** Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB) conducted a multi-agency ‘Lean’<sup>2</sup> event, to review the process between charging a defendant and beginning the resulting Crown Court trial. It ran a separate event specifically on the issue of Crown Court trial listing. The events highlighted a great deal of duplicated effort, and processes which yielded no value. By arranging the processes in a logical order, the number of processes was halved, and the amount of effort required to get the average case from charge to start of trial was estimated to have reduced from 92 to 46 hours. The new process aimed to deliver benefits in terms of: a more efficient and accurate process; a higher effective trial rate; improved trial readiness; and better victim and witness satisfaction.
- **Northumbria – Survivors’ Engagement, Empowerment and Development (SEED) Project** Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) set up a partnership with the Angelou Centre, a third sector organisation, to support Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women ‘survivors’ of domestic abuse, honour-based violence and forced marriage. These problems are often combined with other factors unique to BME women in the UK, and together they are referred to as ‘21st-century domestic slavery’. Through the partnership, they created a network to support women who had experienced these issues. The Centre delivered training and encouraged peer-support, to break the cycle of repeated victimisation in which many of the women had become involved.
- **Warwickshire – Justice Centre, Leamington Spa** The Justice Centre (the Centre) was created as a ‘one-stop shop’ for services to victims, witnesses, suspects and the wider community. It accommodates: 24/7 policing; shared custody (police and courts); part of the Warwickshire Crown Prosecution Service; courts; probation services and accredited training facilities; Youth Justice Service; victim and witness support services; and a head office function for the agencies. It is designed to encourage the various agencies to work in a more integrated manner, not only through co-location, but also by housing their IT, communications and business support services.

**1.10** We carried out fieldwork in January and February 2012. For each project, we interviewed key personnel and reviewed written material. In Kent and Warwickshire we also reviewed a sample of case files. The fieldwork team consisted of staff from all three inspectorates and the National Audit Office. We shared the draft report with staff involved in the three selected projects, in order to ensure accuracy and fairness.

<sup>2</sup> Lean is a business improvement tool used to enhance service delivery by eliminating waste, simplifying processes, and creating capacity to do more work with fewer resources.

**1.11** This report sets out the findings from our fieldwork. It draws good practice lessons from the projects against a framework of 12 project management principles. These principles are derived selectively from the National Audit Office's December 2011 *Guide to Initiating Successful Projects*<sup>3</sup> and more general guidance on project delivery.<sup>4</sup> The principles are:

#### **Planning the project**

- Principle 1: Be clear about your overall purpose
- Principle 2: Identify success measures
- Principle 3: Get the governance right

#### **Initiating the project**

- Principle 4: Involve the right stakeholders
- Principle 5: Use all available skills and resources
- Principle 6: Identify and mitigate potential risks

#### **Conducting the project**

- Principle 7: Seek early impacts in order to maintain momentum
- Principle 8: Communicate the benefits
- Principle 9: Actively manage setbacks

#### **Measuring success**

- Principle 10: Establish the project's overall impact
- Principle 11: Calculate cost savings if possible
- Principle 12: Identify opportunities for additional impact

**1.12** Appendices One to Three describe each of the three projects in detail: its purpose; how it was set up and conducted; what it has achieved and has yet to achieve; and lessons for those looking to run a similar project.

**1.13** The projects that were nominated by LCJBs but not selected are listed at Appendix Four.

<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1012/initiating\\_successful\\_projects.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1012/initiating_successful_projects.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Available at [http://www.nao.org.uk/help\\_for\\_public\\_services/project\\_and\\_people\\_management/project\\_delivery.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/help_for_public_services/project_and_people_management/project_delivery.aspx)



# Part Two

## Planning the project

### Principle 1: Be clear about your overall purpose

**2.1** A good project team sets out the desired outcome from the project, and perhaps also a set of priorities underlying the overall outcome. Failure to be clear about the overall purpose may confuse the various stakeholders or allow effort to be spent on activities which are of lesser benefit.

#### Kent

**2.2** Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB) members were concerned that their Trial Readiness<sup>5</sup> and Effective Trial rates<sup>6</sup> were under 50 per cent. They therefore established a project which focused very specifically on the process between charge and the start of trial. Its aim was to identify and then remove duplication and inefficiency in the process.

#### Northumbria

**2.3** Honour-based violence had become relatively high profile in 2007-08, culminating in the passing of the Forced Marriage Act. As a result, some funding was available from the Office of Criminal Justice Reform. Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) operated differently from many other boards across the country, in that it proactively looked for opportunities to carry out multi-agency work. NCJB recognised that domestic violence services for women from BME groups was an area of unmet need, and that it could help to improve these services in partnership with an appropriate third sector organisation.

#### Warwickshire

**2.4** The clear purpose of the Justice Centre was to provide a one-stop-shop for services to victims, witnesses, suspects and the wider community. The Centre would accommodate the various agencies so that the whole justice process from investigation to sentencing could be delivered.

**2.5** The Centre now houses: Warwickshire Police; part of Warwickshire Crown Prosecution Service; HMCTS (crown courts, magistrates' courts and county courts), Warwickshire Probation Trust; Warwickshire Youth Justice Service; Warwickshire Criminal Justice Board; Victim and Witness Information Partnership; Victim Support and Witness Service; and HM Coroner.

**2.6** All of Warwickshire Crown Prosecution Service was located in the Centre initially. But due to an internal reorganisation the magistrates' court unit was moved to Coventry in 2011. The Crown Court unit remains at the Centre.

<sup>5</sup> Trial Readiness denotes trials where the parties have certified that the case is fully prepared and ready to go ahead on the scheduled trial date.

<sup>6</sup> An Effective Trial is a case listed for a contested trial that goes ahead on the scheduled date as planned. An Ineffective Trial is a case listed for a contested trial that is unable to proceed on the scheduled date, and is adjourned to a later date.

## Principle 2: Identify success measures

**2.7** A good project team establishes a set of realistic achievements, which will encourage all stakeholders to commit to the project. Failure to identify success measures risks ‘gold-plating’ which drives up cost and risk. It may also lead to a lack of clarity about whether the project has reached its goal.

### Kent

**2.8** An interim success measure was to reduce the number of steps carried out by the various agencies involved in the process between charge and start of trial. But the project team recognised that the key measures were to: raise the Trial Readiness rate; improve the Effective Trial rate; and maintain or enhance victim and witness satisfaction levels.

**2.9** In quantitative terms, the project aimed to achieve:

- a Trial Readiness rate of 90 per cent or more;
- an Effective Trial rate of 61 per cent or more;
- an Ineffective Trial rate of under 14 per cent; and
- a Cracked<sup>7</sup> Trial rate of under 25 per cent.

### Northumbria

**2.10** This project, focusing entirely on helping a particular type of victim or potential victim, did not lend itself easily to quantitative success measures. NCJB determined that the project would be a success if it could support a third sector provider who would:

- establish and sustain a regional network to support women who had experienced honour-based violence, forced marriage and 21st-century domestic slavery; and
- enable such women to become self-reliant and thereby break the cycle of repeated victimisation in which they had become involved.

### Warwickshire

**2.11** An integrated Change Management Team was set up to identify the areas where improved business processes were most needed. No quantitative targets were set, but the Team concluded that duplication and unnecessary processes were most prevalent in the areas of:

- case progression;
- cross border management;
- persistent offenders;
- victim and witness support; and
- warrant management.

**2.12** A benefits management strategy was also produced, to manage the delivery of cashable and non-cashable benefits resulting from the rationalisation of the buildings, co-location, integration of functions, reduced duplication and cost reductions.

<sup>7</sup> A Cracked Trial is a case listed for a contested trial which does not proceed at all, because the defendant changes plea to guilty or pleads to an alternative charge, or because the prosecution offers no evidence.

### **Principle 3: Get the governance right**

**2.13** A good project team sets out who ‘owns’ the project and who is best placed to influence its delivery. Failure to get the governance right may diminish the chances of delivering the project to time, cost and quality, or encourage tension between stakeholders.

#### Kent

**2.14** KCJB formally owned the project, and a police superintendent was appointed as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), tasked with delivering the project and reporting back to KCJB monthly. The SRO led an Operational Delivery Group, which consisted of representatives from the key agencies – police, courts and CPS. The SRO was also supported by a Project Implementation Manager. They took a very deliberate decision to keep the governance streamlined, with only one representative from each agency involved. Another benefit of KCJB ownership was that the board’s support staff could subtly influence improvements on the front line, without it appearing that one agency was attempting to take the lead role.

**2.15** One of the Project Implementation Manager’s key roles was to maintain a log of the process changes emerging from the Lean event. The Operational Delivery Group would monitor the impact of changes as they occurred, and each change could only be ‘closed’ once they had evidence that it had been implemented and embedded.

#### Northumbria

**2.16** In 2008, NCJB had initiated an earlier project in partnership with a third sector body, to provide call centre-based support for BME survivors of honour-based violence and domestic abuse. The project failed, but its failure helped to reveal a number of governance challenges that are common to such initiatives, such as:

- tracking the quality of services being provided;
- budget control; and
- accountability to the funding body.

**2.17** At the time of the SEED Project, no similar agreements existed nationally between LCJBs and Third Sector providers. NCJB therefore drew on the expertise of a liaison officer from the Ministry of Justice’s Office of Criminal Justice Reform when setting up governance arrangements for the project. These included tightly defined monitoring periods, at the end of which a progress report was completed and funds released incrementally.

**2.18** However, effective governance of the project did not just require clear monitoring arrangements. It also depended on members of NCJB and staff at the Angelou Centre attending each other’s meetings to develop mutual trust, and the NCJB Project Coordinator working flexibly with staff from the Centre to provide the foundation for genuine partnership working.

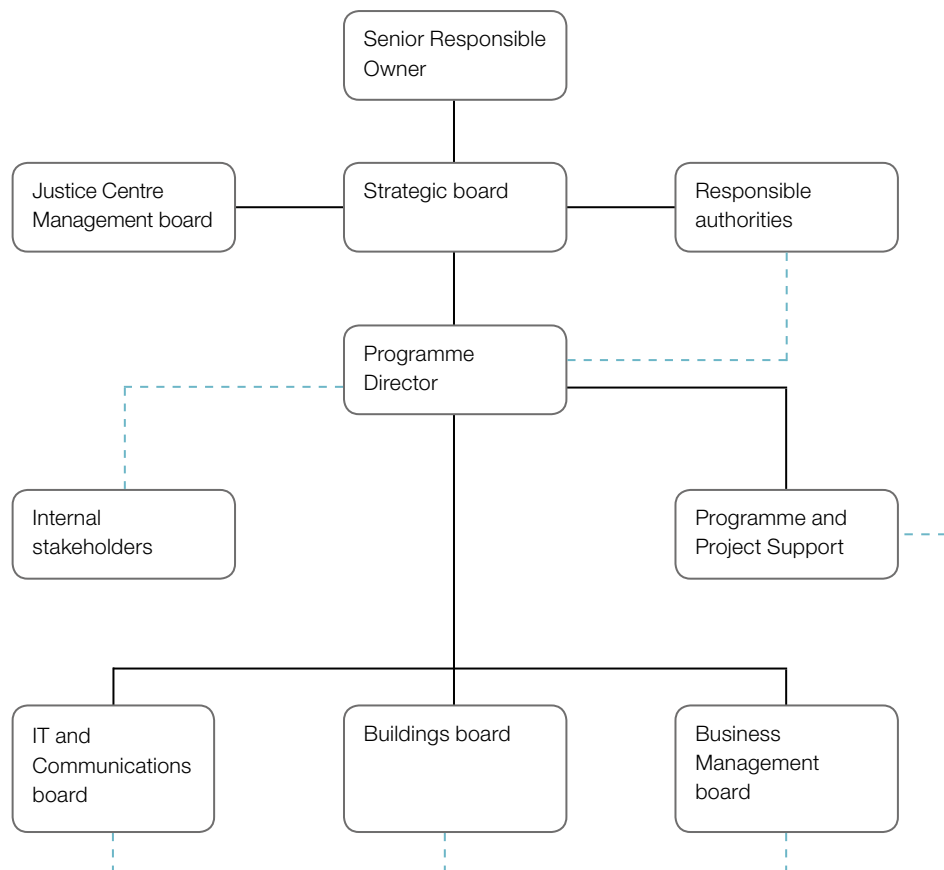
## Warwickshire

**2.19** The co-location of so many agencies presents a serious governance challenge. It was therefore necessary to create a formal structure, as set out below.

**2.20** The Senior Responsible Owner was the Chief Constable, and following his retirement his services were retained by the Police Authority until completion of the project. The Strategic Board consists of representatives from: the judiciary; Youth Justice Service, courts, CPS, police, probation, Police Authority and County Council. The Management Board has representatives from all of the main agencies occupying the building.

**Figure 1**

Governance structure for the Justice Centre, Leamington Spa



Source: Justice Centre Programme Director

# Part Three

## Initiating the project

### Principle 4: Involve the right stakeholders

**3.1** A good project team identifies all of the parties who have an inherent interest in the project. Failure to involve the right stakeholders may harm relations between parties, or increase the risk of suggested changes failing to be taken up fully.

#### Kent

**3.2** It was clear from the start of the project that police, courts and the CPS would need to be involved. But KCJB wanted the Lean event to be attended by working level staff, who know how the system works in practice and were therefore able to map every part of the process in detail. The project also benefited from the involvement of:

- Resident Judges as sponsors.
- Defence solicitors as participants in the Lean event, who provided contrasting views on how processes worked; their involvement was facilitated by KCJB's far-sighted decision to fund their attendance.

#### Northumbria

**3.3** The success of any partnership project is heavily dependent upon the strength of the partners. NCJB understood that they needed to provide a culturally appropriate response to domestic violence issues, and therefore sought out a third sector body with the right ethos.

**3.4** The Angelou Centre was established in the mid-1990s, with the aim of advancing the economic independence of women who are disadvantaged due to race, gender or age. It is one of the very few BME-led women's projects in the North East, and NCJB was impressed with the Centre's track record. NCJB also agreed with the Centre's belief that honour-based violence and 21st-century domestic slavery are, at heart, simply forms of domestic violence, and that all tools to tackle domestic violence should be exploited.

#### Warwickshire

**3.5** Recognising the importance of victims and witnesses as stakeholders is a key strength of the Justice Centre. The Victim and Witness Information Partnership also includes Victim Support, the national charity for people affected by crime. It works closely with witness care teams who identify vulnerable witnesses on first contact, and then refer them to the Partnership. An enhanced service is provided for children and vulnerable adults, including liaising with social services and showing the witness around the court prior to the trial in order to increase confidence.

**3.6** Youth justice workers in the Victim and Witness Information Partnership make contact with all victims of youth crime, to provide support and meet the requirement for referral orders to be restorative in nature. The Partnership also arranges for victim impact statements to be obtained after the victim has had the opportunity to process the impact of the offence.

**3.7** Co-location has simplified the way that victims engage with the system. Previously, they would need to contact the police about charges, the CPS about matters relating to the case, the court about listing, and probation about what would happen after the trial. Now victims have one point of contact. Vulnerable witnesses also have separate entrances to the courts, and a discrete suite of rooms with video links.

### **Principle 5: Use all available skills and resources**

**3.8** A good project team considers the additional input required across the life of the project, and acquires it at minimum cost. Failure to use all available skills and resources may allow the project to fall short of its aims, or require costly resources to be brought in at short notice.

#### Kent

**3.9** The Lean event was led by trained facilitators already employed by Kent Police. Their previous work, and the fact that one of the facilitators was a retired police officer, meant that they understood the subject matter well and were able to manage the different stakeholders more effectively. The event also took place at minimal cost, as there was no need to pay for venue hire or external consultants.

#### Northumbria

**3.10** Much of the effective practice that NCJB has followed in the SEED project was distilled from its earlier failed project. Working level staff followed PRINCE2<sup>8</sup> processes in order to manage the project. NCJB staff recognised that they could provide expertise in accessing funding and reviewing project progress, while the Angelou Centre provided highly specialised skills in supporting victims of domestic violence. As such, this was a genuine multi-agency project which deployed a range of skills and resources.

#### Warwickshire

**3.11** A similar Justice Centre had been built in Nuneaton in 2005. The team planning the Leamington Spa building were able to learn lessons from that project about how to deliver a complex building to time, budget and quality. Each chief executive led one of the project streams, ensuring senior level expertise and buy-in from the start.

**3.12** While stakeholders are divided about whether the building has led to genuine re-engineering of processes, some agencies did deploy available expertise in order to examine their working practices. HM Courts and Tribunals Service, for example, had two Lean champions who ran business mapping sessions, the outputs from which helped to influence the design of the building.

**3.13** The Resident Judge and three magistrates were involved in the design of the courts, which was permitted to diverge from the standard design guide. As a result, the courts are more open, while vulnerable individuals can leave the court without being seen if necessary.

<sup>8</sup> PRINCE2 is a well-established methodology for managing projects. It is the standard approach for public sector projects in the UK.

## **Principle 6: Identify and mitigate potential risks**

**3.14** A good project team establishes the things that could go wrong, and takes action to minimise their likelihood and impact where necessary. Failure to identify and mitigate potential risks may significantly reduce the chances of success, or force the team to incur additional costs.

### Kent

**3.15** KCJB was aware that, by concentrating on improving internal processes, the project might have a detrimental impact on victim and witness satisfaction. It therefore emphasised that improvements in trial readiness by the parties should enable cases to be listed with more certainty that they would go ahead as scheduled. This would enable trials to be listed and witnesses to be warned to attend over a shorter and more precise timescale, minimising disruption to witnesses. Thus a reserve list of cases which may need to be called, in order to fill unused court time, could potentially be abolished.

### Northumbria

**3.16** NCJB's experience of attempting to secure funding for, and work with, an alternative Third Sector provider enabled them to identify the importance of ensuring the credibility of the partner at an early stage, and identify a checklist to confirm credibility. It also prompted them to establish a process where funding was released incrementally, on the provision of management information that demonstrated progress.

### Warwickshire

**3.17** A key risk was that the judiciary might feel that they should resist involvement in the Justice Centre, due to concerns about public perceptions of their role and whether they would maintain their independence while co-located with the other agencies. The risk was mitigated by encouraging discussion between the Senior Presiding Judge and the Lord Chancellor, who worked to reassure the judiciary that their position would not be compromised.

# Part Four

## Conducting the project

### Principle 7: Seek early impacts in order to maintain momentum

**4.1** A good project team recognises that some early successes will encourage buy-in from stakeholders. Failure to seek early impacts may allow the project to stall, and encourage some parties to withdraw their support.

Kent

**4.2** The Operational Delivery Group classified the actions emerging from the Lean event as Quick Wins, Longer-Term Issues or 'Pending' (to be delivered at a later date, once buy-in had been achieved from other agencies). Each action was then assigned to a lead body. The Quick Wins focused on:

- **Communications** – encouraging electronic contact between the CPS and police, with the aim of eradicating paper memos.
- **File preparation** – compiling evidence proportionately where a guilty plea is anticipated; but also, where a not-guilty plea is expected, putting together a full file without waiting for a preliminary hearing.
- **Form redesign** – making simple changes to the forms which relate to witness lists, the availability of police officers to attend court, and exhibit lists (MG9, MG10 and MG12 forms) so that they are easier to interpret and less likely to require re-working.
- **Delivery of evidence** – producing an aide-memoire for judges, giving guidelines for the time required to provide different types of evidence, so that the courts are more likely to set realistic time frames.

**4.3** Soon after the Lean event, police case progression officers were placed in the courts to establish why processes were not flowing the way that they should. They were particularly concerned with issues relating to Plea and Case Management Hearings (PCMHs). They made a key recommendation that PCMHs should be 'block listed' – heard on a specific day set aside each with a single judge, who is provided with all papers at least a day earlier.



## **Principle 8: Communicate the benefits**

**4.4** A good project team convinces people that the effort required of them will produce results, or at least will serve a clear purpose. Failure to communicate the benefits may risk some parties starting to distance themselves from the project.

### Kent

**4.5** A short time after the main Lean event, the project team ran a communications session in order to explain to staff the changes to ways of working that had been agreed. This helped to dispel negative feeling about the purpose of the changes, and encouraged a more constructive response.

**4.6** Case progression officers from police, CPS and courts now meet regularly to discuss progress and outstanding issues. Resident Judges have given them permission to make decisions about the scheduling of cases in a way that did not happen previously.

### Northumbria

**4.7** The SEED project required effective outreach and networking activities from the start, in order to draw potential clients in. Staff at the Angelou Centre actively communicated the help available by:

- making presentations to women's organisations and community groups;
- encouraging word-of-mouth referrals from women who had previously been involved with the Centre;
- running individual advice and guidance sessions; and
- establishing a support network which draws in women from similar cultural backgrounds, who might benefit from the services being offered.

### Warwickshire

**4.8** Many of the staff involved were already enthusiastic about the project. It was identified that two groups – senior managers in HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the Youth Offending Team – had particular concerns. The project team decided to carry out a range of activities for all of the agencies involved, to communicate the benefits of co-location. They held transition workshops, and discussed the need for cultural change. Working lunches were run, led by different agencies, to explain how they carried out their work and how agencies could better operate together.

### **Principle 9: Actively manage setbacks**

**4.9** A good project team understands that, however well it is managing risk, some setbacks are inevitable. It should also have the drive to tackle problems when they arise. Failure to manage setbacks actively may diminish the chances of overall success.

#### Kent

**4.10** Sustaining the initial round of improvements proved to be difficult. Restructuring of the agencies drew attention away from the project, and three members of the project team left their posts. In 2011, KCJB decided to 'park' the project, with a view to reactivating it once organisational changes had been completed. The project was restarted in January 2012, with a workshop involving agency leads and Resident Judges. The workshop produced an updated set of actions, including a new focus on court listings. The project team has also created a working group to examine the effectiveness of preliminary hearings.

#### Northumbria

**4.11** Having identified a number of women whom it could help, the Angelou Centre organised weekly meetings for them. However, the response was very poor, and there was a risk that the project would falter at this early stage. Through individual discussions, the Centre established that the women preferred to be offered a menu of different kinds of support, rather than being labelled as 'survivors' and invited to a generic support meeting.

**4.12** Initially, the women were reluctant to talk about their experiences in a group setting, and preferred to seek out one-to-one support on an ad hoc basis. However, by running social activities and personal development sessions, the Centre has encouraged the women to grow into a network providing mutual support. The group even began to request a space of its own in which to meet.

#### Warwickshire

**4.13** The main setback was the decision by the CPS to move magistrates' courts business away from the Justice Centre. The transfer to digital files will mitigate some of the impact, but this decision demonstrates the need for improvement projects to ensure, as far as possible, that they are future-proofed.

# Part Five

## Measuring success

### Principle 10: Establish the project's overall impact

**5.1** A good project team knows, from early in the life of the project, how it will determine whether it has achieved its aims. Failure to establish the project's overall impact may leave senior stakeholders unsatisfied, and make it hard for others to learn lessons that may be crucial for future projects.

#### Kent

**5.2** The project team produced a summary paper for KCJB in September 2011, around 18 months after the original Lean event that provided the evidence-base for the project. The paper set out the key changes made, detailed results achieved, and recommendations for further action. The team also produced a short paper in January 2012 which summarised performance over the whole of 2011.

**5.3** The project team's review of 2011 performance calculated the impact on trial rates as follows:

	Target (%)	2011 actual (%)	2010 actual (%)	2011 target (numbers)	2011 actual (numbers)
Effective	61+	57.4	51.2	539	507 (32 short)
Ineffective	<14	17.1	13.3	124	153 (28 too many)
Cracked	<25	25.5	35.5	221	225 (4 too many)

**5.4** The review conceded that none of the three targets were achieved in 2011, but maintained that the progress made on Effective and Cracked Trials was a good base for further improvement. It also established the reasons provided for Ineffective and Cracked Trials. The two most common reasons for Ineffective trials were "cases not reached/insufficient cases drop out" and "defendant absent and did not proceed in absence". Almost three-quarters of Cracked Trials were due to a late guilty plea being offered for the first time. These factors are largely outside the control of the CJS agencies.

**5.5** Trial Readiness increased from 45 per cent before the project to 70 per cent during 2011. This represents an additional 250 ready trials. In addition, the Canterbury area showed a trial-ready rate of 93 per cent in January 2012. Qualitative evidence suggests that the most common reasons for failure are difficulties with prosecution witnesses and issues around disclosure. These are factors which the CJS agencies should be able to influence positively.

### Northumbria

**5.6** The SEED project is largely preventive in nature. It is therefore difficult to establish its literal impact, in terms of the negative events which have not occurred as a result of its existence.

**5.7** Nevertheless, NCJB has monitored the project's headline activity throughout, and summarises its impact as follows:

- In total, 86 women were assisted up to the end of 2011. Only one of these women has since returned to her abuser. The nature of the interventions means that there might have been significant cost to the public purse if the services had not been there.
- CJS agencies in the North East are now more connected to the local BME community.
- The local support network consists of two Angelou Centre staff and 56 women who have been helped by the project. It offers culturally and linguistically matched support for other women following their flight from abuse and subsequent resettlement.
- A regional network includes women from Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Northumberland, Stockton, Sunderland and Tyne & Wear. There is sufficient demand for monthly meetings at regional level. These meetings are supplemented by a buddy system which enables new arrivals to be supported.
- Referral by word-of-mouth is now common. Many of the women being helped have relocated from other parts of the country, recognising that there are no other centres providing this level of targeted support.

### Warwickshire

**5.8** Although the basic concept is very simple, the practical impacts of co-location are complex, and vary across the different agencies. But the project team is satisfied that the objectives in the business case have been exceeded, in financial, non-financial and performance terms. The project has facilitated a number of key achievements, including that:

- jury utilisation<sup>9</sup> has increased from 30 to 70 per cent, and Effective Trial rates have improved. The Ineffective Trial rate is 9 per cent;
- Warwickshire has significantly improved its witness care;
- the easy transfer of offenders in custody between police and courts has reduced the time taken for them to appear in court;
- there is potential for cases to be transferred from magistrates' courts to the Crown Courts and dealt with on the same day; and
- the opportunity to merge staff has been identified in the administration of the courts and the integrated offender management team.

**5.9** Clearly this project was based upon considerable capital expenditure, and some very significant major multi-agency decisions. But the transferrable message is that agencies should consider co-location opportunities when reviewing their estates strategies, even if not every agency can be involved.

<sup>9</sup> The juror utilisation rate is the number of Crown Court sitting days divided by the sum of the days in which jurors sat on a case, were present at court but did not sit, and were not required to attend.

## **Principle 11: Calculate cost savings if possible**

**5.10** A good project team identifies whether the project has saved money, and uses a robust method for setting out its conclusions. Failure to identify cost savings, in projects where such savings are important, may seriously undermine the project team's ability to claim success.

### Kent

**5.11** The Lean event suggested that the amount of effort required to get the average case from charge to start of trial could be cut by around 50 per cent. Such a reduction in effort constitutes potential savings to the CJS in Kent of around 40,000 hours per annum, or 19 FTE staff, which can be monetised at around £750,000. In addition, across the Crown Court and magistrates' courts, the Witness Care Unit spends almost half of its time dealing with the re-warning of witnesses in Warned List<sup>10</sup> cases which are not dealt with, and cases where the trial has been vacated (i.e. removed from the scheduled list shortly before the hearing date). This work costs nearly £250,000 per annum.

**5.12** The project team does not currently have the resource to establish how much of the potential saving has been realised in actual staffing numbers, or reinvested in delivering greater productivity. But it is confident that the new process has helped agencies (and particularly the police and CPS) to absorb more easily the demands of current budget constraints, while providing the framework for further performance improvements.

### Warwickshire

**5.13** The Justice Centre was a major capital project, costing around £26 million. As such, it cannot be expected to yield net savings in the short term, and many of the operational benefits relate to improved efficiency rather than direct cost savings. Nevertheless, the benefits realisation exercise carried out on completion of the project suggests that it yielded one-off non-cashable savings of over £16 million, including replacing the Crown Courts which could not be made compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, and one-off cashable savings of around £9.5 million from:

- avoiding refurbishment, maintenance and improvement costs in police properties that were vacated as part of the project; and
- the police being the lead-agency for procurement, which led to VAT benefits.

**5.14** The exercise also identified annual non-cashable savings of around £650,000 and annual cashable savings of around £800,000. The latter included savings of around:

- £275,000, arising from reduced running costs, maintenance, and transfer of data and people between sites in the Crown Court and county courts;
- £220,000 arising from estates rationalisation in the CPS; and
- £140,000 arising from the Probation Trust giving up buildings.

<sup>10</sup> A list of the cases warned to be ready to proceed during a given period, which may or may not actually be called upon, depending on the progress of other cases.

## **Principle 12: Identify opportunities for additional impact**

**5.15** A good project team assesses the outputs from the project, and makes them available to a wider audience if relevant. It also understands that further benefits can become apparent during the course of the project, and that a small amount of extra effort can yield impressive results. Failure to identify opportunities for additional impact may allow the project to fall short of its full potential.

### Kent

**5.16** Given the original aims of the project and the performance in 2011 outlined above, the reconstituted project team is clear that its current priorities are to:

- unlock the benefits for victims and witnesses of having a single, optimum-sized Warned List;
- identify why Ineffective Trial rates are increasing, and reverse this trend; and
- pursue with the judiciary the idea of abolishing most preliminary hearings.

**5.17** There is also scope for the project team to establish whether police provision of the full case file within two weeks is being achieved consistently in practice. There are differing views among the agencies as to whether this important element of the revised process is being actioned, and failure to achieve it routinely will prevent the project from being as successful as it might be.

### Northumbria

**5.18** NCJB project managers have worked with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service to develop a training package that can be used by others who might want to select a third sector partner. It focuses particularly on governance issues, financing and developing 'soft' skills.

**5.19** The local Probation Trust is reviewing its approach to those who receive statutory victim contact services and Restorative Justice. The work done on the SEED Project will inform this review, and help the Trust to develop its stance on hate crime more generally. The Trust is likely to make adjustments to its services, to ensure that they address the specific needs of female victims from BME groups.

**5.20** Additional benefit could be achieved by disseminating to CJS agencies more of the lessons learnt from dealing with the Centre's clients. For example, how police officers can better handle domestic incidents where the victim has limited English skills, the wider use of female interpreters, and problems associated with the spousal visa system.

### Warwickshire

**5.21** Senior staff involved with the Justice Centre recognise that there is scope to make additional savings. For example, each agency currently maintains its own IT system rather than sharing facilities. Planned wider initiatives such as digital working and the early guilty plea scheme may also lead to extra savings.

**5.22** At the same time, budget cuts and staff restructuring have affected the agencies' ability to implement improvements to processes and working practices. Once they reach a steady-state, it would be a good time to conduct a more fundamental business process review, perhaps along the lines of the Kent project, in order to achieve more wholesale efficiencies.

# Appendix One

## Kent Crown Court Trial Readiness and Listings Project

### What is the project about?

**1** The Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB) held a multi-agency event using Lean methodology to examine the process of bringing a defendant to trial, and to identify ways to improve efficiency. Changes to processes implemented as a result of the event have contributed to improved Trial Readiness rates and an increase in the percentage of Effective Trials.

### What is the purpose of the project?

**2** The KCJB recognised that there was a need to improve the process of getting cases ready for trial, as there was duplication of effort and poor communications between agencies. Lean was already being used in the individual agencies, and the board felt that using this methodology at a multi-agency level to examine the process in detail would be a good way to tackle these issues.

### How was the project set up?

**3** The board held a workshop to identify the areas it felt would most benefit from an analysis using Lean methodology, and decided to conduct two events: the first, in February 2010, focused on trial readiness; and the second, in April 2010, reviewed court listings. The board appointed a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the project, and set up a project team consisting of the SRO, representatives from courts and the police, and a Project Implementation Manager.

### How was the Lean event conducted?

**4** Each event lasted five days and took the form of a workshop run by Lean trained facilitators from Kent Police and attended by a mix of senior managers and practitioners from the police, courts, Crown Prosecution Service, and UK Border Agency. Representatives from barristers' chambers, probation, Victim Support and the Witness Service also attended, and the KCJB funded one day's attendance by representatives from defence solicitors.

**5** For the first four days of the event, participants mapped out the whole process involved in bringing a case to trial and used this step-by-step map to identify inefficiencies, duplication of effort and rework, and blockages in the system. They then reviewed the maps in detail and removed unnecessary steps to produce a map of the 'ideal' process. Each step was also assigned a time value, and the team were able to use the values of the removed steps to calculate the potential time savings that could be achieved by making the improvements to the process that had been identified through the mapping work. The final day of the event was spent presenting the results of the exercise back to the attendees, including the recommendations for improvement.

**6** The event was held at minimal cost, as the team were able to use existing facilities at a Kent Police station, and employ two of the force's own Lean trained facilitators. The only costs involved were the time that individuals gave up to take part in the event, and the payments the KCJB made to the defence solicitors for attending the event. The two facilitators came from police and private sector backgrounds. In preparing for the event, they put together performance information on the key issues being examined, and were able to make use of process mapping work already undertaken in the individual agencies.

**7** Following the event, the team created a summary of the changes being advocated, and the agencies involved signed up to most, but not all, of the content. The project delivery team identified around 50 key actions, which it divided into Quick Wins, Longer-term Issues and 'Pending' (to be delivered at a later date, once buy-in was achieved from other agencies). The team met to discuss progress made and actions outstanding on a monthly basis.

### **What has been achieved?**

**8** A number of changes have been made to processes as a result of the Lean event: These include:

- Regular meetings, with clear agendas, of Case Progression Officers from all three agencies to discuss problematic cases and resolve issues. These meetings have been one of the most significant benefits of the Lean event.
- The introduction of block listing of Plea and Case Management Hearings (PCMHS), with both Crown Courts in Kent committing to listing all of these hearings on one day, with a single judge. This has made case management easier for the police and CPS.
- Proportionate file build by the police when anticipating a guilty plea. A working group simplified the content of the file, and agreed the key evidence that should be included.
- Police starting to build a Full File where a not guilty plea is anticipated, and aiming to complete this file within a two-week timescale. This timescale is not being consistently achieved, due to a number of issues, including the provision of outstanding forensics or medical evidence.
- Changes to the processes for recording information on the MG9 and MG12 forms so that the police and courts are both recording information on the same basis (in chronological order), and production of an aide-memoire for the courts on the typical time frames to deliver different types of evidence.
- Changes to the police duty system, and to the layout of the MG10 form to provide extra clarity for the courts.
- Greater use of electronic working to improve communications.

**9** It took around a year to implement all the changes. In the period since the Lean event took place, trial readiness rates increased from 45 to 50 or 60 per cent, effective trials are up 7 per cent on average, and cracked trials have fallen by 10 per cent. There is still work to do, however, as ineffective trials have actually increased by 3 per cent, and there are different levels of success between the two Crown Courts (Maidstone and Canterbury) which are thought to be due to differences in workload and listing practices.

**10** Partnership working was already good in the area, but there have been some further improvements to relationships between the agencies as a result of the Lean event. The event helped participants to gain a detailed understanding of the end-to-end process and the impact on others of their own actions, and has encouraged a culture of agencies meeting together to resolve issues as they arise.

**11** The event identified potential savings of 40,000 hours, which can be translated into a fall in time taken to progress the average case from 92 to 46 hours. These figures included some more radical changes which were not agreed to by key stakeholders, so the actual time savings achieved are likely to be lower than this, but there has not been enough resource to assess the level of actual savings that have been realised as a result of the event.



### **What is still to be achieved?**

**12** Significant changes were made to processes following the first stage of the project, but sustaining the initial round of improvements was made more challenging by agency restructuring which took place in 2011. Cost-cutting measures led to the departure of a number of staff, including some of the members of the project team. The project team has recently met again to reinvigorate the project, and has planned further work looking at listings and the effectiveness of preliminary hearings.

**13** The team was unable to implement all the changes identified at the Lean event as key stakeholders did not agree to all the proposals. Although improvements have been made, there is further work to be done on some of the known issues, such as the police providing files in a timely manner and with information in the right format and late service of defence case statements.

### **What key lessons can be learnt from the project?**

**14** A number of factors have contributed to the success of the event, including having:

- a well-documented aim;
- a good strategic governance structure in place;
- effective high-level buy-in from the sponsor, and from the different agencies involved;
- clear leadership of the project;
- a well-structured business plan with timetables and deliverables;
- the right people at the Lean event (a mix of practitioners and senior management);
- access to independent facilitators;
- a project team to implement the changes, and a project manager in place for the whole project; and
- a strong communication strategy.

### **Who should I contact for further information?**

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# Appendix Two

## Northumbria Survivors' Engagement, Empowerment and Development (SEED) Project

### What is the project about?

**1** The Northumbria Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) worked with a third sector partner to improve services to support Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women 'survivors' of domestic abuse, honour-based violence and forced marriage. There are likely to have been considerable wider benefits to the criminal justice sector through the prevention of possible criminal offences.

### What is the purpose of the project?

**2** The NCJB identified a need to work with a third sector organisation to develop a support network for survivors of honour-based violence, forced marriage, and 21st-century domestic slavery. It felt that there was an unmet need for domestic violence services for women from BME groups in the area, having held discussions with the voluntary sector to gain a fuller understanding of the women's needs. The aim of the project was to facilitate a regional and sub-regional support network to empower the women to become self-reliant through motivational coaching, confidence building, assertiveness, goal setting and action planning, thus breaking the cycle of victimisation.

### How was the project set up?

**3** In 2008, the NCJB submitted a regional bid for funding from the Office of Criminal Justice Reform Race Challenge Fund, to enable it to work with a charitable organisation to develop the required support network. The board originally entered into partnership with another third sector organisation, but this proved unsuccessful due to issues with governance, and the project was terminated. Using the learning from this experience, the board then identified the Angelou Centre (an established charitable organisation and training provider for BME women) as a suitable delivery partner, and the Survivors' Engagement, Empowerment and Development (SEED) project officially commenced in 2009.

### How was the project conducted?

**4** The NCJB provided the initial funding for the project and assistance with start-up, and the Angelou Centre then took forward the work to address the unique domestic violence and abuse problems faced by its potential clients. Many of these women can be hard to reach due to the restrictions on their liberty, language barriers and lack of understanding of the services and support available.

**5** The work of the Centre includes a programme of personal development and confidence-building sessions covering language skills, and welfare, benefits, legal and immigration advice. The Centre also has two 0.5 FTE staff to coordinate the support for survivors and service users, and a network of 56 survivors, called Sahili, who provide mutual support. There are monthly meetings of the regional support network, and additional more locally based groups facilitated by survivors. There is also a buddy system which enables new arrivals to be supported by other survivors who are further on towards the goal of independent living.

**6** After the start-up phase, the board retained oversight of the project through strong governance arrangements (including a PRINCE2-based project management process), active involvement of NCJB members, and regular updates on progress by the project manager. The initial funding of £15,000 was released incrementally upon receipt of three-monthly update reports by the Angelou Centre at an informal meeting. Although routine engagement with the Centre has now ended, the Board secretariat continues to provide informal support through provision of guidance and expertise in future funding bids.

### **What has been achieved?**

**7** The involvement of the NCJB has brought access to funding, enabling the Centre to widen its focus from the traditional perspectives of domestic violence to encompass honour-based violence and cultural issues. The Centre has been highly successful in responding to a clear unmet need for services to support these survivors, and women have travelled from all over the country to access the services on offer, as there are no other centres offering equivalent support and services in the UK.

**8** More widely, the project has raised awareness of the issues and helped staff working locally in the criminal justice sector to feel they are more connected to the BME community. There is now better engagement with other local agencies such as Health, Housing and Education, and the Centre has also enabled victims to access police and other services that manage risk-of-harm issues.

**9** It is difficult to measure the wider benefits to the Criminal Justice System from the work of the Centre in any traditional way. In total, 86 women have been assisted by the Centre to lead more sustainable and independent lives, and have been empowered to leave their abuser. It is likely there would have been a significant cost to the public purse had the services not been available, as the women may instead have gone on to be victims of crime, with associated impacts in terms of social and health care, and child protection.

**10** The work done to develop the Angelou Centre has informed broader developments within probation on reviewing services to victims who receive statutory victim contact services and restorative justice. It has informed the Probation Trust's more general approach to dealing with hate crimes, and its development of programmes to address victims of domestic violence and victim awareness work being done with offenders.

### **What is still to be achieved?**

**11** It would be difficult to devise a methodology to identify any cost savings achieved. Local quantification of the problem before and after the SEED project is problematic as previously the problems encountered by the victims were largely a hidden issue, and since the Centre has been in place survivors have relocated from other areas of the country to access the services. Much of the work of the Centre is preventative and it is difficult to determine how many offences may have been averted by the Centre's work. However, we were able to suggest ways in which the impact of the project could be evaluated, using experience drawn from inspection. This involved quantifying the risk of harm identified and avoided.

**12** Additionally, it was clear from talking to users of the Centre that they have a wealth of information about how the Criminal Justice System deals with honour-based violence, forced marriage and 21st-century domestic slavery. Their experiences as service users were not always positive. While the Centre was able to provide some information to criminal justice agencies, there was significant potential for the agencies to learn from user experience and thereby improve service delivery. For example, encouraging police officers to handle domestic incidents better where the victim has limited English skills, and supporting wider use of female interpreters.

### **What key lessons can be learnt from the project?**

**13** The NCJB has learnt a number of lessons on how to successfully work with the third sector, both through the initial failed project with another partner, and through the work with the Angelou Centre. The key factors contributing to the success of the project are:

- establishing a sound understanding of the needs of service users before commissioning services;
- assessing the credibility of the proposed partner – the board developed its own criteria, and has since worked with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service to develop a training package which will help to disseminate this knowledge;
- writing a clear project implementation plan, in particular in relation to how the governance should work and developing soft skills;
- releasing of funding to the third sector partner on an incremental basis;
- maintaining strong partnership working;
- following PRINCE2 project management processes; and
- monitoring project progress carefully.

### **Who should I contact for further information?**

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# Appendix Three

## Warwickshire Justice Centre, Leamington Spa

### What is the project about?

**1** The Justice Centre is a purpose-built facility, which brings together all the justice agencies and their services in one place. Co-location has brought benefits in terms of reduced costs for individual agencies, improved services to witnesses, and facilities for suspects, but there are further opportunities to benefit from greater integration. There is a similar centre, built in 2005 as a separate project, in Nuneaton.

### What is the purpose of the project?

**2** Local criminal justice agencies decided to build a new multi-agency justice centre, to bring together all the agencies under one roof (police, CPS, courts, probation and the Youth Justice Service). The Centre, at Leamington Spa, was set up as a 'one-stop shop' for services to victims, witnesses, suspects and the wider community. By co-locating the agencies and using the opportunity to examine and change business processes, the board hoped to be able to bring offenders to justice more quickly and efficiently, improve access and delivery of services for victims and witnesses, protect people from harm and reoffending, and improve public confidence in the justice system.

### How was the project conducted?

**3** The project started with a vision for the CPS, probation, police, Youth Justice Service and courts to be located together. The agencies all needed new facilities and it was felt that it would be cheaper overall to build one new building to house everyone. The Centre would also provide an opportunity to look at new ways of working and a business process improvement team made up of managers from the agencies conducted an end-to-end process mapping exercise, which made recommendations for improvement to processes. It was hoped that the new building would enable the delivery of the proposed changes. Each agency also identified savings that could be made from the move to the new building (both cashable and time savings).

**4** Key stakeholders and building users were consulted in the design of the building. For example, the Resident Judge and three magistrates were involved in the design of the court. The Resident Judge also sits on the Strategic Board, which is responsible for agreeing policy and protocol in respect of any process change.

**5** The Centre took two years to build, at a cost of £26 million. It was completed in July 2010 and combines police, Crown Court, and facilities for the criminal justice agencies. Warwickshire Police act as landlord on behalf of the individual agencies, who are billed for the portion of the building that they use. There is a Management Board for the building, which is responsible for its day-to-day operation.

## What has been achieved?

**6** The move to the new building has enabled many of the agencies to make cost savings, including the following:

- The police avoided the one-off costs of refurbishment, maintenance and improvement in properties vacated as part of the project, saving around £6.7 million.
- The Crown Court and county courts save around £275,000 annually due to reduced running costs, maintenance, and transfer of data and people between sites.
- Estates rationalisation in the CPS saves around £220,000 annually.
- The Probation Trust saves £140,000 each year from giving up buildings.
- The police have made savings through not having to travel to Birmingham for Class 1 trials, and because the CPS are not having to move files around so much, from being able to hand over prisoners within the one building, and through the use of screens and audio visual systems in the new purpose-built court facilities. The video link facilities have enabled witnesses to give evidence from remote locations, or from overseas, which has resulted in considerable savings.
- All agencies now work on a common (police) telephone system, which has resulted in significant savings, as all calls are now internal between the agencies at Leamington Spa and Nuneaton.
- The agencies benefit from continuous power supplies from the generator systems normally installed in police buildings.

**7** The new building has led to greatly improved services for victims and witnesses:

- The Victim and Witness Information Partnership is a multi-agency unit comprising police witness care officers, probation, CPS, Youth Justice Service, victim support worker and a police officer working on anti-social behaviour. It provides traditional witness and victim support as well as dealing with civil anti-social behaviour issues in the hope that this will help prevent further more serious crimes.
- The Unit is able to engage with victims before they attend courts, including witnesses who have been identified as vulnerable, and to show them around the court facilities in advance, reassuring them about any concerns they may have about coming into contact with the defendant by showing them the design of the court with a separate entrance for witnesses, and screens and video links. During the trial itself, staff from victim support can meet witnesses and accompany them to the court. The Unit can also provide support after the trial, help with compensation applications, referrals to victim support and signposting to other agencies. The partnership provides support to bereaved families at the Coroner's Court, as they have an established protocol with police family liaison officers. Use of the Centre by HM Coroner enables the full range of support to be offered to witnesses at inquests.
- Co-location of witness service, probation and victim support means that the agencies have a good knowledge of what everyone is doing, and problems can be more easily raised and dealt with face-to-face. Rather than having to contact agencies individually, there is now a single point of contact for witnesses.
- The improvements to services for witnesses are reflected in the fact that Warwickshire is regarded as offering strong witness care, and has good rates for witness attendance.

- 8** Being located in the same building has led to better cooperation between agencies, and contributed to the introduction of more efficient working practices:
- Open-plan working has helped improve the way people work, as practices have become more transparent. Working relationships have improved as agencies can better understand each other's needs and priorities. It is easier to sit down and resolve issues face-to-face rather than rely on telephone calls or emails.
  - The building enables teams working on a project to sit together more easily, and all areas have sockets for each of the agency's computer systems, so staff can login in any room.
  - Co-location has improved the time taken to process cases. For example, the results of 99 per cent of magistrates' court cases are concluded in 24 hours and entered on the Police National Computer.
  - Probation has found that family intervention profiling, which involves multiple agencies, is more efficient in the new building. Probation also has access, as far as the law allows, to police and court files and IT systems to obtain information on offenders, and can more easily speak to police directly to gain access to intelligence on offenders that may not be on file.
  - The building has a major incident suite on-site, which enables police officers on Class 1 cases to work in the building whilst the case is at court, and have access to all the material they need. Youth Offending Team and probation staff are also within the same building as the court and so do not need to attend court continuously.
  - Authorised staff have access to other agencies' data, which helps to improve information exchange, reduce reoffending and eliminate duplication of processes.
- 9** Although inter-agency performance management has suffered through the loss of police and CPS staff, performance indicators such as file submission targets, file review dates, late chasers, complaints and discontinuances have improved. There has been good performance on reoffending rates.
- 10** Jury utilisation has increased from 30 to 70 per cent, and Effective Trial rates have improved. The Ineffective Trial rate is 9 per cent. However, the loss of judicial sitting days as a result of wider budget cuts has meant a mixed performance for the courts and has had a negative impact on the timeliness of cases.

### **What is still to be achieved?**

- 11** There is scope to make additional savings and improve working practices further. For example, each agency currently maintains its own IT system and photocopiers rather than sharing facilities. Planned wider initiatives such as digital working and the early guilty plea scheme may also lead to further savings.
- 12** All agencies have been subject to budget cuts and staff restructuring, which have had implications for the ability to implement further improvements to processes and working practices as the agencies try to work with reduced costs and resources. Budget cuts have also meant that not all courtrooms can be used each day, so the agencies have not been able to capitalise fully on the potential of all being in the same building. CPS have moved the administration of magistrates' court cases to Coventry to have one team to process this work, but this has undermined the idea of the multi-agency approach, and has had an impact on victim and witness care with some witnesses attending the wrong court or at the wrong time.

**What key lessons can be learnt from the project?**

**13** A number of factors have contributed to the success of the project:

- Vision by strategic leaders.
- Good project management, with each chief executive leading one of the project streams, and a project plan related to PRINCE2 principles and Managing Successful Programmes (MSP).
- The programme and individual sub-projects were subject to Office of Government Commerce (OGC) gateway reviews at every stage, providing reassurance and advice.
- The re-engineering of services for victims and witnesses demonstrates the potential for wider service improvements if the same rigorous approach were applied to all processes.
- Good working relationships between agencies, and a desire to tackle inter-agency issues as soon as they arise, such as crime hotspots and reducing reoffending.
- Promoting the changes to achieve buy-in.
- Preparation for cultural changes.

**Who should I contact for further information?**

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## Appendix Four

### Additional good practice projects put forward by Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs)

Derbyshire – Redesign of Victim Contact Service.

Derbyshire – Restorative Justice Project.

Hartlepool/Teesside – Process changes in the Magistrates' Court.

London – New allocation system for Witness Care Units.

Surrey – Integrated prosecution team.

West Mercia – Redesign of Community Breach Penalty processes.

West Yorkshire – Quest business process review.

# Where to find out more

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution  
Service Inspectorate website is  
[www.hmcpso.gov.uk](http://www.hmcpso.gov.uk)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of  
Constabulary website is  
[www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
of Probation website is  
[www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation](http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-probation)

The National Audit Office website is  
[www.nao.org.uk](http://www.nao.org.uk)



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