

Other HMICA work

- **Joint Inspections** – with other inspectorates (of Constabulary, Crown Prosecution Service, Prisons, Probation and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) and sometimes other organisations, such as Victim Support
- **Thematic Reviews** – these focus on a particular theme, in order to establish the current performance and identify examples of good practice. In the past, these have included: fine enforcement, custody arrangements, race issues and the use of interpreters.
- **Advice** – the Inspectorate offers advice to the Ministry of Justice and HMCS on issues which arise from inspections and thematic reviews as well as to other professional bodies and organisations
- **Participation** – the Inspectorate meets requests for participation in appropriate professional events whenever possible, for example: speaking engagements and contributing to training events for staff within HMCS.

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 Publications Team
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Bristol BS10 6EZ

Tel: 0117 959 8200 / 8201 / 8203

This leaflet can be provided, on request, in Braille, larger print and languages other than English. For information, please contact the Publications Team.

An Introduction

Who we are, what we do

September 2007

Background and Remit

The Courts Act (2003) made provision for the setting up of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA) in April 2005.

HMICA's remit is to:

- **Inspect and report to the Lord Chancellor on the system that supports the carrying on of the business of the Crown, county and magistrates' courts and the services provided for those courts**
- **Discharge any other particular functions which may be specified in connection with the above courts.**

All inspection activity will exclude "persons making judicial decisions or exercising any judicial discretion".

In line with government policy, HMICA inspection activity will:

- Be independent of the service providers
- Provide assurance to Ministers and the public about the safe and proper delivery of these services
- Contribute to improvement of those services
- Report in public
- Deliver value for money

The scope of HMICA's work in inspecting court administration

In order to inspect court administration not subject to review by other bodies, the Inspectorate has identified the following key areas for inspection:

- **Promoting Diversity** – working arrangements ensure diversity is promoted and achieved
- **Public Governance and Accountability** – the actions and activities of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) are transparent, responsible, accountable and fair
- **Leadership and Strategic Management** – key strategic issues are identified and effective action plans are implemented and evaluated
- **Finance** – funds are used cost effectively
- **People** – a diverse workforce cost effectively delivers appropriate services for all court users
- **Buildings, IT and Equipment** – these cost effectively meet the needs of all court users
- **Court Administrative Processes** – these support the business of the courts and deliver appropriate services for all court users
- **Enforcement** – prompt and effective actions ensure compliance with orders of the court
- **Quality of Service** – high quality services are provided for all court users.

The inspection process

- **Risk assessed decision to inspect** – including views of Ministers, Ministry of Justice and HMCS; performance against government targets; HMICA current priorities
- **Evidence based** – documentary evidence from a variety of sources, such as self-assessment; performance data; the views of court users, stakeholders and staff; observation
- **Development of hypotheses** – analysis of evidence, developing hypotheses about performance against HMICA published inspection criteria
- **Hypotheses shared with inspected body, tested and refined** – through focused interviews with senior staff and the collection of further evidence
- **Development of judgements** – formulating judgements against the inspection criteria based on refined hypotheses and analysis of further evidence
- **Feedback to inspected body** – main conclusions and recommended action for improvement shared at the earliest opportunity
- **Report publication** – timely, published, written report including findings, recommendations and action plan
- **Monitoring improvement actions** – follow up progress in implementing recommendations within 18 months of inspection.

Inspection is not audit. Inspection looks at whether systems are effective in delivering good quality outcomes for all users.