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# About CPS

## The Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. The CPS is independent, and we make our decisions independently of the police and government.

Our duty is to make sure that the right person is prosecuted for the right offence, and to bring offenders to justice wherever possible.

The CPS:

- decides which cases should be prosecuted;
- determines the appropriate charges in more serious or complex cases, and advises the police during the early stages of investigations;
- prepares cases and presents them at court; and
- provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses.

Prosecutors must be fair, objective and independent. When deciding whether to prosecute a criminal case, our lawyers must follow the Code for Crown Prosecutors. This means that to charge someone with a criminal offence, prosecutors must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, and that prosecuting is in the public interest.

The CPS works closely with the police, courts, the Judiciary and other partners to deliver justice.

## The Code for Crown Prosecutors

The Code for Crown Prosecutors sets out the general principles which crown prosecutors should follow when they make decisions on cases.

Continue reading

## The Criminal Justice System

The CPS works in partnership with the police, courts, the Attorney General's Office, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and other agencies throughout the criminal justice system.

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## How we work

### The principles we follow

The Code for Crown Prosecutors sets out the basic principles to be followed by Crown Prosecutors when they make case decisions. The decision on whether or not to charge a case against a suspect is based on the Full Code Test as outlined in the Code. The Full Code Test has two stages:

#### The evidential stage

This is the first stage in the decision to prosecute. Crown Prosecutors must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" against each defendant on each charge. They must consider whether the evidence can be used and is reliable. They must also consider what the defence case may be and how

#### The public interest stage

If the case does pass the evidential stage, Crown Prosecutors must then decide whether a prosecution is needed in the public interest. They must balance factors for and against prosecution carefully and fairly. Some factors may increase the need to prosecute but others may suggest that another course of action would be better.

consider what the defence case may be and how that is likely to affect the prosecution case.

A "realistic prospect of conviction" is an objective test. It means that a jury or a bench of magistrates, properly directed in accordance with the law, will be more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged. (This is a separate test from the one that criminal courts themselves must apply. A jury or magistrates' court should only convict if it is sure of a defendant's guilt.) If the case does not pass the evidential stage, it must not go ahead, no matter how important or serious it may be.

A prosecution will usually take place however, unless there are public interest factors tending against prosecution which clearly outweigh those tending in favour. The CPS will only start or continue a prosecution if a case has passed both stages.



## Our values

### We will be independent and fair

We will prosecute independently, without bias and will seek to deliver justice in every case.

### We will be honest and open

We will explain our decisions, set clear standards about the service the public can expect from us and be honest if we make a mistake.

### We will treat everyone with respect

We will respect each other, our colleagues and the public we serve, recognising that there are people behind every case.

### We will behave professionally and strive for excellence

## Equality and inclusion

The CPS commitment to inclusion and equality is at the heart of how we work. It is important to us both as an employer and in the way we approach our responsibilities as a prosecuting authority. The two are closely linked – supporting a diverse workforce allows us to provide a better service to the public.

We also value the insight we get from engaging directly with the communities we serve, who provide welcome scrutiny of our work. This inclusive approach means that:

Effective community engagement builds greater trust with the public victim and witness satisfaction, and better informed prosecution policy and practice.

The CPS has an inclusive culture, reflected in a diverse workforce, locally and nationally, and at all levels of the organisation

We will work as one team, always seeking new and better ways to deliver the best possible service for the public. We will be efficient and responsible with tax-payers' money.

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By opening up the CPS and acting on input from diverse communities, we aim to inspire greater confidence in the CPS, in particular from witnesses and victims, resulting in improved prosecution outcomes.

The Equality Act 2010 underpins the way we work; data is available in the Publications section of this website.

We have published our **CPS 2020 inclusion and community engagement strategy**, which sets out our ambition to build on strong foundations, making sure we continue to lead the way on promoting fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion across the criminal justice system.

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## Our Organisation

Around 6,000 people work for the Crown Prosecution Service, across England and Wales in a variety of roles. Almost half our employees are lawyers, who are responsible for deciding whether to prosecute cases, and represent the Crown in many hearings in the courts. The rest work to assist prosecutors preparing cases for court, or in other professions including operational delivery, finance, human resources, communications and digital and technology services.

### Director of Public Prosecutions



**Max Hill QC** is the Director of Public Prosecutions. He was appointed by the Attorney General and took up post on 1 November 2018.



Max was born in Hertfordshire in 1964. He attended state primary schools and, following a family move to Northumberland, the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle upon Tyne. He won a scholarship to study Law at St Peter's College, Oxford 1983-6. He qualified as a barrister in 1987 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2008.

While at the bar, Max both defended and prosecuted in complex cases including homicides, violent crime, terrorism, high value fraud and corporate crime. He was instructed in many of the most significant and high-profile murder trials in recent years, including the second set of trials concerning the killing of Damilola Taylor, and the London bombings of 2005.

From March 2017 to October 2018 Max was the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation. As the Independent Reviewer, he compiled reports including an investigative review of the use of terrorism legislation following the Westminster Bridge attacks.

Max was also the Leader of the South Eastern Circuit from 2014 to 2016, Chairman of the Criminal Bar Association from 2011 to 2012, and Chairman of the Kalisher Trust from 2014 to 2018. Until his appointment as DPP Max was Head of Red Lion Chambers.

## The CPS Board

The CPS Board provides strategic leadership and is collectively responsible for delivering our organisational objectives. It plays a key role in ensuring that the organisation is equipped to provide a professional, efficient and high quality service.

The DPP chairs the CPS Board, which supports him in governing the organisation. The Board includes four executive members and four non-executive directors:

Rebecca Lawrence - Chief Executive	+
Monica Burch - Lead Non-executive Board Member	+
Mark Hammond - Non-executive Board Member	+
Caroline Wayman - Non-executive Board Member	+
Simon Jeffreys - Non-executive Board Member	+

The role of the non-executive Board Members is to provide external perspective, challenge and advice on matters referred to the Board.

Audit and Risk Committee	+
Nominations and Governance Committee	+
Ministerial Strategic Board	+
CPS senior leadership organogram	+

## Specialist Casework Divisions and CPS Proceeds of Crime

Our three Central Casework Divisions deal with some of the most complex cases we prosecute. They work closely with specialist investigators from a range of organisations, including the National Crime Agency, HM Revenue & Customs and the Independent Police Complaints Commission, as well as police forces across England and Wales.

The three specialist divisions, each headed by a Head of Division (equivalent to a Chief Crown Prosecutor), are:

- International Justice and Organised Crime Division
- Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division
- Specialist Fraud Division

In addition, **CPS Proceeds of Crime** is a dedicated division responsible for all restraint, enforcement and serious

## Your local CPS

The CPS operates across England and Wales, with 14 regional teams prosecuting cases locally.

Each of these 14 CPS Areas is headed by a Chief Crown Prosecutor, and works closely with local police forces and other criminal justice partners.

Find out who's who in your area, and read more about local cases.

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