

**Target setting and
performance management
in the criminal justice system
in Northern Ireland**

January 2006

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
A better justice system for all



There are countless ways of being wrong
(Aristotle)

Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	5
Recommendations	7
1. Introduction	9
2. What are targets for?	11
3. The targets for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland	15
4. Target setting in the agencies:	
a. Are they the right targets?	19
b. Are there too many of them?	24
c. Are they clear and understandable?	27
d. Are they set at the right level?	29
e. Do they conflict with other agencies' targets?	33
f. Are they set in consultation with staff?	35
g. Are targets being used to support performance management?	38
5. What do staff make of it all?	43
Annexes	
A. Methodology	45
B. The planning and target setting process in the agencies	47
C. Targets set by individual agencies in their Business Plans for 2005-06	49
D. Targets set by counterpart organisations in other jurisdictions	53
E. Illustrative outline framework of objectives for the criminal justice system	63
F. Reference documents	65

Foreword

This inspection goes to the heart of the management of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

It looks at the targets set by the major criminal justice agencies and the processes by which they set them. It also looks at the relationship between those targets, and therefore at the way in which the criminal justice system as a whole is managed.

All the agencies are going through a period of rapid change. The Police Service is being transformed and the Public Prosecution Service and the Youth Justice Agency are, in their present form, new creations. Ahead is the prospect of eventual devolution of criminal justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly, which will place new demands on the system. This is therefore a good time to take stock of the practices of the agencies and to think afresh about how to achieve a coherent and effective criminal justice system.

It is not for Inspectors to be prescriptive in detail, but there are some pointers in this report for the agencies to as to how they might improve their target setting. Agencies and the NIO are invited to reflect on their targets in the light of this report and to consider in particular how they structure their targets and how they use them to communicate with different groups of interested parties: their sponsors, the public and their staff.

CJI has itself learnt from this review. The review has forced Inspectors to think both about the way we use targets to manage this (by comparison, very small) business, and about the impact which CJI's recommendations may have upon organisations which are already heavily committed. In future CJI will consider more carefully how it times its recommendations to fit as easily as possible into agencies' own planning cycles.

I am grateful to the agencies for their assistance, and in particular to those who served on the Steering Committee for the review: Jacqui Durkin (Court Service), ACC Judith Gillespie (PSNI), Graham Kelly (PBNI) and Robin Masefield (Prison Service). They were joined by other colleagues in the final stages. They served in a personal and advisory capacity, and bear no responsibility for any deficiencies in the resulting report. Thanks also to Sir Dan Crompton and Robert McGarry, who advised me in relation to the PSNI, Sandra Brown (HMICA), Rose Burgess (HMIP) and Paul Mageean and Ann Duncan, who assisted me in CJI.



Kit Chivers
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland

Executive summary

This thematic review examined the practices of the six main agencies of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland in relation to target setting and performance management.

The agencies differ in their size and their stage of development. The PSNI is a large and complex organisation with highly developed planning and management systems, while the Youth Justice Agency and the Public Prosecution Service in its present form are relatively recent creations. The nature of the businesses is very different. The Court Service and the Prison Service seem by their nature to lend themselves more easily than the others to target-based management.

The review asked seven questions about the six agencies and about the criminal justice system as a whole:

- a. Are they adopting the right targets (i.e. targeting the right things)?
- b. Are they setting a manageable number of targets?
- c. Are the targets clear and understandable?
- d. Are they set at the right level?
- e. Do they conflict with other agencies' targets?
- f. Are they set in consultation with staff?
- g. Are targets being used to support performance management?

The conclusions are these:

- a. *Are they the right targets (i.e. are the right things being targeted)?*

In general yes, though several agencies could do more to relate their key targets to their core business and to the results which are of most interest to the public.

- b. *Are agencies setting a manageable number of targets?*

Most agencies presented a manageable number of top-level targets, but some need to be more selective. There would be scope for some agencies to identify a smaller number of key targets that would provide a clearer focus for the organisation year by year.

- c. *Are the targets simple and understandable?*

Most are understandable, though some would benefit from being made more explicit. Agencies need to check that all their targets are SMART: most are, but by no means all. Some of what are described as targets are really objectives or even continuing aims or *desiderata*.

d. Are targets being set at the right level (i.e. challenging but attainable)?

This is a weak area for most agencies. In most there is little sign of evidence-gathering in the past in terms of trends or benchmarks to inform the setting of targets, and little evidence of effective challenge from outside the agencies.

e. Are they compatible with the targets of other agencies in the criminal justice system?

There are no serious conflicts, but some targets are in practice unhelpful to other agencies. There is limited evidence of agencies getting together to target key aspects of the criminal justice system jointly, and there is a widespread feeling that it would be right for the Criminal Justice Board to be more pro-active in managing the structure of targets.

f. Are they set in consultation with the staff that will have to deliver them?

The practice is different in the different agencies. In some there is extensive consultation and the targets are set through a dialogue between top management and divisions, in others such dialogue is much more limited, or restricted to senior managers and a few policy areas.

g. Are targets being used to support performance management?

Three agencies are currently more advanced than the others in the way they use targets to support performance management. Others are making good progress in developing the necessary information systems, but still have some way to go in building performance management into their personnel management systems.

Agencies know that they have more work to do to create appropriate structures of targets and to integrate them into their performance management. Staff generally understand the purpose and value of targets, but there is still a degree of scepticism in some quarters. This underscores the importance of ensuring that targets are relevant and communicating them effectively to staff: face to face, and not just through planning documents.

There is a widespread feeling that more could be done to make the plans and targets of the criminal justice system as a whole more coherent and to give it a stronger direction. There would be much support for Ministers giving the NI Criminal Justice Board more authority to take a proactive role, on the lines of the Office for Criminal Justice Reform in England and Wales. Several agencies and the NI criminal justice system as a whole could benefit from studying the targets which have been developed for their counterparts in other jurisdictions.

Recommendations

1. The Criminal Justice Board should be more pro-active in co-ordinating a framework of shared targets and monitoring the contribution that agencies are making towards them. It needs to be given a clear mandate to this effect by the Ministerial trilateral, and it needs a joint secretariat properly resourced for this purpose. [3.3]
2. Agencies and the NIO could usefully pay more attention to the regimes adopted by their counterparts in Great Britain (see Annex D), making due allowance for the special circumstances of Northern Ireland. [4(a)]
3. Agencies need to think more carefully about the different audiences for their plans and distinguish different categories of targets accordingly. They need to address the public and their own front-line staff through their key, highlighted targets at the same time as providing a framework for performance management within the organisation through their other, managerial targets. They need to ensure that their highlighted public targets relate to their core business and the outcomes they are aiming to achieve, not just to internal processes, so that they are meaningful to the general public. [4(a)]
4. Agencies need to apply more 'science' to setting the levels of their targets, analysing trends and benchmarking against comparators elsewhere; and to be more disciplined about making sure that all their targets are SMART¹. Targets need to be able to be validated, and indeed audited. [4(d)]
5. There needs to be more challenge in the target-setting process. Agency sponsors need to challenge their agencies, and agencies in turn need to challenge their staff, to pursue continuous improvement. [4(d)]
6. Agencies need to do more to involve staff in the process of setting targets, so that they feel ownership of them. A performance management culture needs to extend down from the corporate to the individual level. [4(f)]
7. The Criminal Justice Board should facilitate public consultation over the plans for the agencies (apart from the PSNI, for which the Policing Board takes the lead), so that each agency does not need to go out separately to consult what are, in many cases, the same stakeholders.² Agencies should be prepared to accept consultation messages on behalf of, and feed them back to, other agencies. [5.5]

¹ 'Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound'. 'Stretching' is sometimes added to the list.

² This would be facilitated if agencies could harmonise their planning cycles.

I. Introduction

1. The setting of targets is an indispensable part of the management of any modern commercial enterprise. Government agencies, including the police, have followed suit and adopted systems of planning and management based around the setting of annual targets for improving performance.

2. This report examines the use and practice of target setting by the six main criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland:

Police Service (PSNI)
Public Prosecution Service (PPS)
Probation Board (PBNI)
Youth Justice Agency (YJA)
Prison Service (NIPS)
Court Service (NICtS)

3. For convenience they are all referred to as 'agencies' in this report, irrespective of their precise legal status. The Northern Ireland Court Service is a Government Department in its own right; the Public Prosecution Service is in effect an independent Department, though it receives its funding from, and has other ties to, the Northern Ireland Office; the Prison Service and the Youth Justice Agency are Executive Agencies of the Northern Ireland Office; while the Probation Board is a non-departmental public body (NDPB). PSNI, like other police services in the United Kingdom, has a triangular reporting structure, accounting to the Policing Board as well as to the Secretary of State.

4. The criminal courts themselves, as distinct from their administration by the Court Service, are not part of the system in the same sense as, for example, the Public Prosecution Service is. The judiciary are entirely independent. Nevertheless they play an essential part in the criminal justice system.

5. The starting point for the report is the actual targets set by the six agencies in their Business Plans for 2005-06, which are reproduced (or summarised) in Annex C.

6. The report examines the appropriateness of these targets, whether they are clear and verifiable, whether they are set correctly and at appropriate levels and how they are used in the performance management of the agencies.

7. The emphasis in this report is not on a detailed critique of the targets but on the general themes that emerged from Inspectors' discussions with the agencies. It focuses particularly on the importance of increasing the coherence of performance management in the criminal justice system as a whole. Examples are quoted from individual agencies, but generally to illustrate good practice or to point up problems of more general relevance.

8. Annex A describes the methodology of the review.

2. What are targets for?

1. The use of targets in the public sector often gets a bad press. It is seen as a token of 'managerialism': the importation of management techniques that were developed in and for the commercial private sector and which people suspect are not suitable in the public services. Examples of the *unintelligent* use of targets and of their unintended consequences are commonplace, especially from the health service. The target, for instance, that everyone should be able to see a GP within 48 hours was last year discovered to have led to many practices refusing to accept bookings more than two days in advance.

2. This report is about setting targets *intelligently* in the complex environment of the criminal justice system, recognising its complexity and the pitfalls of an over-simple approach. It will be useful to begin, however, by setting out the private sector model, not least as a means of clarifying the terminology.

The private sector model and the language of target setting

3. Targets form part of a system of management in which, conventionally, an organisation:

- starts by formulating a 'mission statement' – in effect the purpose for which the organisation is set up;
- adopts a long-term 'vision', setting out the position it is aiming to achieve – e.g. 'to become the market leader in its field in Western Europe';
- sets out medium-term or continuing 'aims' which will contribute to the achievement of the vision; and
- defines time-limited 'objectives' for things which it definitely intends to accomplish in the coming year, for example, to contribute to those aims.

4. In a sound system of performance management organisational targets will be cascaded down and ultimately reflected in the personal targets for individual managers and teams.

5. Targets derive from and support objectives. They are quantified measures, expressed in terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which the organisation needs to achieve in a specified timeframe if it is to meet its objectives and succeed.

The limitations of target setting

6. Not every objective needs to have a target or targets associated with it. Some objectives do not allow for KPI-based quantification, as these comments by police officers illustrate:

“There are problems with measuring some work, for instance the surveillance work. How do we measure that? Yet we recognise that it is very important.”

“The stuff we do [community policing] is not really being measured”.

“How can we measure what we do when we are out on the beat?”

7. Targets, moreover, are never the whole picture. Managing a complex public service organisation cannot be reduced to a handful of performance indicators. The targets which are selected need to be seen in context as only a part of a holistic view of the performance of the organisation. Just because something is not the subject of a target does not mean that it is unimportant.

8. A large organisation typically needs an array of KPIs by which to manage. The acceptable level of performance in relation to all those indicators may be ratcheted up from year to year in a process of continuous improvement (necessary to stay abreast of the competition, in the commercial sector). But from time to time it will be apparent that a discontinuous improvement – a step change in performance – is needed. That may reflect a commercial imperative in the private sector, or a political imperative in the public sector. Target setting has a particular role in relation to changes of that kind.

Targets in the public sector

9. For a business, success and failure are comparatively easy to assess. One looks in the short term at the profit and loss account and in the longer term at the increase in shareholder value. It is much less straightforward for the agencies of the criminal justice system. They are monopoly providers of services in relation to which customers exercise little or no choice. There is no market in which to test value for money or customer satisfaction. It is even ambiguous who the customer is, much of the time.

10. Criminal justice is one of the services government delivers to its citizens to increase their overall well-being. But it is not something that sits comfortably within a framework of economic utilitarianism. The justice system is prepared to devote enormous resources to ensuring that rights are protected and innocent people are not wrongly imprisoned.

11. One could adopt an overarching aim, as the Serious Organised Crime Agency does, of ‘reducing the harm (i.e. the welfare loss) caused by crime’, but there would be no way of doing the sums that would be needed to give meaning to such an objective, and in any case it would not be adequate for the system as a whole. Criminal justice is in part a means to achieve welfare gains, but it is also seen as a good in itself, for which economic welfare sometimes has to be sacrificed.

12. This makes setting the objectives of the criminal justice system extraordinarily complex. The desired outcomes are at many different levels, and they intertwine with every other objective of social policy. ‘Effectiveness’ needs to be interpreted in terms of what works for whom, and means are important, as well as ends. There are choices to

be made about how retributive or restorative the system should be, and what should be the balance between prevention and enforcement.

13. Political guidance about what is asked for from the criminal justice system and about the criteria for success is therefore essential. The framework which has been set for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland is described in the next chapter.

Criminal justice and other public policies

Criminal justice is not self-contained. Much of what the police and the courts do is not related to criminal justice (for example, road traffic accidents). Conversely other parts of the public sector – health and social services, education and housing, to name the most obvious examples – make major contributions to it, especially in relation to children and young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. This means that objectives for the criminal justice system often need to be supported by agreements of one sort or another with other parts of the public sector: the Community Safety Partnerships and the MASRAM arrangements for the management of sex offenders are examples in Northern Ireland, and the new relationship between the CJS and the Health Service being piloted in South Yorkshire is another example.

The purpose of targets

14. Setting targets serves a number of purposes. It can be a way of communicating to staff what is being asked of them in very precise terms, so that performance can be measured month by month and corrective action can be taken if there is any variance from target. It may be the basis of performance related remuneration. Or it may be a means – particularly for a public service agency - of communicating to the outside world, to Parliament and the public, what the agency is committed to doing for them in the coming year.

15. Targets may form part of an explicit ‘contract’ or Public Service Agreement (PSA) with the Treasury about what the agency is going to deliver in return for the resources it has been granted. But it would be wrong to see a PSA as tantamount to a commercial-style contract. A contract for the delivery of even the most routine type of service commonly runs to a hundred pages or more. The PSA for criminal justice in Northern Ireland fits on one page. It is no more than a selection of a few crucial topics to which Ministers ask the agencies to pay particular attention.

16. In the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland the main use of target-setting is for the purposes of internal management. The agencies set targets with public accountability in mind, but in most cases that is not the prime consideration and the targets are not designed to be optimal for that purpose. There is little use of published targets as a basis for performance related pay, and little sense of them being the basis of a performance contract with their sponsoring Department or the Treasury.

17. There is a tension between the different purposes. To be useful for internal management targets need to be specific and capable of quick and regular measurement. The targets that suit that purpose are typically those related to processes or ‘inputs’ to

the delivery of services. Public accountability, on the other hand, often calls for targets expressed in terms of 'outcomes' for the public, which raise more difficult questions of assessment because they are subject to external influences, and are often less reliably measurable.

Targets and performance management

18. Performance against targets cannot be translated directly into an overall assessment of performance. Performance can be affected for good or ill by a variety of external influences. Crime rates, for example, may have declined on account of better home or vehicle security rather than on account of improved policing, and conversely the rise in hate crime may reflect changes in society rather than a deterioration in policing.

19. In one agency appraisal is based 50% on performance against targets and 50% on competencies, which reflect how people are meeting them; but even that degree of weight given to absolute performance may not always be appropriate. Sometimes all that the performance information can do is to raise questions for management and for the public. If there is an increase in a particular type of offence, what is behind it, and what implications may there be for the way resources should be deployed to tackle it?

Quantity and quality

20. Quantitative targets always need to be balanced against considerations of quality. There were many references in the interviews to staff being conscious of the danger that quality might be being sacrificed in the drive to achieve numerical targets. The quality of police files and intelligence reports and the quality of Probation Officer interventions were cited as examples of this. Quality, it was felt, lost out because it was not targeted. Targets for drug seizures were quoted as another example. Neither the weight nor the street value of seizures was regarded as a reliable criterion. Assessing the success of drugs policing requires a more sophisticated evaluation.

21. Quality of service is not a simple concept in relation to the criminal justice system. CJI would resist the opposition of 'quality' to timeliness and efficiency. On the contrary, timeliness and value for money are elements in quality. A justice system which produces excellent outcomes, but long delayed and at disproportionate cost, is not a quality service. 'Quality' is a question of deciding on arrangements that are fit for purpose and will produce acceptable outcomes – juries and silks for this sort of case and magistrates' courts for that sort – and then managing the service so as to provide the desired standard as economically as possible.

22. Resources are always limited, and may be more limited in the future than they are now. Very substantial resources have been deployed in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland in the context of the Troubles. The challenge for the future will be to re-assess how to maintain standards in terms of outcomes in a changed and changing situation.

3. The targets for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland

1. The formal Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Northern Ireland is made up of six major agencies; the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), the Northern Ireland Court Service (NICtS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and the Youth Justice Agency (YJA).

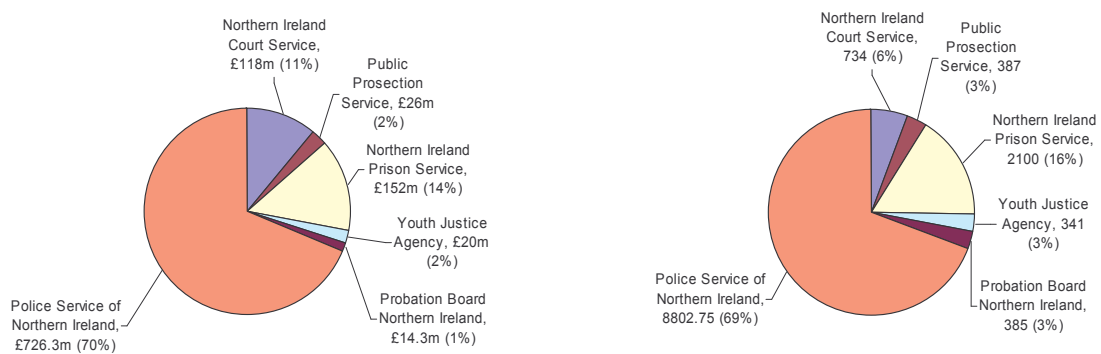


Figure 1: Northern Ireland CJS budget (left) and staffing (right) for 2005/2006

2. Each agency has a specific role and remit within the CJS. Most have a legal basis which provides them with a degree of independence from the other parts of the system and from government. The agencies are rightly concerned to maintain this independence. Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition that successful functioning of the CJS is dependant on increasingly close co-operation between the agencies. While each may have a defined role within the CJS, the system cannot work effectively without a degree of co-ordination and interaction. Arguably, what has been missing in Northern Ireland has been an agreed vision for the CJS, understood and supported by the constituent parts of the CJS and the public.

3. The problem of managing a system which comprises constitutionally separate agencies accountable to different Ministries has been addressed with considerable energy in England and Wales in recent years. A National Criminal Justice Board and Local Criminal Justice Boards were set up in 2000, and in 2004 the Office of Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) was created as a single, strongly resourced agency staffed by officials from the three Departments and reporting to the three Ministers jointly. In Northern Ireland there is a Ministerial Trilateral, in which the three Ministers responsible meet from time to time to discuss cross-cutting issues, but it has not been supported by anything like the administrative firepower of the OCJR.

Recommendation I

The Criminal Justice Board should be more pro-active in co-ordinating a framework of shared targets and monitoring the contribution that agencies are making towards them. It needs to be given a clear mandate to this effect by the Ministerial trilateral, and it needs a joint secretariat properly resourced for this purpose.³

4. The CJS serves a number of purposes and has a series of aims. At its most basic level, the CJS exists to protect people. It should keep society safe from individuals who may, on occasion, step outside the bounds of acceptable societal behaviour. In such situations the CJS and its component agencies should try to mitigate the impact of the unlawful behaviour on ordinary citizens. It should also seek, where appropriate, to bring those individuals to account for their actions. This involves, in most cases, bringing criminal proceedings against individuals. Guilt is adjudged and punishment, if appropriate, is imposed. In that event, the CJS should seek in some cases, particularly those involving young people, to rehabilitate and resettle the offender.

5. Huge amounts of public money are invested in the CJS. This is especially so in Northern Ireland where in 2004-05 £763 per head of population was spent on public order and safety compared to £394 in England and Wales. In the year 2004-05 the combined budget of the criminal justice agencies was more than £1bn. Despite these high levels of public expenditure serious questions exist as to the objective efficacy of the CJS and the extent to which the public has confidence in it. Recent estimates in the context of the CJS in Britain suggested that offenders are only found and successfully brought to justice in relation to 3% of crimes committed. There is no reason to think that the system in Northern Ireland performs significantly better than this despite the additional public monies invested in it.

6. In addition, public confidence in the CJS has fallen markedly in recent years. The reasons for the fall in the level of confidence are unclear, particularly at a time when it appears that crime is also falling and police detection rates are increasing. However, the response of the CJS to the decline in confidence has been marked more by a desire to communicate better what the CJS is doing, than by re-considering what the public wants or expects to be provided by the CJS. The CJS appears to be confident that it is doing a good job and that if only the reality could be better communicated to the public confidence would increase. Several of those interviewed expressed doubts about the 'confidence' target:

“The broad NIO surveys of confidence and satisfaction are pretty meaningless. People are likely to respond according to their prejudices ... It would be better to use targeted surveys of victims conducted by professional consultants.”

³ The Criminal Justice Board would need to be careful not to infringe the role of the Policing Board as the body with the responsibility for holding the PSNI to account. Liaison with the Policing Board would, however, be essential. It is suggested that the Policing Board's Chief Executive should be invited to attend the meetings of the Criminal Justice Board when relevant matters are on the agenda.

7. It is not easy to strike the right balance in communications about criminal justice. The agencies need to show that they are aware of the concerns of ordinary people without giving encouragement to the media's tendency to maximise a sense of alarm. CJI believes that confidence is more likely to come from successes in major investigations, from sensitive public order policing and from the regular daily interactions of the public with the police (the police more than any other agency) than from pronouncements about reductions in the incidence of crime. Local consultation, for example through the District Policing Partnerships, can be valuable, but the main thing is (probably) the way officers talk to people in the street and the way they handle calls. It is those inter-personal skills, backed up by efficient response systems, that really affect public perceptions.

8. Currently the high level targets for the CJS in Northern Ireland are set by the Government by way of the Public Service Agreement (PSA) with the Northern Ireland Office, but most targets are set by the agencies themselves with the approval of their individual Ministers. The Policing Board told Inspectors that it would welcome an increased level of consultation about the setting of the targets.

9. The PSA targets for the Northern Ireland CJS relate to:

- increasing confidence in the police,
- increasing Catholic representation in the police service,
- increasing confidence in the criminal justice system,
- reductions in rate of domestic burglary, theft from vehicles and rate of reconviction,
- reduction in cost per prisoner place

10. There may be legitimate discussion about the relatively unambitious nature of the targets relating to confidence (an increase of 3% in four years) and the accuracy of the system of measurement (opinion surveys) but it is of course vital that the CJS should make efforts to increase the level of confidence it enjoys across the whole community in Northern Ireland, particularly when, as indicated above, confidence rates have declined recently. Increasing Catholic representation in the police service is a product of the Patten report and a necessary aspect of the implementation of the Agreement. However, the reductions in domestic burglary and theft from vehicles, while undoubtedly areas of major public concern, are hardly the sort of headline issues which should feature in the setting of aims and objectives for the CJS. It is also surprising, given ministerial and public concern about the issue of delay in the processing of criminal cases in Northern Ireland, that this does not merit a PSA target.

11. In CJI's view the PSA targets should reflect what the public in Northern Ireland want and are entitled to expect from the CJS. This should normally be compatible with, or at least able to accommodate, key government priorities in terms of cost. The Criminal Justice Board, as the institutional face of the CJS in Northern Ireland, should set its aims and objectives from the PSA targets and consequently targets for each agency should flow from these aims and objectives. In this way, there will be a coherence to the public targets of the CJS which currently does not exist.

12. For instance, there is no apparent link between the Aims of the Criminal Justice Board and the PSA targets. There is also little evidence that the agencies took the Aims of the Criminal Justice Board into account in their own target setting processes. The impression obtained by inspectors was that while some attention was paid by the agencies to relevant PSA targets, there was little sense of priorities being set by the PSA or the Criminal Justice Board for the system as a whole. Consequently, there is little system wide coherence in the targets of the various agencies.

13. The question of high level objectives is not an academic one, nor a managerial one. The public should be able to understand and support the aims and objectives set for the CJS. Performance of the system as a whole, and individual agencies, should be judged against such published aims. The aims though should reflect the basic *raison d'être* of the CJS. They should relate to the protection of society, confidence in the rule of law, resettling offenders, and minimising cost.

14. Annex E contains for illustration an example of the sort of framework of objectives for the criminal justice system which CJI would suggest.

4. Target setting in the agencies

This chapter addresses seven questions about the way the six agencies, and the criminal justice system as a whole, set their targets and use them to manage performance:

- a. Are they the right targets?
- b. Are there too many of them?
- c. Are they clear and understandable?
- d. Are they set at the right level?
- e. Do they conflict with other agencies' targets?
- f. Are they set in consultation with staff?
- g. Are they used to support performance management?

a. Are they the right targets?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Bad practice is that people choose things that are easily measurable, rather than what is most important. They include targets because they feel they ought to have a target in that area of business, or to create 'easy wins', even if the target is meaningless or superfluous, e.g. 'must stay within budget'. Sometimes targets can be set which are counterproductive in relation to broader objectives.

It is a common criticism of target regimes that targets focus on processes rather than outcomes. However processes may be important. They often have the advantage of providing more readily verified targets than outcomes, and may provide more meaningful targets if the outcomes are subject to external influences.

Summary

In general the agencies are making a reasonable choice of targets, though some targets are narrowly process-related and several agencies could do more to relate their key targets to critical aspects of their core businesses. There is an issue about whether targets are best expressed in terms of final 'outcomes', which make most sense to the public, but are subject to external factors, or of more intermediate 'outputs', for which agencies can be held more closely to account. This may be resolved in part by identifying the different audiences that need to be addressed by a corporate or business plan: what is required for external accountability and for messages to front-line staff is different from the detail required for internal management. But there is often a genuine difficulty in identifying what contribution an individual agency is making to a common objective such as reducing re-offending or increasing public confidence. Even if it is not possible to express

the relationship in quantitative terms it would be good practice to be explicit about the outcome to which each target relates.

Criminal Justice System

The PSA targets for the CJS in Northern Ireland relate to public confidence, Catholic representation in the Police Service, reductions in the incidence of domestic burglary and vehicle crime, a reduction in the rate of reconviction and a reduction in the cost per prisoner place. That seems a reasonable choice of targets, though CJI has some reservations about the 'confidence' target, and a target for the reduction of delay in criminal cases would be another good candidate. The targets are not nearly as comprehensive as those for the Home Office shown in Annex D: there is nothing on 'narrowing the justice gap' or 'persistent and prolific offenders', for example.

Police Service

The targets in the last Policing Plan were not yet sufficiently closely related either to the National Intelligence Model (NIM) or to an analysis of the risks facing the PSNI. However progress has since been made, utilising the NIM Business Process. The Strategic Issues are now prioritised using risk management, and then performance indicators, targets and risks are identified.

The Integrated Planning Process, incorporating NIM, is highly developed but it had the effect in the 2005-06 Policing Plan of generating too many targets, which were not properly prioritised. Some of the targets relate to core business but many do not, and there are important aspects of PSNI's work which are not targeted. The targets in Part 2 of the Policing Plan need to be reduced to a smaller number and supplemented by a few targets from Part 3. The remainder should be relegated to 'internal management' status. Commanders and their District Policing Partnerships need to ensure that the targets published in local policing plans reflect key local policing issues and concerns. Local plans follow a template provided by HQ, and although content is at the discretion of the District Commander there is a tendency for local plans to follow the content of the Annual Policing Plan directly.

Some police officers' views

Police officers commonly felt that some of the Policing Plan targets were not particularly relevant to current requirements, and suggested others:

“Good detection rates are harder to achieve than reducing crime.”

“I would not agree with the target set for anti-social behaviour, or the percentage of persons who know their local police officer.”

“Drink driving would be a good target, because it is a scourge, difficult to tackle and requiring inter-agency co-operation”.⁴

Targets which did not appear in the Policing Plan were often more important than those in the Plan to officers outside Headquarters. The work of the Districts is guided by Regional and District Plans, which generate their own suites of targets.

Several officers commented on the negative consequences of imposing certain targets. A common example was District targets for the use of fixed penalty tickets:

“Some officers would issue tickets in the evening to people parking within 15 metres of a junction or for dirty number plates. These would be better dealt with by advice and warning.”

“Officers would deliberately increase their figures if they thought they had to in order to meet targets, and then they would go and do the real police work.”

Another officer did not agree with the number of PACE Is being a target, as that meant that people were being stopped and searched:

“At times this may not be entirely legal.”

“This is typical of young officers just out of training, who are obsessed with hitting targets. Some of these targets are counter-productive to community policing.”

⁴ Drink driving is in fact targeted in Part Two, but the suggestion was that it should be singled out as one of the handful of high-profile targets.

Public Prosecution Service

Understandably much of the emphasis in planning is currently on the task of establishing and rolling out the Public Prosecution Service, but work is in hand to develop further measures relating to the core business of the agency. Targets for timeliness are in place, but there is scope for other targets related to the quality of the prosecution service, along the lines followed by the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales.⁵ There is a lack of data about the quality of decision making, though quality measures are under development and appropriate targets will be included in the 2006-07 Business Plan. A range of operational measures and targets (either in place or under development) are included in Region and Section scorecards.

Probation Board

NI Standards for Probation work underpin all of PBNI's professional work and influence many of their targets. There are well-established targets and KPIs, but with little indication of how they contribute to the aims of reducing re-offending and ensuring public protection. The targets and KPIs contain nothing specifically on child protection, which is an important area of work for the Probation Service. The targets are essentially process-related and focus on timeliness and the regularity of procedures, but do not address the quality of input or the overall effectiveness of interventions (though the supporting monitoring and audit procedures try to capture both quality and quantity). Inspectors do not underestimate the difficulty of establishing linkages to final outcomes, but there is statistical evidence which could be drawn upon to demonstrate more clearly the value of Probation's work. NISRA, for example, recently reported favourably on the effectiveness of Custody Probation Orders in reducing re-offending amongst young men released from Hydebank Wood.

Youth Justice Agency

The aim of the YJA is to prevent offending by children, but at present the top-level targets are mainly related to administrative aspects of setting up the comparatively new agency. There is currently no target in relation to re-offending:

“There is a need to aim for a re-offending target. In 5 to 10 years time I would also like to see targets on victim satisfaction and victim participation, and on young persons' participation and satisfaction.”

There are good lower-level targets, however, for the Youth Conferencing Service, and work is in hand to collect statistical information which will enable the agency to set more meaningful targets in other areas.

⁵ The CPS targets, which are expressed in terms of achieving satisfactory outcomes from the prosecution process, may be taken as indicators of quality. But quality may also be measured at the level of the correctness of the individual prosecutorial decision.

Prison Service

The targets relate to aspects of the core business of the Prison Service. There was a general acceptance amongst staff at all levels that the published targets did accurately reflect the work of the Prison Service. There are other issues that could perhaps usefully be highlighted, such as increasing Catholic representation in the workforce. Inspectors also suggested the adoption of a possible target on suicide and self-harm, as is the case in England and Wales. However, the consensus within the Prison Service was against the adoption of such a target.

Court Service

The targets relate to the core business of the courts and the central role they should play in enhancing confidence in the criminal justice system. The structure of targets has remained the same for some years and the Court Service is currently re-thinking its targets to see if they provide the most appropriate coverage of its activities, customer service work in particular. Instead of just having a headline confidence target, the Court Service breaks it down into a series of things it means to do to contribute to that headline (good practice).

Recommendation 2

Agencies and the NIO could usefully pay more attention to the regimes adopted by their counterparts in Great Britain (see Annex D), making due allowance for the special circumstances of Northern Ireland.

Recommendation 3

Agencies need to think more carefully about the different audiences for their plans and distinguish different categories of targets accordingly. They need to address the public and their own front-line staff through their key, highlighted targets at the same time as providing a framework for performance management within the organisation through their other, managerial targets. They need to ensure that their highlighted public targets relate to their core business and the outcomes they are aiming to achieve, not just to internal processes, so that they are meaningful to the general public.

b. Are there too many targets?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Bad practice is that too many targets are identified, with the result that no outsider can pay sufficient attention to them, staff fail to take them on board, and public accountability for performance is impaired. No clear distinction is drawn between the large number of targets needed for internal management of the organisation (which may nevertheless be put into the public domain in a spirit of openness) and the small number needed to provide an intelligible basis of public accountability.

Good practice is that comprehensive information about objectives and targets is published for the benefit of internal management and external analysts, but that a small sub-set are singled out as the primary targets of the organisation in the year in question. These targets constitute a message to staff and partner organisations, as well as the tangible criteria by which the organisation plans to be judged.

Summary

Most agencies present a manageable number of top-level targets, but several need to identify more clearly their selected targets for the purposes of public presentation and public accountability. The PSNI faces a major challenge in marshalling its targets so as to present an understandable picture of its plans and performance. The Policing Board presents the material clearly, but there is too much. There would be scope for the Chief Constable to identify a smaller number of key targets that would provide a real focus for the organisation year by year. For some agencies recommendations by inspecting bodies add significantly to the targets they have to manage.

Criminal Justice System

There are seven targets in the PSA (strictly six, but the first target has two distinct parts). This has the merit of identifying a small number of issues which are genuine priorities, but on the other hand there are important issues, such as delay in the criminal justice system, which are omitted. CJI's own suggestions – purely for illustration – are at Anne E.

Police Service

It is recognised that in such a large and complex organisation as PSNI that the published targets cannot reflect the work undertaken by all units and branches. The Policing Plan currently contains 138 published targets. Not all the targets are of equal significance, however,⁶ and rigorous prioritisation would make it easier for members of the public to understand the aims and to assess the performance of the PSNI.

⁶ Some are reporting mechanisms rather than true targets.

“There is no criticism, no prioritisation and no cost-benefit analysis of targets.”

“It is no good saying something is a priority if it isn’t really. In the end everything has to be done.”

A smaller number of published targets both in Parts Two and Three of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan would have two main advantages:

1. It would enable the delivery of policing services to be focused on a more manageable number of key priority targets.
2. It would also provide an opportunity to delegate greater responsibility to District Commanders by ensuring their local policing plans fully reflect PSNI’s community policing ethos with a greater representation of key local policing issues and concerns.

Part Three targets should be limited to key priority issues that directly enhance PSNI’s capacity to deliver Part Two targets. Targets that do not meet such criteria should be confined to the unpublished Departmental Business Plans. Targets dropped from Part Three of the Plan would continue to be encompassed by departmental business plans, ensuring that all branches and departments are working towards a common vision.

The number of targets is a problem in terms of communication to staff. There is a widespread – almost universal - view among police officers that there are too many targets.

“It is confusing to have Part 3 as well as Part 2 of the Plan. Part 3 in general makes no impact on the public.”

Public Prosecution Service

There are 23 ‘performance milestones’ spread across the four PPS Strategic Priorities, which are, Inspectors suggest, slightly too many for effective public presentation. The targets are designed primarily for the purposes of internal management, and the PPS might wish to identify a sub-set of targets to represent its business to an external audience.

Probation Board

PBNI has reduced the number of objectives and targets considerably in recent years. They are now better focused and amount to a more reasonable number. The number of key business areas in the corporate plan has been reduced from 18 in 2003 to five in 2005. Staff complain, however, that there are still too many objectives and targets for them to cope with.

Youth Justice Agency

Yes. There are 10 targets in the business plan.

Prison Service

Yes. There are 11 key targets.

Court Service

There are five key operational targets specifically relating to criminal business. The limited number of top level targets are cascaded down to operational units. The Court Service uses targets well for management purposes but could identify a smaller number for the purposes of public accountability.

c. Are targets clear and understandable?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Bad practice is that targets are set which are not verifiable, or that they are set in what appear to be simple terms, but they can only be understood in relation to a particular definition of the terms, with the result that the target may mean something different from what the ordinary member of the public might think.

Good practice is that targets are clear and accurately reflect what they appear to mean, and that they are SMART, i.e. verifiable. Ideally targets should not merely be verifiable, but should be audited to confirm that they have been achieved.

Summary

Most targets are understandable, though some would benefit from being made more explicit. Agencies need to check that all their targets are SMART: most are, but by no means all. Targets are often designed for internal consumption and are not expressed in a way which is accessible to the public.

Criminal Justice System

The PSA targets are broadly understandable, but they would be clearer if the baselines for improvement were stated: percentage improvements from what to what? (A 5 per cent increase in a percentage is not the same thing as an increase of five percentage points.)

Police Service

The targets are generally understandable, with the main difficulty arising from their number. Several, however, are not properly quantified or 'SMART'. The format of the plan has become better structured since the 2003-06 Policing Plan. It is now easier to understand what the targets and objectives mean, though some in Part 3 of the Plan are slightly obscure.

“They were asked to ‘increase cash seizures’ and one of the Officers said that if he increased by £5 he had hit his target. These were very broad objectives and did not mean much.”

Public Prosecution Service

Broadly speaking the targets are comprehensible, certainly to staff within the PPS and the wider criminal justice system. However, it is unclear to what extent the targets speak to the general public about the important work of the PPS. The scorecard reporting and monitoring method creates a good framework document, clearly defining

the objectives, measures, targets, actions and responsibility, but it is not designed, or suitable, for an external audience.

Probation Board

The targets are clear and well understood within the organisation, but may not be so readily understood by outside observers. Notes of explanation would be helpful.

Youth Justice Agency

The targets within the corporate plan and business plan detail a strategic aim, key performance indicators, key performance targets and the development objectives. All are clear and understandable. However, to the public, it may be that they do not properly reflect the core work of the organisation. The targets are clear, but there is more to be done in developing them. The current evaluation of youth conferencing by Queen's University is helping the YJA to make its related targets more SMART.

Prison Service

The targets are clear and well understood by staff, though the definition of 'constructive activity' is very broad, including, for example, legal visits, and could be misleading. The Prison Service emphasises the importance of keeping targets clear and simple:

"They need to be communicated to staff in ordinary terms, not in jargon."

Court Service

The targets are clear and unambiguous, but it would be helpful if some notes could be appended explaining the stages of the criminal justice process to which they refer. There are objectives and performance milestones under the 'Responsiveness' business area, which are supported by key operational targets in a way that CJI regards as good practice.

d. Are targets set at the right level?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Bad (but very common public sector) practice is that there is 'cosiness' in the setting of achievable targets. Unchallenging deals are struck between sponsoring officials who go through the motions to show that they are making an effort to raise performance and managers who want to ensure that they are able to meet whatever targets are set.

This is in contrast to business, where targets are set as a result of commercial imperatives, with much more application of quantitative techniques such as benchmarking and trend analysis, more challenge and less comfort.

Good practice involves either a quasi-commercial quantitative approach or else substantial external challenge to provide the necessary discipline on the organisation.

A perverse effect can arise if targets which are set slackly are treated as norms so that, for example, action is always left till just before the deadline.

Summary

This is a weak area for most agencies, with some exceptions. In most agencies there is little sign of evidence-gathering in terms of trends or benchmarks to inform the setting of targets, and little evidence of effective challenge from outside the agencies. There was no evidence of actual collusion to set easy targets, but there is a lack of tension in the system. The only effective driver would seem to be the Public Service Agreement set by the Treasury, but even there it is not clear how much science went into the levels of targets set, and the scope of the PSA is very limited.

Criminal Justice System

Challenge is in principle provided by HM Treasury through the Public Service Agreement with the NIO. However the targets appear to be essentially self-selected by the NIO and not all of them are demanding. The small target improvements in confidence levels may be within the margins of survey error, and the specific crime targets look modest. On the other hand the reduction in the reconviction rate and the reduction in cost per prisoner place may be quite challenging.

Police Service

Challenge is in principle provided by both the NIO and the Policing Board. The NIO is more closely involved in the planning process for policing than for any other of the agencies because of the statutory role the Secretary of State has to play in relation to the policing plan. However, its participation is still limited and mainly relates to targets which have financial implications. The Policing Board devotes careful attention to the plans. There is always a balance to be struck between being supportive and being

challenging, but there is evidence of the balance shifting and more challenge being visible in the past year.

The same problem of a lack of baseline information applies to the police as to the other agencies. There are some targets which just exhort the police to “increase” the number of drugs seizures or “reduce” crime. These are hardly ambitious. Some targets appear to be set in areas where progress will be relatively easy to achieve (‘easy wins’). Until recently there was no system to provide additional challenge by use of comparative analysis across Districts, but this is now a feature of Accountability Meetings. The introduction of domains in the 2005 Policing Plan will facilitate the making of such comparisons.

Public Prosecution Service

The PPS targets suffer from a lack of baseline information (either historic trends or benchmarking). However, there is no question that they are challenging: in a number of cases they are not being met, and there is a widespread feeling that they are currently unrealistic, though that may change as more staff come on board and experience builds up. Performance in the new ‘PPS’ areas has been better than in the residual ‘DPP’ areas. The PPS reports to the Attorney General, but it draws its budget from the NIO’s public expenditure allocation. Any external ‘productivity’ challenge would tend to come from the NIO rather than from the Attorney’s Office, though there are numerous linkages between the Departments.

Probation Board

The core targets have stayed the same since 2003-04, and all the targets but one are set at over 90%. There is at present a lack of evaluation which could inform target-setting better. The draft plan is sent to the sponsoring department within the NIO for Ministerial approval. The Department has been active in encouraging the Board to improve its published plans, but it has not intervened actively to challenge the targets. Quarterly overview meetings are held with the NIO in which PBNI are held to account for delivery.

Youth Justice Agency

It is difficult to judge because of the lack of baseline information. The YJA told Inspectors that gathering baseline information was going to be one of its main tasks in the coming year. The Agency is planning an away day for senior managers to begin to address this issue. As with the Probation Board, the NIO is more involved in monitoring than in the setting of targets. There has been an attempt to make some of the targets more challenging from the previous year of 2004-05 business plan. For example the target for delivering results through staff saw the target for training days increase from 70% of plan in 2004-05 to 75% of plan in 2005-06.

Prison Service

The key targets are reviewed each year as part of the business planning process. Most of the key targets have changed from the 2004-05 business plan and all are now more challenging. For example, the number of staff assaulted by prisoners is less than 3 per 100 prisoners in 2005-06 (5 per 100 prisoners in 2004-05); an average of at least 20 hours constructive activity per week for each sentenced prisoner in 2005-06 (18 hours per week in 2004-05). The 2005-06 plan stipulates the target average cost per prisoner place, which has not been stated in past published plans. A three year staged target has been set in accordance with the PSA. One Governor said he

“deliberately incorporated aspirational elements into some [local] targets in the hope that they will provoke staff constructively and eventually be accepted into the culture.”

There is quarterly scrutiny at regular meetings in terms of the targets set from the NIO and additional (external) scrutiny by HM Treasury and by Audit.

Court Service

The Court Service is the Lord Chancellor’s Department in Northern Ireland, and is an independent Civil Service in its own right. It has a direct relationship with HM Treasury and funding is voted directly to it by Parliament. It is one of the Departments led by the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) but, although from time to time the Court Service may consult with colleagues in DCA, the DCA is not responsible for operational issues within the Court Service, such as target setting.

The Corporate Plan cycle follows the spending review timetable, to link targeted outputs to funding availability.

The DCA is not involved in target-setting except to sign off the corporate and business plan. Any challenge from the Treasury relates to the Service Delivery Agreement which links resources to targets. There have been no changes to the targets from the plans dated 2003/04 and 2004/05, but the Court Service recognises that it is time to take a fresh look at its structure of targets and has begun to consult about it. However there is considerable challenge involved in the setting of local targets, based on the corporate targets and on each Division’s evaluation of its performance in the previous year.

Recommendation 4

Agencies need to apply more ‘science’ (i.e. numerical analysis) to setting the levels of their targets, analysing trends and benchmarking against comparators elsewhere; and to be more disciplined about making sure that all their targets are SMART. Targets need to be able to be validated, and indeed audited.

Recommendation 5

There needs to be more challenge in the target-setting process. Agency sponsors need to challenge their agencies, and agencies in turn need to challenge their staff, to pursue continuous improvement.

e. Do they conflict with other agencies' targets?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Organisations plan in isolation without reference to one another's objectives, with the result that targets and objectives may conflict.

Good practice is for agencies to exchange plans in draft with relevant partners, and to have clear understandings about their expectations of one another, amounting to service level agreements, if necessary.

Summary

The inspection has not identified any obvious incompatibility between the targets being set by different agencies. While there is some evidence of some agencies getting together to target key aspects of the criminal justice system jointly, this approach tends not to be system wide or strategic. There are instances of targets which are in practice unhelpful to other agencies and of agencies telling Inspectors that it would be helpful if partner agencies could take on board their requirements more explicitly. Inspectors would like to see a more systematic approach to the setting of shared targets, with the Criminal Justice Board taking a more pro-active role and each agency undertaking to make its own measurable contribution toward them. This would require collective Ministerial endorsement, but it need not conflict with the statutory independence of agencies.

Criminal Justice System

The PSA targets for the criminal justice system all appear somewhere or other in the targets of individual agencies, but unsystematically. There is little explicit reference in the individual plans to the overarching Public Service Agreement. Nor is the PSA clearly reflected in the published 'Purpose and Aims of the CJSNI', which mentions no targets for the CJS (and slightly different objectives!).

Police Service

The PSNI builds in to its planning process consultation with other agencies. However its targets are not always framed to be as helpful as they could be to other agencies. The targets for processing 85% of custody cases within 90 days and 85% of bail cases within 110 days can have the effect of causing files to be sent to the PPS before they are ready, resulting in Requests for Further Information (RFIs) and consequent delay. The Departmental consultation takes place with other agencies in the criminal justice system; however the depth and breadth of consultation is left to the discretion of Chief Officers and varies accordingly. Districts appear to have little input into agreements reached with other agencies at the macro level with concern being expressed regarding the achievability of the targets and implications for resource allocation.

Public Prosecution Service

There are no obvious inconsistencies between the targets set by PPS and other agencies. Where appropriate the PPS adopts a cross-agency approach. The Director has regular contact with the representatives of partner organisations through the CJB and its sub-groups. PSNI are on the PPS project board. There were comments from partner organisations about the delay sometimes occasioned by the PPS. This aspect of target-setting is being addressed in the separate CJI thematic review of avoidable delay in the criminal justice system, which is currently in progress.

Probation Board

PBNI builds into its planning process consultation with other agencies. PBNI meets to consult on the Prison Service's plans and on those of Health Boards and Trusts. The plans acknowledge that there are cross cutting themes in criminal justice to take into account within the planning, but those themes could be more clearly reflected in actual objectives and targets.

Youth Justice Agency

There is no indication of conflict with other agencies, but there was a comment from the police that they were not consulted about the time limits set for Court Order conferences. The targets were very strict and police attendance was regarded as a high priority. In the corporate plan for 2005-06 there is a reference to contributing towards the NIO PSA target to reduce the rate of re-conviction by 5 %.

Prison Service

There is joint planning with the Probation Service and with other partners such as NIACRO. The Prison and Probation Services exchange drafts of their plans. The plan states that together with PBNI and other bodies, the Prison Service will deliver PSA 6 'to ensure that the supervisory and custodial sentences imposed on offenders by the courts are delivered appropriately to protect people of Northern Ireland and help reduce the risk of re-offending'. In addition, at a local level, Probation are involved in developing plans for the individual prison estates.

Court Service

There is good evidence of consultation. Trilateral targets have been agreed with the PPS and the Youth Conferencing Service. The Court Service shares its targets with other agencies locally through Court User Groups. Within the strategic objectives under 'Modernisation' there is a reference to working with other justice agencies to improve working practices. The Court Service has been a member of the Public Prosecution Service evaluation team which has looked at feasible targets and business procedures that impact on both organisations. There is continuous consultation with the Lord Chief Justice regarding the targets and performance against them.

f. Are they set in consultation with staff?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Good practice is that plans are generated through dialogue and a process of challenge between management and the workforce. Staff understand why achieving the targets matters, in terms either of the viability of their company (in the private sector) or in terms of the public good (in the public sector).

Consultation does not necessarily mean agreement: at the end of the day target setting is management's responsibility.

Bad practice is that plans are produced unilaterally by top management and then imposed on the workforce without consultation. Staff fail to understand the significance of the targets, do not identify with them and do not make the contribution they could towards achieving them.

Summary

There is wide variation in the practices of the different agencies but in general there is scope for considerable improvement in the extent to which target setting is informed by a genuine dialogue with staff. Performance management extending from the corporate to the individual level is well developed in only one agency, though others have elements of it. Targets are not always popular with staff: they are widely regarded as a 'necessary evil', and sometimes as a diversion from the real task in hand.

Criminal Justice System

Not applicable. The Public Service Agreement is negotiated between the Treasury and the NIO. There is little scope in practice for the NIO even to consult agencies about the PSA targets.

Police Service

At the corporate level there are thorough processes to reflect internal views during the target-setting process. At district level considerable efforts are made to ensure the involvement of staff in setting targets for local policing plans. At Departmental level however the approach taken appears to be less co-ordinated. The outcome is that in one department we inspected lower level staff were consulted in the shaping of targets, while staff input in another was minimal; indeed many officers in that department were unaware of any consultation process. It was found that staff who were subject to consultation related better to the targets set than those whose views were not sought. Further research into a number of other Departments would clarify if the experience from this one Department is replicated.

Public Prosecution Service

It needs to be recognised that the PPS is still in a transitional state. There is some consultation with staff, but mainly senior staff, and the performance management system is focused on Grade 5 and above. It is not clear to what extent any input from front-line prosecutors affects the drafts of the plans and targets. The impression was that they felt that the plans were of limited relevance to them, apart from the timeliness targets, which are well understood. Some targets, however, have regularly been missed and have therefore lost some of their force. Staff tend to be sceptical:

“Targets are just imposed from above... Staff pay little attention to targets that cannot be met.”

The culture is undoubtedly one of hard work, but there is more to be done to persuade staff to own the performance management regime.

Probation Board

There is substantial consultation both with staff and externally, with seminars taking place in a number of locations throughout Northern Ireland. Internal planning details names against objectives and targets, and plans are aligned with performance appraisals. However there is some dissatisfaction among staff with the content of the appraisal system, which they think relates too much to quantified targets and too little to the quality of their interventions.

Youth Justice Agency

There is evidence of staff consultation, and changes to the draft business plan were made in the light of consultation, but interviewees said that they felt there was room for improvement:

“A meaningful process needs to be agreed.”

Prison Service

Staff are closely involved in target setting, with each Directorate and Establishments formally feeding into the process. The prison service unions are included in the target setting process. Staff in the establishments tend to focus on their local plans and targets. Discussions in each prison showed a similar picture in each establishment where, following the corporate planning session which senior management in each prison attended, there was a local planning process. This was led by the Governor but included a cross section of staff within each prison. There were variations as to how inclusive this process was in terms of gathering ideas and input from ordinary members of staff. However, most staff to whom CJI spoke seemed reasonably satisfied with the process and were aware, if not always of the corporate targets, at least of their local plans.

Court Service

There is a thorough process of involving staff in the setting of targets, and staff are fully involved in monitoring and re-assessing progress against targets and risks in relation to targets. The performance management culture is more developed than in any of the other agencies.

Recommendation 6

Agencies need to do more to involve staff in the process of setting targets, so that they feel ownership of them. A performance management culture needs to extend down from the corporate to the individual level.

g. Are targets being used to support performance management?

WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

At one extreme there is no linkage whatever between corporate targets and the appraisal of individuals. At the other, staff are judged and rewarded solely by reference to the results they achieve in relation to their targets, with no questions asked about how they achieved them.

The right balance between these extremes will depend on the nature of the business. The degree to which individuals can be held to account for the non-achievement of targets will vary, as will the appropriate balance between short-term targets, such as sales this year, and long-term targets, such as developing the staff and building the business.

In public sector organisations it is generally right to take a long-term view, and how the objectives are achieved is often as important as whether. But one still looks for corporate targets to be cascaded down through the organisation in an effective way, and for them to be given due weight in the appraisal process. Performance-related pay may be helpful, but it is unlikely to be effective in the absence of a management culture which gives constant attention to performance against targets.

Summary

There were significant variations in the practice of managing performance across the six agencies. Generally, senior staff understood what was expected of them in terms of performance and could see how their performance fed into corporate performance against stated targets. However, the further down the chain inspectors went in each organisation, the less staff understood about how their performance fed into overall targets, and the more dissatisfaction there was with the internal processes for performance management. It was also the case, that in a number of the agencies, significant changes to the performance management systems were being introduced.

Police Service

Use of the National Intelligence Model has created a comprehensive system throughout the Police Service of fortnightly management meetings and monthly Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG) meetings. These forums are used at all tiers of command; not only do they assess current performance but they also identify emerging trends for remedial action. This process ensures that the organisation is on track to meet published targets. The NIM meetings are augmented by Chief Officers and Commanders who use a less formal system of daily meetings to provide updates on performance.

The SATURN IT system, which has made significant recent improvements, has an information delay of only 4-5 days. This system, which can be viewed on PSNI's intranet, provides official crime and detection figures and is extensively used to monitor performance.

Performance and Accountability meetings are held between the Deputy Chief Constable and his Chief Officers and between management teams and their respective Assistant Chief Constables or civilian equivalents. These meetings examine, amongst other matters, performance against targets in published plans and departmental business plans, examination of risk and external audit inspections. The latter process is informed by Performance and Accountability (PAC) briefs that are prepared in advance of meetings by Policy, Planning and Performance staff. This process is replicated at District level when Regional ACCs hold District Commanders to account for the performance of the District. These PAC briefs are prepared by the Police Analysts and while use of the PAC brief has been successful in its application, concern was expressed that it is now attempting to measure and assess too much detail in that it is now approximately 45 pages in length.

At Superintending level it was found that a number of the targets set for personal development were directly related to published targets as well as the targets set for their respective areas of command. The use of personal development targets, with a reward scheme for exceptional performance, has recently been introduced into the Police Service. Those interviewed expressed a general consensus that its use focuses attention on organisational targets. Below Superintending level a different picture emerged. Staff are not allocated individual responsibility relating to the achievement of published targets, nor is a reward system for exceptional performance in place (this would require national agreement). While links are made between a member of staff's yearly activity and the published targets during annual staff appraisals, there was a general view that this process, which is retrospective in nature, does not provide sufficient focus on the achievement of organisationally important targets.

Overall within PSNI there is clear and commendable evidence of a performance culture within the police service that has emerged over recent years.

Public Prosecution Service

The PPS has a sophisticated Business Objects system which allows monitoring of performance of individual members of staff at least in terms of timeliness. However, from discussions with Senior and Public Prosecutors, it is clear that there is not a performance management culture within the organisation. Line managers rarely discuss performance with lawyers reporting to them and individual lawyers were not able to discuss their own performance figures. Staff appraisal does take place and involves twice yearly discussions with line managers but a number of legal staff described the system as meaningless:

“[Appraisals] have no implication at the end of the year – terms of condition and pay will be unaffected.”

“There is no measure of performance in this organisation in terms of quality – who is good and who is bad.”

A senior member of management described the current system as “*management by exception*”. Generally there was a feeling that lawyers were reluctant to be subject to a performance management system. We understand that the system is in the process of being changed.

Probation Board

Internal planning places names against objectives and targets, which are then cascaded down into individual forward job plans and appraisals. Staff are very widely aware of performance against targets at the Area level.

“There is a transparent process for linkages between the corporate plan through to appraisal processes.”

There was a feeling among some staff, as indicated above, that the organisation is over-driven by KPMs and that quality was sometimes being lost by an over reliance on numerical targets. Opinions amongst staff differed on this, however, with some staff telling inspectors that, at least insofar as individual performance was concerned, excessive weight was not given to performance against numerical targets. A new appraisal system was introduced last year, which still needs time to bed in. Administrative staff and senior managers have performance related pay, but Probation Officers and Area Managers do not.

Youth Justice Agency

Across the four directorates performance management varies due to the nature of the work carried out and the management information systems available. Performance against targets is reviewed quarterly by the Directors and Assistant Directors, and in some directorates review meetings are held in conjunction with staff, for example within Youth Conferencing, as part of their regular performance review. Personal targets are held within performance development plans which are derived from the local business plans.

Prison Service

The NIPS is unique among the NI criminal justice agencies in that performance against targets is a factor (albeit a minor one) in the annual pay award for most staff. Nevertheless, the general view among the majority of staff to whom we spoke was that there was not as yet a performance management culture across the whole of the Prison Service. Staff were aware of the local targets in each establishment and while most could see their role as contributing to those targets, they generally did not see the appraisal system as linking into the overall corporate targets. The appraisal system for most staff is a subjective and retrospective analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. This is being replaced by a more objective forward looking system which will eventually be extended to all staff and which was welcomed by those staff to whom we spoke.

The more developed system is already in place for more senior staff and there was a clear expectation on their part that they would be held accountable by their line managers for the performance if it fell short of what was expected. It was also clear that Governors were expected to answer for the performance of their establishment.

Court Service

The performance management culture is more developed than in any of the other agencies. The Business Support Group (BSG) was established in early 2004 to progress performance management across the courts and has made a significant impact. Progress against targets is reported to the senior management board on a quarterly basis.

“Performance management runs right through our system.”

Locally, targets are monitored monthly and are discussed with section managers as part of performance review meetings. There is quarterly upward reporting against the targets. Each court area receives feedback from the BSG on the performance tables they have submitted. Each area also produces an end of year report detailing performance against plan. Pay is performance related as staff appraisal takes due account of efforts towards meeting targets but it is not mechanistically linked to the achievement of targets.

5. What do staff make of it all?

1. Most staff interviewed understood that their organisation had to have targets, even though they were often viewed as a necessary evil. Staff can see that target setting has a place in the management of their organisations. They can see that it has led to improvements in service levels in some instances. But they also perceive that there are potential dangers of over-mechanising the management of organisations which do not lend themselves to target-driven management as readily as routine industrial or clerical processes. A target-driven culture suits the Court Service and the Prison Service well enough, but it is less comfortable in the Probation Service or the Youth Justice Agency:

“The core values of ... are picked up in the teams. It is more about who you are and what you do than performance indicators”

2. It is evident from the interviews that, while senior managers in the agencies are seized of the importance of targeting and showing performance against targets, there is scepticism among front line staff. There is a sense that targets sometimes miss the real point of what they are doing, that they are poor proxies for a fair judgment of their achievements, and that in some cases managers tacitly realise that and so do not themselves take the exercise all that seriously. Police officers (and lawyers) were particularly prone to be ‘target-sceptical’.

“The public doesn’t really care [about targets] and neither do the police officers within the District.”

“We cannot work to the Policing Plan. We have to deal with reality, and the reality is murders and the Loyalist feud”

3. It is genuinely hard to turn the complex aims of the criminal justice system into operational targets without oversimplifying them. There was a recognition, though:

- that targets helped an organisation to avoid becoming ‘lazy and unfocused’;
- that they could be useful in drawing attention to particular priorities;
- that targets had led to improvements in performance
- and that what was not targeted might not be funded.

4. The way targets are communicated to staff is obviously crucial. Targets need to be simple and understandable, not expressed in jargon; they need to be related to the actual jobs that people are asked to do; they need to be conveyed with conviction by management and to form the subject of regular face-to-face interactions (performance reviews, appraisals) with the staff they are meant to influence. Targets that stay on paper in planning documents are of no value.

5. Staff and many managers would like to see fewer targets, by and large, and targets more clearly related to the real jobs that they are doing. They can see, too, that it is important that the targets for each individual agency should cohere in an overall pattern

of targets for the criminal justice system. Although there were not many examples of actual conflicts between different agencies' objectives, there was a sense that agencies did not consult one another enough and that they were often as a result not being as helpful to one another as they could be. There was a suggestion that they should get together more to present their plans to the public, rather than consulting the same stakeholder groups independently. This would be facilitated to the extent that agencies could harmonise their planning cycles.

Recommendation 7

The Criminal Justice Board should facilitate public consultation over the plans for the agencies (apart from the PSNI, for which the Policing Board takes the lead), so that each agency does not need to go out separately to consult what are, in many cases, the same stakeholders. Agencies should be prepared to accept consultation messages on behalf of, and feed them back to, other agencies.

6. Agencies will inevitably have different, and therefore potentially conflicting, priorities: producing prosecution files on time may not always be the priority for police officers who are working long shifts in public order situations, and the convenience of police and forensic witnesses may not always be the priority for those scheduling court business. There may be other factors that have precedence from the point of view of the interests of justice.

7. Understanding one another's business better and making oneself accessible for the ready exchange of information seem to be the keys to better functioning of the system. Too many police officers and agency officials hide behind procedures which artificially (and sometimes quite deliberately) isolate them from other parts of the system. If there was more of a sense of a common endeavour, less 'us and them', the system has the potential to work much more efficiently. The members of the Criminal Justice Board need to take a lead on this, but it will not happen overnight. It will require a sustained effort to convince staff at all grades in the agencies that they are all working on the same side.

Methodology of the review

Project initiation

The aims of the inspection were to:

- 1) Assess the agencies' practices in relation to target setting and performance management against the criteria set out above;
- 2) Examine whether the targets which are coherent and consistent with the Government's overall objectives for the criminal justice system;
- 3) Make recommendations for improving agencies' practices both in setting targets individually and collectively and in using them to improve performance and outcomes for the public.

A Project Initiation Document (PID) was drawn up by the lead inspector detailing the proposed scope of the inspection. It was approved by the Steering Group in April 2005.

Steering Group

The inspection was guided by a Steering Group consisting of:

Kit Chivers (CJI)
Sir Dan Crompton (Adviser)
ACC Gillespie (PSNI)
Robin Masefield (NIPS)
Jacqui Durkin (NICtS)
Graham Kelly (PBNI)
Brendan McGuigan (CJI)
Paul Mageean (CJI)
Ann Duncan (CJI)

The group was later expanded to include Jimmy Scholes (PPS), Bill Lockhart (YJA) and David Wilson (Policing Board).

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out in two phases. Phase 1 involved speaking to the Chief Executives and key operational staff within each agency to gain an understanding of the process by which targets are set in each of the organisations. A documentation review was conducted from the material submitted by the agencies from which hypotheses were drawn. Phase 2 involved various meetings, one to one interviews and focus groups with staff of all grades within the core criminal justice agencies. Several interviews with related bodies were also held to assist judgments. Research was conducted so to carry out comparative analysis with other jurisdictions.

Time frame

The main fieldwork was carried out in September and October 2005. Preliminary meetings were held during the months of June and July with Phase 1 of the inspection complete by mid-August 2005.

Interview Team

The interview team comprised Kit Chivers (Lead Inspector), Paul Mageean (CJI), Ann Duncan (CJI), Bill Priestley (CJI), James Corrigan (CJI), Brendan McGuigan (CJI), John Shanks (CJI), Tom McGonigle (CJI), Rose Burgess (HM Inspectorate of Probation), Sandra Brown (HM Inspectorate of Court Administration), Sir Dan Crompton (Consultant) and Robert McGarry (Consultant).

Police Service of Northern Ireland

31 interviews, 8 of which were focus groups, 21 individual interviews, 64 staff in total interviewed.

Public Prosecution Service of Northern Ireland

11 interviews in total, 4 of which were focus groups, 28 staff in total interviewed.

Probation Board of Northern Ireland

14 interviews in total, 7 of which were focus groups, 41 staff in total interviewed.

Youth Justice Agency

9 interviews, 4 of which were focus groups, 30 staff in total interviewed.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

13 interviews, 4 of which were focus groups, 42 staff in total interviewed.

Northern Ireland Court Service

12 interviews, 2 of which were focus groups, 19 staff in total interviewed.

Other external interviews

- Finance Director, NIO
- Director of Criminal Justice, NIO
- NIO Internal Audit
- Northern Ireland Policing Board: Chairman and Chief Executive

Planning and target setting in the agencies

This inspection examined the planning processes used by each of the agencies. The agencies are of very different sizes and at different stages of development, and it was not to be expected that they would follow similar procedures. PSNI has the most advanced and comprehensive planning system, based on intelligence and risk assessment, supplemented by extensive consultation both within the organisation and outside, but all the agencies have procedures appropriate to their needs.

Police Service

PSNI has sophisticated target setting processes developed over recent years following the establishment of the Policing Board and its District Policing Partnerships. At the corporate level the Secretary of State sets overarching objectives to inform the target setting process for which the Policing Board has lead responsibility. The Board discharges this responsibility by the publication of Part Two Policing Plan targets which are determined in consultation with the Chief Constable and Secretary of State (in accordance with the provisions of the 2000 Act). Part Three targets arise from the Chief Constable's strategic planning process with the objective of matching organisational capacity with Part Two requirements. At District level, Commanders hold lead responsibility for the publication of local policing plan targets which are determined in consultation with their respective District Policing Partnership. At Departmental level the Part Two and Three targets, as applicable, are incorporated into unpublished Departmental Business Plans with individual responsibility for delivery cascaded down to Branch Heads. At all organisational tiers processes of internal and external consultation are employed to varying degrees, including the use of strategic assessments, one of the products of the National Intelligence Model (NIM). The target setting process is characterised by a 'top-down' 'bottom up' approach. All targets are subject to annual revision.

Public Prosecution Service

Planning processes within the PPS are relatively new. A corporate plan was produced for the first time in 2004/05 and covers a four year period. There was limited baseline information from which to work. The PPS use a balanced score card planning process which was introduced in 2003/04. In November/December, objectives and targets are drafted and cascaded to Assistant Directors for comment. Draft scorecards are produced by each directorate in January/February, which then feed into the corporate score cards. The plan is then submitted to the Attorney General for approval.

Court Service

The business planning cycle was developed 5 years ago and uses a balanced scorecard approach with systematic risk assessments around all the targets. The basic high-level targets have not been revisited for some time, but there is an active process of negotiating targets at the operational level. The plan is submitted to the Treasury for comment before being submitted to the junior Minister at the Department of Constitutional Affairs for approval. Corporate targets are incorporated into business plans which then feed in to local targets and objectives. A top-down and bottom-up approach is used. The business plan is issued for consultation in July and court administrator teams discuss detailed targets.

Prison Service

Away days are held for the senior management at HQ and each establishment. New targets are discussed and a draft then produced. Each establishment receives individual targets which are calibrated to meet the corporate target. Local planning also takes place however to draw up those aspects of the local plan which are developed at that level. This process seems to work well and most staff interviewed felt as involved as they wanted to be in that process.

Probation Board

There is a new planning process in place. Consultation takes place with stakeholders between September and November, including seven open public consultations. Events are attended by invited guests, including DPPs, CSPs, schools, police, Women's Aid and Victim Support. Two staff consultation events are held and consultation documents are circulated to social services, prisons, political parties, churches and business in the community. A draft plan is produced from these events, which goes to the Board and staff in December. Amendments are received up to February and the plan is printed and published in April. The management team uses the draft corporate plan as an opportunity to look at objectives and targets. The plans are submitted to the NIO for approval. There is some discussion and changes may be suggested, but there have been no substantive changes to targets.

Youth Justice Agency

A one day workshop is held for Directors, Assistant Directors and BI's. From this a draft plan is then produced a week after which is an outline plan. Targets and objectives are then agreed and circulated to the workshop participants for comment. Feedback is received and changes are made. The plan is then circulated to staff for consultation. Any comments are incorporated.

A Stakeholder conference is then held with agencies such as Courts, PBNI, Community Safety, PSNI, Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts and NIO is in attendance. Last year there were plans for one event in Belfast and one in Londonderry. The one in Londonderry was cancelled but the YJA hope to carry out a similar event next year. A draft plan is drawn up including the feedback from the stakeholder event. The finalised draft is submitted to the NIO around March.

From the agreed corporate plan each Directorate will then produce a business plan incorporating both corporate issues and business that affects their field of work. A similar consultation process with staff and key stakeholders occurs.

Targets Set by Agencies in their Business Plans for 2005-06

NIO Public Service Agreement Targets

Target 1: Increase confidence in the Police throughout all parts of the community in Northern Ireland by 3% by April 2008, to be measured by a composite suite of measures on public views on the fairness and effectiveness of the police and policing arrangements.

In addition: Increase the Catholic representation on the police service to 30% by December 2010 as proposed by Patten with an interim target of 18.5% by March 2006.

Target 2: Increase confidence in the criminal justice system throughout all parts of the community in Northern Ireland by 3% by April 2008 to be measured by a composite of measures on public views on the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Target 3: The Northern Ireland Office, working in conjunction with other agencies, will:

- Reduce Domestic Burglary by 2% by April 2005 and by 15% by April 2007
- Reduce theft of and from vehicles by 6% by April 2005 and by 10% by April 2007
- By April 2008, reduce the rate of reconviction by 5% compared to the predicted rate.

Target 4: Ensure that the annual cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland falls to £82,500 by 2007/08 with interim targets of £86,290 for 2005/06 and £85,250 for 2006/07.

POLICE SERVICE

Targets, as contained in Part Two of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan, are published under six 'domains'. The domains model, which originated from the Home Office, was designed to encompass all policing activity and permit comparative analysis of performance in all Basic Command Units across England and Wales. In 2005 the domains model was adopted by PSNI (with exception of the Providing Assistance domain) to assist in the development of their performance management systems. A PSNI-specific domain is used to monitor compliance with the programme of change arising from the recommendations of the Patten Report (Section 22 (2) Northern Ireland Act 2000).

Domain	Part Two targets
Citizen Focus	4
Reducing crime	6
Investigating crime	10
Public safety	11
Resource usage	6
Programme of change	1
Total number of Part Two targets	38

Each of PSNI's 29 District Command Units (DCUs) publishes individual local policing plans that contain targets which take account of key local policing issues and concerns. Such targets must be framed so as to be consistent with those contained in Part Two of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan.

Part Three of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan contains published targets arising from the Chief Constable's strategic planning process. These targets are allocated to individual Chief

Officers who hold responsibility for achievement. These targets are also set out using the domains model.

Domain	Part Three targets
Citizen Focus	13
Reducing crime	13
Investigating crime	20
Public safety	14
Resource usage	33
Programme of change	7
Total number of Part Three targets	100⁷

The **Secretary of State** has three long term policing objectives:

- 1) To build and sustain confidence in the Police Service and police accountability arrangements by all sections of society in Northern Ireland, addressing all the areas set out in legislation and the implementation plan; and increasing Catholic representation in the Police.
- 2) To work in partnership with other relevant agencies to help reduce the incidence of crime, including organized crime, in line with the Government's published targets; and to diminish the fear of crime.
- 3) To uphold and maintain the rule of law, counter the terrorist threat; and bring to justice those responsible for crime.

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE

The PPS has a detailed business plan outlining strategic priorities, objectives and performance milestones. For the purposes of this study, the key published targets are the following:

- Issue prosecution decisions within agreed targets for 2004/05
- Make committal papers available within agreed targets for 2004/05
- Increase public confidence in the provision of a fair and impartial prosecution service to 65%.
- Evaluation of the Belfast PPS Pilot will be completed by the end of August 2004.
- Belfast PPS office fully operational by end of March 2005.
- All 2004/05 deliverables from the PPS accommodation project will be achieved by the end of March 2005.
- Deliver community outreach strategy by the end of December 2004.

PROBATION BOARD

Public Protection

- The proportion of induction interviews arranged within five working days of sentence- 98%
- The achievement of the agreed standards regarding minimum levels of contact- 94%/ 72%
- The proportion of supervision plans written to the agreed standards- 83%

⁷ A number of the targets contained in Part Three repeat targets already set out in Part Two of the Plan.

- Where breaches of proceedings are appropriate, the proportion commenced within ten working days of the incident occurring- 93%
- The proportion of offenders subject to an active Community Service Order that work an average of five hours or more per week- 90%
- The proportion of Community Service Orders that complete their sentence within twelve months- 98%
- The proportion of offenders whose risk assessment is reviewed at least every four months- 93%
- The proportion of Pre-Sentence Reports or explanatory letters delivered to the Courts by the date specified by the Court- 99%.

Business Performance

- Improve EFQM overall score by 100

YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY

Prevention of Offending:

- All young people sentenced or remanded to the Juvenile Justice Centre for more than one week will have an educational assessment and individual learning plan.
- 90% of all young people sentenced to custody will commence an approved scheme of tackling offending programme during the custodial element of their sentence.
- Achieve 80% completion in all community orders supervised by the Agency

Security:

- No escapes from within the Juvenile Justice Centre.

Safety:

- Over the year no more than 2% of the total new referrals/admissions to the Agency should be non-accidentally injured.
- Over the year no more than 2% of the total members of staff should be non-accidentally injured while engaged in work of the Agency.
- No members of the public should be non-accidentally injured whilst accessing Agency services.

Delivering Results Through Staff:

- Deliver at least 75% of the planned training days specified in the Corporate Training Priorities Plan 2005-06.

Managing Resources and Promoting Services:

- Agency expenditure is within approved budgetary limits
- Achieve a victim participation rate of at least 50% at youth conferences.

PRISON SERVICE

Security

- No escape for top and high risk prisoners
- No more than 3 escapes per 1000 medium and low risk prisoners.

Safety & Prisoner Health

- The number of staff assaulted by prisoners is less than a ratio of 3 per 100 prisoners.
- The number of prisoners assaulted by prisoners is less than a ratio of 4 per 100 prisoners.

Regimes and Reducing Re-offending

- An average of at least 20 hours constructive activity per week for each sentenced prisoner.
- An average of at least 10 hours constructive activity per week for each remand prisoner.
- To ensure 87% of prisoners serving six months or more are working to a resettlement plan and that 97% of lifers work to a resettlement plan, including preparation of the plan, in the first six months from sentence.

Staff and Developing the Service

- Each member of staff should receive an average of five training days.
- Reduce the rate of absenteeism across the Service by 10%.

Finance, Corporate Governance and Improving Business Performance

- Lay the annual report and audit accounts before the Parliament prior to the summer recess.
- Ensure the average cost per prisoner place does not exceed £86,290.

COURT SERVICE

Case management: 80% of criminal business will be processed within the target times, namely:

Papers received to listing for Court of Appeal defendants:	3 weeks
Committal to arraignment for Crown Court defendants:	6 weeks
Arraignment to start of hearing for Crown Court defendants:	12 weeks
1 st hearing to disposal for adult magistrates' defendants:	9 weeks
1 st hearing to date of finding for youth magistrates' defendants:	12 weeks

Customer service: All main courthouses to achieve Charter Mark status by March 2006.

Targets set for the criminal justice system in other jurisdictions

England and Wales CJS Targets 2005-06

CJS Vision Strand	2005-06 Target
Bringing more offences to justice	Bring 1.15m offences to justice
Confidence	Increase the proportion of people who are very or fairly confident that the CJS is effective at bringing people who commit crimes to justice (from 2002-03 baseline of 39%).
Race	Increase the confidence of black and ethnic minority communities that the CJS is effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice (from 2002-03 baseline of 49%)- this target has not been devolved to Local Criminal Justice Boards.
Victims and Witnesses	Improve the satisfaction of victims and witnesses with the CJS (from 2003-04 baseline of 59% and 57% respectively)- this target has not yet been devolved to Local Criminal Justice Boards.
Persistent Young Offenders	To maintain the average time for dealing with persistent young offenders from arrest to sentence to 71 days or fewer.
Enforcement; Fail to Appear Warrants Financial Penalties Community Penalties	To reduce the absolute number of unexecuted fail to appear warrants. To achieve an average national rate for payment of financial penalties of 81%. An average time of 35 working days from second unacceptable breach of a community penalty to resolution of the case; and 50% of breaches of community penalties should be resolved within 25 days of a second unacceptable breach.
Asset Recovery	To secure 2,200 confiscation orders worth £68 million. To reduce the outstanding balance rate to 50% for confiscation orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA); and To reduce the number of collectable outstanding orders over twelve months old by 25%.

National Policing Plan (England & Wales) 2005-08

Key Priorities

- Reduce overall crime- including violent and drug-related crime- in line with the Government's Public Service Agreements (PSAs)
- Provide a citizen-focused police service which responds to the needs of communities and individuals, especially victims and witnesses and inspires public confidence in the police, particularly among minority ethnic communities;
- Take action with partners to increase sanction detection rates and target prolific and other priority offenders;
- Reduce people's concern about crime, and anti-social behaviour and disorder; and
- Combat serious and organised crime, within and across force boundaries.

(National Policing Plan 2005-08)

Garda Síochána Policing Plan 2005

National/International Security;	To reduce the threat of subversive and terrorist activity through intelligence-led policing and international co-operation
Crime	To reduce the incidence of organised, drug related and serious crime, and criminal behaviour
Traffic	To reduce the incidence of fatal and serious injury collisions and improve traffic flow
Public Safety	To ensure public safety by reducing the incidence of public disorder and anti-social behaviour
Public Confidence	To improve confidence in An Garda Síochána
Ethnic and Cultural Diversity	To build the capability of An Garda Síochána to fulfill the emerging policing needs of our diverse ethnic and multi-cultural communities.

(Garda Síochána Policing Plan 2005)

Policing Priorities For Scotland 2003-2006

Priorities	Target
Engage Criminality; Crimes of Violence	To reduce the incidence of serious violent crime by 5% by the end of 2005/06. To increase the clear up rate for violent crime by the end of 2005/06.
Domestic Housebreaking	To reduce the incidence of housebreaking by 5% by the end of 2005/06.
Public Order Offences Emerging threats	
Confront the Problem of Drugs	To increase the weight of class A drug seizures by 10% by 2005/06. To increase the number of offences for possession and possession with intent to supply drugs by 10% by 2005/06.

Ensure Community Safety; Community Reassurance Crime Prevention Road Casualty Reduction	To increase the detection rate of racially aggravated crime by 5% by 2005/06. Against the original baseline (1994-98) for Road Accidents by 2005/6 to have reduced; The number of people killed or seriously injured by 33% The number of children killed or seriously injured by 40% The number of people slightly injured in road accidents by 10%.
Support Priorities	To reduce the proportion of working time lost to sickness absence
Modernisation Programme; Technology Improved Call Handling Finance	To achieve completion of the rollout programme for Airwave to all Scottish Forces by June 2005. To answer at least 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds.

(Association Of Chief Police Officers In Scotland- Policing Priorities For Scotland 2003-2006)

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (Scotland)

Priorities over the next 3 years;

- 1) Prosecuting serious crime;
- 2) Understanding and responding to the needs of Scottish communities;
- 3) Improving the service we provide to victims, witnesses and next of kin;
- 4) Working closely with our partners in the criminal justice system;
- 5) Investigating sudden and suspicious deaths;
- 6) Investigating and reporting on complaints against the police;
- 7) Developing staff to their full potential, valuing their contribution and rewarding good performance.

Office of the Irish Director of Public Prosecutions

Key Objectives;

- 1) Understand the law and context of operation;
- 2) Develop vision and strategy for the future direction of the Office;
- 3) Design operating processes and systems to achieve independent, fair and effective prosecutions;
- 4) Interact and co-operate with all other participants in the criminal justice system in relation to cross cutting issues with a view to improving the overall quality of service;
- 5) Maintain accurate public expectations of service.

(Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Strategy Statement 2004-2006)

Crown Prosecution Service

PSA Targets

- 1) Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2 million by 2005-06, with an improvement in all CJS areas, a

greater increase in the worst performing areas and a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials.

- 2) Improve the level of public confidence in the criminal justice system, including increasing that of ethnic minority communities and increasing year on year the satisfaction of victims and witnesses, whilst respecting the rights of defendants.
- 3) Increase value for money from the criminal justice system by 3% a year.

Key Objectives- 2004-2005;

- Driving Change and Delivery in the CJS
- Strengthening the Prosecution Process
- Being Champions for Justice and Rights of Victims
- Inspiring the Confidence of the Communities We Serve
- Being Renowned for Fairness, Excellent Career Opportunities and Commitment and Skill of All Our People.

Key Targets

Area	Target
Offences Brought to Justice	1,188,342
Attrition;	
Unsuccessful outcomes	18%
Sanction detection rate	22.1%
Charging;	
CC PCD discontinuance rate	13.1%
MC PCD discontinuance rate	13.6%
CC PCD guilty plea rate	66.1%
MC PCD guilty plea rate	71.2%
Ineffective Trials;	
MC ineffective trials	23%
CC ineffective trials	17%
Hate Crime;	
Hate crime as unsuccessful outcomes	36%
Absence- Days sick absence/employee/year	8.0

(Crown Prosecution Service Corporate Business Plan 2004-05
CPS Business Strategy 2005-08)

The National Probation Service for England & Wales

Business Plan 2005-06

The five key priorities for the National Probation Service for 2005-06 are;

- 1) Contributing to the building of an excellent National Offender Management Service with the separation of offender management from interventions;
- 2) Working purposefully with other criminal justice agencies to protect the public from harm;
- 3) Working with other criminal justice agencies and local Crime and Disorder Partnerships to promote the effective implementation of the Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) Strategy;
- 4) Working with other criminal justice agencies, Judges and Magistrates to implement the 2003 Criminal Justice Act with a particular focus on the new Community Order.

- 5) The full implementation at a national, regional and area level of “Reducing Re-offending- A National Action Plan”.

Priority	Target Measure
1- Contribute to building an excellent NOMS	Regionally set employment targets for minority ethnic staff.
1	95% of race and ethnic monitoring data on staff and offenders is returned on time and using the correct classifications.
1	Staff sickness in the NPS not to exceed an average of nine days/annum.
2- Protecting the Public from Harm	90% of risk harm assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders are completed within five working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community.
2	85% of victims to be contacted within eight weeks of an offender receiving 12 or more months' imprisonment for a serious sexual or violent offence.
3- Protecting the Public from Prolific Offenders	90% of risk assessments and OASys sentence plans are completed on prolific and other priority offenders within five working days of commencement of the order or release into the community.
3	350 ICCP completions for offenders sentenced before implementation of the CJA.
4- Implementing the 2003 Criminal Justice Act	90% of reports(expedited & adjourned) provided within the timescale required by the court.
4	Initiate breach proceedings in accordance with National Standards within 10 working days in 90% of cases.
4	Increase to 85% the proportion of orders or licences in which the offender complies
5- Implementing the National Action Plan on Reducing Re-offending	a) 40,000 Basic Skills starts b) 8,033 Basic Skills awards (contributing, alongside the LSC-led partnership target of 1,967 awards to a total of 10,000 awards for offenders in the community.
5	15,000 unemployed offenders find and keep employment or vocational training for four weeks or more during the course of their supervision.
5	4,000 DTTO/DRR completions
5	16,000 DTTO/DRR commencements
5	15,000 accredited programme completions

(National Probation Service for England & Wales Business Plan 2005-06)

Scottish Prison Service (SPS)

2005-06 Business Plan

Key actions to reduce re offending and to realise the SPS vision of Correctional Excellence;

- Working in partnership with Criminal Justice Authorities and others to reduce re offending;
- Securing offender services;
- Improving the quality of the prison estate
- Working in partnership to create and communicate a culture of professionalism in the delivery of our services;
- Making effective use of resources.

Key Performance Indicators – Ministerial Targets	Key Performance Targets 2005-06
Escapes; extreme risk	0
Escapes; others	≤ 6
Serious assaults; staff	≤ 12
Serious assaults; prisoners	≤ 74
Hours of completed programmes and approved activities, % of programme hours in accredited programmes	80,000 (70%)
Offender development; hours	1,300,000
% of prison places with access to night sanitation	93%
% clear of in-prison drug use under random anonymised prevalence testing	85%
Average annual cost per prisoner place	£35,00

(Scottish Prison Service Business Plan 2005-06)

HM Prison Service (England and Wales)

2005-06 Business Plan

Main Priorities;

- Ensuring safe and decent conditions for prisoners;
- Reducing re offending and improving prisoners' prospects on release;
- Maintaining order and control;
- Increasing diversity and equality;
- Maintaining security and preventing escapes;
- Improving health care.

To ensure that no category A prisoner escapes
To ensure that the rate of escapes from establishments and from escorts, expressed as a percentage of the average prison population, is lower than 0.005%.
To reduce the number of serious assaults as a percentage of the population compared to the 2004-05 outturn.
To ensure the rate of self-inflicted deaths in 2005-06 does not exceed 112.8 per 100,000 of the prison population.
To reduce the number of those testing positive from random mandatory drug tests as a percentage of the population compared to the 2004-05 outturn.
To ensure 59,467 prisoners will have accommodation to go to on release.
To ensure that the number of minority ethnic staff represents at least 6.0% of the workforce by April 2006.

To deliver 6,590 accredited offending behaviour programme completions in 2005-06, including 1,160 sex offender treatment programmes.
To deliver 5,250 drug treatment programmes.
To ensure that the percentage of the prison population held accommodation units intended for fewer prisoners does not exceed 24% of the average prison population.
Prisoners to achieve; 45,520 basic skills awards (including 13,250 at entry level, 18,020 at level 1 and 11,250 at level 2 and 90,000 work skills awards
To ensure that 34,890 prisoners have a job, training or education outcome on release in 2005-06.
To ensure that average staff sickness in 2005-06 is lower than 11.5 working days per person.

(HM Prison Service Business Plan 2005-2006)

Youth Justice Board (England and Wales)

2005-06 Business Plan

Main Priorities;

- Reducing offending and the use of custody
- Improving outcomes for children
- Safe and appropriate use of custody
- To increase confidence in youth justice system

The YJB contributes to four of the Home Office key aims;

To reduce crime and the fear of crime, tackle youth crime and violent, sexual and drug related crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder, so increasing safety in the home and public spaces.
To ensure the effective delivery of justice, avoiding unnecessary delay through efficient investigation, detection, prosecution and court procedures. To minimise the threat to and intimidation of witnesses and to engage with and support victims.
To deliver effective custodial and community sentences to reduce re offending and protect the public, through the prison and probation services, in partnership with the YJB.
To reduce the availability and abuse of dangerous drugs, building a coherent, co-ordinated drugs strategy, covering education and prevention, supply and misuse. To focus on effective intelligence and detection, preventative measures at local level, community regeneration, and with other relevant departments and agencies- the provision of necessary treatment and rehabilitation services. To reduce the incidence of drugs in prison and provide appropriate follow-up and remedial services.

YJB Key Targets

Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system by 5% by March 2008 compared to the March 2005 baseline.
Protect victims and communities by reducing re offending by young offenders by 5% by March 2006 compared with the 2000 baseline.
Between 31 March 2005 and 31 March 2008, reduce the size of the under- 18 custodial population by 10% through the implementation of the minimising the use of custody work programme.
To improve the assessment of risk and need for young people who have offended, and improve their access to specialist and mainstream services that will address the factors identified.

To ensure that YOTs have action plans in place to achieve equal treatment at local level for comparable offences by different ethnic groups, and to deliver targeted prevention activity that substantially reduces local differences by ethnicity in recorded conviction rates, by March 2008.

(YJB Corporate and Business Plan 2005/06 to 2007/08)

Department of Constitutional Affairs

PSA Targets

- 1) Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.25m by 2007/08.
- 2) Reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the criminal justice system without compromising fairness.
- 3) Reduce unfound asylum claims as part of a wider strategy to tackle abuse of the immigration laws and promote controlled legal migration.
- 4) By 2009/10 increase the proportion of care cases being completed in the Courts within 40 weeks by 10%.
- 5) To achieve earlier and more proportionate resolution of legal problems and disputes by;
 - Increasing advice and assistance to help people resolve their disputes earlier and more effectively;
 - Increasing the opportunities for people involved in court cases to settle their disputes out of court;
 - Reducing delays in resolving those disputes that need to be decided by the courts.

Scottish Court Service

Corporate Plan 2002-2005

The Scottish Court Service contributes to the overall key aim of the Scottish Executive which is committed to

- Making Scotland a place where people are safer and feel safer;
- Having more efficient and fairer civil and criminal justice systems;
- Reducing offending;
- Providing wider and improved access to justice.

Sheriff Courts	2004-05
Summary criminal cases disposed of within 20 weeks (%)	85%
Average waiting period (weighted) for ordinary civil cases agreed with the Sheriff Principal (in weeks)	TBC
Achievement of the administrative standards set by the Lord President and the Lord Justice General for the court session and the High Court of Justiciary (%).	97%
Achievement of the administrative standards agreed with Sheriffs Principal for the Sheriffs Courts (%)	98%
Courthouse meeting the 'Coming to Court' standards (%)	90%
Customer satisfaction as measured by annual survey (%)	85%

Customer satisfaction as measured by annual survey (%)	85%
--	-----

(Scottish Court Service Corporate Plan 2002-2005)

An illustrative outline framework of objectives for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland

Purely for illustration, the ground to be covered by the high level objectives for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland might usefully comprise the following:

Preserve life and social institutions by preventing violent disorder

Maintain acceptable standards of conduct in public places, covering all kinds of anti-social behaviour, rowdiness, criminal damage and racial, homophobic or sectarian abuse

Maintain respect for and confidence in the Law by ensuring that offenders are brought to justice, particularly for more serious offences

- Reduce delay in processing criminal cases through the system
- Increase willingness of victims and witnesses to report crime and to testify
- Introduce a policy on persistent and prolific offenders

Keep people as safe from crime as is reasonably possible, with the level of safety proportionate to the gravity of the offence

- Reduce the incidence of specific serious offences (murder, arson, GBH, burglary of occupied premises, domestic violence, sexual offences, hate crime etc)
- Reduce the likelihood of an offender re-offending, through restorative practices and offender treatment programmes as well as deterrence

Ensure that the public are realistic in their perception of the risk of being a victim of crime, so that they can take appropriate (but not disproportionate) steps to protect themselves

Minimise the cost of the criminal justice system, consistently with achieving satisfactory outcomes in terms of the above

References

Police Service

The Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2005-2008
 The Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2004-2007
 The Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2003-2006
 Criminal Justice Departmental Plan 2005-2006
 District Policing Partnership; DPP Public Consultation Survey May 2004- Northern Ireland Policing Board
 District Policing Plans, Northern Ireland 2005-2006
 ACPOS; Policing Priorities for Scotland 2003-2006
 Garda Síochána; Policing Plan 2005
 National Policing Plan 2005-2008, Home Office
 National Policing Plan 2004-2007, Home Office

Prosecution Service

Public Prosecution Service; Annual Business Plan 2005/06
 Crown Prosecution Service; Corporate Business Plan 2004-2005
 Crown Prosecution Service; Business Strategy 2005-08
 Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service; review 2003-04
 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Strategy Statement 2004-2006

Probation

Probation Board Northern Ireland; Corporate Plan 2005-2008, Business Plan 2005-2006
 National Probation Service for England & Wales; Business Plan 2005-2006

Youth Justice

Youth Justice Agency; Corporate Plan 2005/2008, Business Plan 2005/06
 Youth Justice Board; Corporate and Business Plan 2004/05 to 2006/07
 Youth Justice Board; Corporate and Business Plan 2005/06 to 2007/08

Prison Service

Northern Ireland Prison Service; Corporate Plan 2005/08, Business Plan 2005/06
 Northern Ireland Prison Service; Corporate Plan 2004/07, Business Plan 2004/05
 Magilligan Prison; Business Plan 2005/06
 Maghaberry Prison; Corporate Plan 2005/08, Business Plan 2005/06
 Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison, Business Plan 2005/06, Strategic Plan 2005/08
 Services Directorate Business Plan 2005/06
 Northern Ireland Prison Service Framework Document 2005
 Scottish Prison Service; Business Plan 2005-06
 HM Prison Service; Corporate Plan 2005-2006, Business Plan 2005-2006

Court Service

Northern Ireland Court Service; Corporate Plan 2003-06 and Business Plan 2003-04

Northern Ireland Court Service Business Plan 2004-05

Northern Ireland Court Service Annual Report

Scottish Children's Reporter; Corporate Plan April 2004-March 2006

Scottish Court Service; Corporate Plan 2002-2005

Other

NIO Departmental Plan 2005

Copyright© Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
All rights reserved

First published in Northern Ireland in January 2006 by
CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND
14 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7BA
www.cjini.org

ISBN 1-905283-05-9

Typeset in Gill Sans MT
Printed and bound in Northern Ireland by PIERCE