



## Chief Inspector reflects on his term of office

As Kit Chivers prepares to retire as Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland at the end of July, in his final article for *The Spec*, he reflects on his five-year term of office and gives his view of the challenges that remain for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

“It has been a great privilege to be the first Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, and indeed the first Inspector of Criminal Justice anywhere. But especially in Northern Ireland, where criminal justice has so long been disputed territory, and especially at this time, when Northern Ireland has been moving towards the devolution of responsibility for policing and justice to the Assembly.

“My five years have given me some understanding of the situation out of which the criminal justice agencies are coming and an appreciation of their achievement in getting to where they are now. But there is still more to be done. More about guaranteeing the equality of the system, both in terms of employment of staff and outcomes for citizens. More about changing the culture from an understandable



**Kit Chivers pictured at work at CJI.**

preoccupation with security to a focus on providing a service to the public, and especially to victims and witnesses. And more about making the criminal justice agencies more efficient, bringing their costs into line with their counterparts in other jurisdictions and redressing the balance between policing and justice and other much-needed public services.

“People sometimes ask whether inspection adds anything or whether

it is just a costly distraction and a burden for hard-pressed agency managers.

“In my ten years as an Inspector I have never for an instant doubted the value of the role. As an Inspector one has a great amount of discretion to use the resources at one’s disposal intelligently to encourage managers to raise their game, to inform the public about the justice system and show them how their money is being spent and

# Public confidence in CJI independence grows

**Criminal Justice Inspection's latest Omnibus survey has revealed a growth in public confidence that the organisation acts independently of Government.**

The survey showed an increase from 48% in 2007 to 63% in 2008, of respondents who had heard of CJI and were confident of the Inspectorate's independence.

"It is encouraging that the public have confidence that CJI will act independently of Government," said Deputy Chief Inspector Brendan McGuigan.

Mr McGuigan further highlighted an increase from 51% in 2007 to 64% that respondents believe CJI is in a position to

inspect the criminal justice system fairly.

The survey also confirmed that respondents had a good awareness of three key areas of the organisation's business.

"The survey results showed that 29% of respondents thought that CJI ensured a fair and impartial system of justice to the community. A further 19% of respondents were aware that CJI inspects the main areas of the criminal justice system, and 16% felt CJI ensures that the policies and operations of the criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland are even-handed between the communities," added Brendan.

The survey, carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and

Research Agency (NISRA) in January, not only confirmed that one in four people had heard of CJI, but highlighted that more people than ever had either watched, heard or read about the Inspectorate via the media, highlighting the level of coverage the organisation continues to attract.

"The results of this independent survey are welcomed by the Inspectorate as they provide CJI with the valued views of the public. The results also show the progress CJI has made since it was established in 2004, and provides future direction for the organisation" concluded Brendan. ■

## New Administration Support Officer joins CJI team

**CJI has appointed a new Administration Support Officer to join its Business Support Team.**

Paula McCullough joined CJI at the end of March 2008 after successfully securing the post following a recruitment campaign carried out in February.

Prior to joining CJI, Paula worked as an administrative officer with *Gingerbread NI*, a charity working to support lone parents and children. She also previously held a post as a senior clerical officer with Belfast Metropolitan College (formerly BIFHE).

Paula chose to work with CJI because she supports the Inspectorate's ethos of inspection with a view to improving public confidence in the criminal justice system. She also felt her role within the Business Support Team would offer a variety of new challenges.

Speaking to *The Spec* following her appointment Paula said: "I am delighted to have taken up this post with CJI and I look forward to making a real contribution to the work of the Business Support Team as they go about supporting senior management and members of the Inspection team as they



**Paula McCullough.**

carry out their work."

Paula holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Political and Social Sciences from University of North Wales, Bangor. ■

# First inspection of Belfast Harbour Police completed

**On 7 May 2008 CJJ published its first inspection report on the Belfast Harbour Police — one of the oldest organised police forces in the UK and Ireland.**

Belfast Harbour Police (BHP) is funded by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC). It delivers policing services over an area of 2000 acres of the Harbour Estate to a population at any one time of around 17,000 and a daily footfall of about 25,000.

Officers are sworn in as Constables under founding legislation and are able to exercise their full powers up to one mile outside the harbour boundary.

The inspection found that as a result of an internal review carried out in 2006, there was a clear vision for the force that was shared amongst BHP staff and the funding body.

Inspectors found that the force

was in transition having recently appointed a new Chief Officer and having increased its establishment of permanent officers from five to 38.

New officers were undergoing structured training at the time of the inspection that had been specifically designed for their role, whilst existing officers had received training on new systems of incident and crime recording. The full compliment of new officers was due to commence full operational duties in January 2008.

CJJ Inspectors found that BHP was in the early stages of developing new policies and processes and had begun to develop good relationships with its main stakeholders. Work was progressing on agreeing a formal protocol with the PSNI which was an important part of this development.

The force had aspirations to deliver a community-based model of policing and was moving to establish



Photograph courtesy of Belfast Harbour Commissioners

**A Belfast Harbour Police Officer on duty within the Harbour Estate.**

community and stakeholder oversight structures to enable it to do so.

Inspectors made recommendations designed to support the move to a community-based service model, to professionalise incident and crime recording, and to strengthen formal and operational links with the PSNI.

Inspectors are to return to assess progress against the report recommendations in the spring of 2009. ■

## Development opportunity for Ian

**A secondment opportunity to develop his skills and knowledge has been given to and accepted by CJJ Assistant Inspector Ian Craig.**

The 12 month secondment is based at the headquarters of the Northern Ireland Prison Service at Dundonald House. The work will include research into the development of a women's strategy, equality monitoring, performance monitoring systems, and training evaluation.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to work with a large criminal justice agency and further my interviewing



**Ian Craig who has undertaken a 12-month secondment with the Prison Service.**

and research skills and I am very grateful to Brendan, CJJ's Deputy Chief Inspector, for considering my future development and setting up this opportunity" said Ian.

During his time with the Prison Service Ian also hopes to be involved in research that will impact on the development of the organisation's policies and business strategy.

He will continue to keep in touch with his CJJ colleagues throughout the year and looks forward to meeting the new Chief Inspector on his return.

Ian's secondment commenced at the end of May. ■

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to protect the rights and interests of some of the most vulnerable, among whom I include both victims and offenders.

“It is never going to be possible to quantify the value that inspection adds – certainly not in an inspectorate as diverse as CJI – but in relation to a cost equivalent to about one thousandth part of the criminal justice budget I have no doubt that we deliver value. And the light-touch review conducted recently by John Hunter confirms that view.

“I have had the help of a great team in CJI. If Brendan and I have done anything well it has been selecting the people we have to do the work of CJI. We have a remarkable range of talents at all levels, and exceptional cohesion within the team.

“I would also like to acknowledge the support that has been given to CJI by the NIO since its inception. We owe a particular debt to Dan Mulholland and Barbara McAtamney, Keith Boyce and Stephen Western, who were responsible for setting up the Inspectorate, but we have enjoyed continuing support - without interference - from the Department.

“The Department has been entirely correct in its relationship with CJI, and has always respected our independence, even when we have had difficult messages to convey.



**Kit addresses the 2008 Stakeholder Conference.**



**Kit pictured with the Minister for Justice David Hanson MP (second left) on a visit to CJI's Belfast Headquarters. Also pictured are (from left) Brendan McGuigan, Jacqui Durkin and David Lavery, Northern Ireland Court Service.**

“Looking back on it, the range of work we have covered in five years – or really four years of being operational – is remarkable.

“We could not have done it without the assistance of other Inspectorates, HM Inspectorates of Prisons, Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service and our colleagues in ETI and what was the Social Services Inspectorate here too (now part of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority).

“We have also forged valuable alliances with the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, the Human Rights Commission and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and with a wide range of other non-governmental organisations and voluntary sector organisations. It is this breadth of support, reflected in our sizeable Stakeholder Conferences each year, that has made the success of the Inspectorate possible.

“If I have one disappointment, it is that the devolution of policing and justice has not happened during my term of office.

“I have had a couple of appearances before Assembly Committees and was looking forward to more, but devolution will transform the work of the Chief Inspector and make it what it was always intended to be: a constant source of trusted advice to the Assembly across the whole range of



**Former Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Minister Maria Eagle MP shares a joke while at CJI as the Chief Inspector looks on.**

criminal justice related matters. I have no doubt that the demands on the Inspectorate will increase sharply as MLAs get to grips with their new responsibilities. CJI's experience of Committees so far gives me confidence that they will handle those responsibilities conscientiously and thoughtfully.

“At the time of writing the identity of my successor is not yet known. But I know that the field of candidates was extremely strong and any one of those shortlisted would have brought distinction to the post.

“I therefore have great confidence, as I prepare to hand over, that CJI will continue to flourish and will make an increasingly important contribution to the good governance of Northern Ireland and thereby to the peace and well being of this island as a whole.” ■

# Benefit Fraud – Follow-up Review of the Benefit Investigation Service

In May 2006 CJI published a report following an Inspection of the Benefit Investigation Service (BIS) which is a specialised investigation unit within the Social Security Agency (SSA).

The report made a total of 18 recommendations for improvement structured into four themes:

- leadership and accountability;
- partnership working;
- organisation learning; and
- delivering results.

During January 2008, a follow-up review commenced as part of the CJI 2007-08 inspection programme.

It focused upon reviewing the commitments made within the Action Plan submitted by the SSA. In keeping with the CJI review methodology, recommendations were assessed as either being 'achieved' or 'not achieved' based on results and progress in implementing the agreed tasks.

The review report (which can be downloaded from the CJI website [www.cjini.org](http://www.cjini.org)) was published in May 2008.

Based on the files of evidence submitted by the SSA, follow-up interviews with key staff and stakeholders, Inspectors found that 15 of the 18 recommendations had in the main been satisfactorily achieved.

In particular, Inspectors were pleased to see evidence of



improvement particularly the development of systematic means of identifying the risk of benefit fraud, based on intelligence gathered from its activities; such learning is vital if the Agency is to maintain a rigorous effort to tackle fraud.

Of the remaining recommendations, one was set aside due to the impact of other reforms which left two recommendations requiring further work to be undertaken. In particular, more needs to be done to secure the 'gateway' to social security benefits by transferring learning from counter fraud and Programme Protection Group activities.

Identifying the causes of fraud and error and developing better controls of benefit claims are a central theme for delivering the objectives of the SSA's fraud and error strategy.

CJI recognised that some of the expected results will take a longer time to mature, due to the nature and complexity of counter-fraud work as completing investigations, consideration of decisions including directing appropriate sanctions and referring cases for prosecution, requires due care and attention.

It was appreciated that it may be 2008-09 or beyond before BIS can fully evaluate the results of



*Images courtesy of the Social Security Agency.*

the development work they have undertaken. Once the full lifecycle of enforcement events has been completed, and a significant volume of cases have been evaluated, BIS will be better able to fully assess its strategy and achievement of operational objectives.

From discussions with BIS senior management, it is acknowledged that it will be important to learn from its experience through regular evaluation of its approach and results, to ensure that it is able to fulfill its obligations to tackle benefit fraud and play a full part in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. ■

# Inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre for Northern Ireland

**CJI published an inspection report of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, Northern Ireland's only custodial facility for children in May 2008.**

Inspectors found that the centre, which opened in January 2007, was a well-managed facility that provided many examples of good practice. Significant progress had been made since Inspectors assessed the old centre accommodated in the former Rathgael training school three years ago.

Inspectors found that Woodlands struck a good balance between caring for difficult children, including some dangerous offenders, and addressing their criminal behaviour.

The new building was found to incorporate many positive design features that enhanced the management and care of children.



**Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre.**

Management practices, staff training and qualification levels were much improved from 2004.

Inspectors were satisfied that education and healthcare were given a high priority, with the majority of young people improving their standard of numeracy, literacy, physical and mental health while in the centre.

However, concern was expressed in the report at the

high turnover rate of children being placed in Woodlands, and at the disproportionate numbers coming directly from residential care placements.

CJI recognise that efforts to address this problem are ongoing and advocate a continued interagency approach as it cannot be addressed by the JJC alone.

CJI also recommended that Woodlands improve its methods of capturing data in order to analyse the offending profile of children in custody and best meet the needs of the centre's population.

Overall, Inspectors found the JJC compared favourably with other child custody facilities in the UK.

It will be subject to an ongoing unannounced inspection regime, and another full inspection will be scheduled in three years time. ■



**One of the living areas inside the centre.**

*Photographs courtesy of the Youth Justice Agency.*

# Paul says farewell

**Paul Mageean has said farewell to CJI having accepted a post as Director of the University of Ulster's new Graduate School of Professional Legal Education based at its Magee Campus in Derry/Londonderry.**

Paul joined CJI in June 2005 having previously worked for PJ McGrory & Co one of Belfast's leading criminal law firms and the Committee on the Administration of Justice. Prior to joining CJI Paul also held the role of head of the Criminal Justice Secretariat with the Northern Ireland Court Service.

During his three years with CJI, Paul played a valuable role in establishing the professional reputation of the Inspectorate.

He played a key part in the first ever inspection of the Public

Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland and was responsible for leading CJI's inspection on the use of Police Bail. Paul was also involved in carrying out the first inspection on Section 75 within the criminal justice system – a report that is due for publication in the near future.

Paul also made a valuable contribution to the first inspections of community-based restorative justice schemes operated under the auspices of Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland.

“While I am delighted to have been offered this position with the University of Ulster and I look forward to the challenge of developing the new Graduate School



**Paul with Kit and Brendan**

at Magee, it is with great sadness I leave CJI,” said Paul.

“I have enjoyed my time with the Inspectorate and firmly believe the work it has undertaken to date and will continue to undertake in the future has the ability to have a positive impact on the criminal justice system.

“I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone within the various agencies that I have worked with during the course of my three years with the Inspectorate for their help and assistance,” he added. ■

## Life sentence prisoners review

**CJI has been requested by Prisons Minister, Paul Goggins MP to undertake a review of risk assessment, testing in the community and pre-release home leave for Northern Ireland life sentence prisoners.**

The Minister is keen for an independent analysis of this important subject, as management of life prisoners is essential for public protection and public confidence in the criminal justice system.

The review, will consider how life prisoners are assessed and tested before they are considered for final release by the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland. It will compare practice in Northern Ireland with other jurisdictions, and

will be informed by the circumstances of individual cases although it is not an enquiry into them.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is primarily responsible for management of lifers during this pre-release period, though a range of other agencies including the Probation Service, police and voluntary organisations support their work.

CJI will take a thematic overview of practice by all the agencies. It will seek to establish if they work effectively together to strike the right balance between public protection on the one hand, and preparing prisoners for resettlement in the community on the other.

While focusing on current life prisoners (170 at time of



**Prisons Minister Paul Goggins.**

publication) the review is especially relevant as it is anticipated that the lifer population will increase as a consequence of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 which was introduced in May.

CJI expects to publish the findings of its review in the autumn. ■

# Second follow-up review of Scientific Support Services in the PSNI

**Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) have undertaken a follow-up review of Scientific Support Services in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).**

The purpose of this second review was to assess improvements made by the PSNI since Inspectors first examined progress in 2007 against their original report (2005).

The findings of this review were published on the CJI website in May 2008. The two Inspectorates commended the PSNI for the work it has undertaken to improve its Scientific Support Services and reported steady progress against the outstanding recommendations.

Five of these recommendations were classified as 'achieved' and significant effort has been made to progress nine other outstanding recommendations.

Inspectors found that critical policies such as those dealing with the management and co-ordination of crime scenes and the storage, retention, weeding and destruction of property had been reviewed and made available to officers via the PSNI's intranet site.

Inspectors did express concerns about the submission of exhibits to Forensic Science Northern Ireland and called for improved quality control in the packaging and tracking of forensic property.

Increased forensic awareness across the Service continues to be a priority action. It is therefore positive that two forensic officers are now involved in providing training at the Police College.



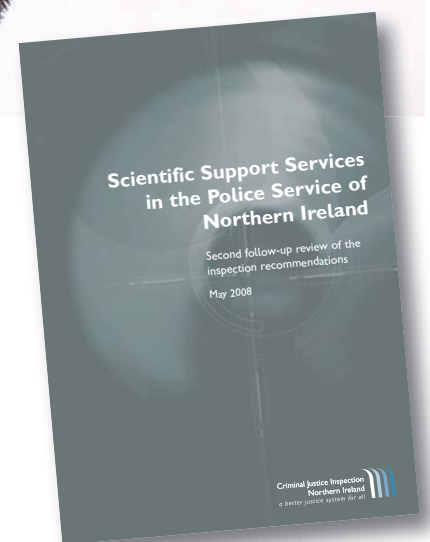
Inspectors wish to see a continued corporate approach to the training and targeting of forensic awareness among operational officers in the middle of their careers.

An effective and efficient service is dependent on a good working relationship between PSNI and its primary external forensic science provider – Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI).

Good strategic relations have been cemented in recent years and there is now an opportunity to provide a more co-ordinated service in areas such as shared databases and the development of a common numbering system for exhibits.

Progress on two key recommendations remains dependent on internal re-structuring within FSNI.

A good Scientific Support Service is founded on the continuing professional development of its staff. The ongoing review of staff terms and conditions as part of the *LINKS* project has the potential to address



some key concerns around working conditions and motivation. The scope for better integration with other functions, through better shared accommodation, should remain a priority, even in the context of any outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Inspectors have welcomed the commitment of PSNI to Scientific Support Services and have incorporated their Action Plan into the published report.

A further follow-up review will be conducted in 2009 when significant progress against the remaining recommendations is expected. ■