



Business Plan

2022-2023

Plan Owner – Karen Kneller, Chief Executive



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1. Introduction

The year ahead has, to some extent, two purposes. It is a chance to consolidate on the strong developments that have taken place over the first two years of the current Corporate Plan period (2020 – 2023), whilst it also brings an opportunity for us to reflect on where we are as an organisation.

Over the coming twelve months we will mark the 25th Anniversary of the inauguration of the CCRC, along with the development of our next three-year Corporate Plan. Both will provide an excellent opportunity for us to engage with our stakeholders, and together to think about not only what our priorities should be for the next three years, but to look ahead to the potential challenges and opportunities of the next twenty-five.

2. Our Purpose and Values

Everyone at the CCRC is driven by our common purpose, which is to investigate and identify miscarriages of justice, and thereby to promote confidence in the criminal justice system.

We aim to do this by:

- Investigating and reviewing cases proactively, effectively and efficiently;
- Referring appropriate cases to the appellate courts;
- Demonstrating independence and impartiality in all we do;
- Being thorough, proportionate and conscientious;
- Using our unique knowledge and experience to help improve the Criminal Justice system;
- Working constructively with stakeholders; and
- Maintaining awareness of and adapting to change in the wider criminal justice system

To guide us, in our corporate plan, we identified four values which we follow in our work, and in our interactions with our stakeholders. We make sure that we are Independent, Accountable, Proactive and Respectful.

3. Our strategic aims

Our strategic aims were developed for the current Corporate Plan and reflect our focus on delivering high quality casework and making sure that everyone who needs our service is aware of it and knows how to access it.

Our aims are:

Excellence in Casework

Enhanced Engagement with Stakeholders and Media

An Employer of Choice

Smarter Agile Ways of Working

These aims have guided our work over the past two years, and more detail on these, our values and our purpose can be found in our Corporate Plan document.

4. Review of 2021-22

The past year has seen a great deal of success against the priorities set in the business plan, whether in terms of casework performance, or in the development of the organisation through an extensive programme of transformation. Further on in the document there is a discussion around performance in general, but in this section, we want to highlight some of these other developments.

In casework, we introduced two new roles, Trainee Case Review Manager, and Senior Case Review Manager, for the first time introducing a career pathway for Case Review Managers. We also welcomed three new Kalisher Interns to the CCRC. Amanda Pearce was appointed as the Casework Operations Director, in succession to Sally Berlin, who moved on to a new career challenge.

Taking onboard some of the recommendation of the Westminster Commission report, we conducted an internal review of our approach to applicant communications, decision documents, the use of provisional decisions, exceptional circumstances and are implementing improvements; whilst also introducing a Youth Justice champion and delivering youth justice training.

We continued to focus on building relations with our stakeholders and presented on our work to the Court of Appeal Criminal Division and met with stakeholders in Northern Ireland including Lady Chief Justice Keegan, Northern Ireland Prison Service, Public Prosecution Service NI, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Law Society Northern Ireland. We have continued to work with other charities and organisations who support people with convictions including,

Women in Prison, Advance, Sussex Prisoners families; 3Pillars; Working for Justice Group and Prisoner Advice Service.

We continued the development of our Quality Management System, progressing the work on casework policies and procedures and will widen this in the coming year to the rest of the organisation.

During the past year many elements of the transformation programme were completed, and the organisation started to reap the benefits. Key successes included the overhaul of many systems and processes, including improvements in finance and in business support. A new system in HR that now supports timesheets, overtime, as well as recruitment, whilst performance management will be added in the coming year.

The new systems and the associated technology that has been implemented over the last two years have enabled the CCRC to become a remote first organisation. This has allowed us to widen the areas from which we can recruit, and has brought new perspectives to the CCRC, with staff living in all parts of the United Kingdom. The move to remote first was supplemented with a successful move to a modern new office hub, and decommissioning of the old office.

We launched a new website, which includes the ability for people to make online applications, and expanded our social media presence to Instagram, aiming to reach a younger demographic, a need identified through both the Westminster Commission, and our analysis of applications. Alongside this we broadened our outreach, working with key stakeholders to promote what we do, this included providing online training for prison staff, in an effort to overcome the lack of access to prisons brought about by COVID.

5. Key Developments for the Year Ahead

We have developed our plans for 2022-23 based on how we can deliver our existing strategic aims in the final year of this Corporate Plan period.

During the coming year the development of the next Corporate Plan will be a key action that cuts across all areas of the organisation.

Action	Owner	Duration
Development of Corporate Plan 2023 - 2026	Wayne Gough Head of Business Planning and Performance	Quarter 1 – Quarter 4

We will be focusing our other development work over the coming year in the following way.

Strategic Aim 1 Excellence in Casework:

The core purpose of the CCRC is to find and investigate miscarriages of justice, which is delivered through excellent casework. To do this, we need to ensure that we have the resources in place to conduct timely case reviews to a high standard over the coming year and beyond.

A particular focus on delivering continuing improvement in this area in 2022-23 will be on retaining, recruiting, and supporting the development of our casework review staff. This will be important in helping to maintain the improvements in casework performance we have seen over the early part of the Corporate Plan, but also to prepare for what is expected to be a picture of increasing application numbers, as the backlog due to the impact of Covid-19 starts to unwind. Further increases in applications will come about because of the expansion of our outreach work, as well as the significant growth in prison numbers predicted over the next few years.

An area for review will be the current KPIs, and this will be combined with development of operational management indicators that will aid with understanding where blockages in the process could be removed to improve the service provided to applicants. The intention is that this will form a part of the work to develop the next Corporate Plan.

We will also continue to monitor the quality of our work and will be finalising our quality system in casework and expanding it to the rest of the CCRC.

Key actions in this area will be:

Action	Owner	Duration
Enhancing the development programme for Case Review Managers – building on the introduction of Trainee and Senior CRM posts; the identification of core skills and level of skill needed for each role	Amanda Pearce Casework Operations Director	Quarter 1 – Quarter 4
In support of staff retention, review of Casework Pay and grading - benchmarking to CJS and other comparators – to present to MOJ for consideration as part of Pay remit	Amanda Pearce Casework Operations Director	Quarter 1 – Quarter 3
Deliver casework knowledge base for sharing knowledge, learning and development around casework	Amanda Pearce Casework Operations Director	Quarter 2 - Quarter 4
Review of Casework KPIs and Performance indicators to make best use of new system, inform process improvement, and make changes where appropriate	Amanda Pearce Casework Operations Director	Quarter 1 - Quarter 4
Implementation of improved regular and informative updates for applicants following evaluation of current methods.	Amanda Pearce Casework Operations Director	Quarter 1 – Quarter 3

Strategic Aim 2: Enhanced Engagement with Stakeholders and the Media

For us to achieve our core purpose of finding and investigating miscarriages of justice, people need to be aware of what we do and have faith in our ability and independence, so that they will feel confident in applying to us.

We will be welcoming a new Head of External Affairs and Communication in the coming year, helping to bring a renewed focus to this area. To support this aim, the two strong teams that deliver Communications and Applicant Engagement will be brought together under this post, allowing for greater collaboration and synergy in these closely linked areas.

Over the coming year, through our Applicant Engagement Strategy, we will be extending our outreach programme, with targeted and more directed outreach to applicants and their families to educate people on the role of the CCRC and how it can help them. This will include trying to increase applications from underrepresented groups, as well as targeting our efforts on potential miscarriages of justice that have been identified, for example Post Office cases, or linked cases that may arise through our investigations.

During 2021/22 prisons were still experiencing restrictions due to the pandemic, which will hopefully be eased during 2022/23, so that we can visit more prisons and increase the frequency of such visits.

We have a great resource in our stakeholder forum, it enables us to involve some of our key stakeholders in our work and provides an opportunity to talk about challenges and opportunities. The forum will be a vital resource over the coming year, and we will look to involve it in the development of some of our key pieces of work, such as the corporate plan for 2023-26.

Using the insight from the stakeholder forum we will be looking to build strong collaboration with wider stakeholders to help deliver greater awareness of our role and work, using their networks and reach to raise our profile beyond our ability to do so on our own.

We also want to be more proactive in our work with our stakeholders across the criminal justice system to share our knowledge and our learning, helping to improve the system where we can, again the stakeholder forum will be a useful resource for testing and delivering against this desire. This will build on our success in recent years in areas such as our work championing Easy Read documents, working with the Criminal Appeal Office to assess the impact of 'loss of time orders' as a barrier

to justice, and contributing to improvements in the management of jurors through our section 15 enquiries for the Court of Appeal Criminal Division.

We will look to work with our successful applicants to involve them in our outreach work, and through their stories we will be able to show the benefits of our work to a wider audience, encouraging more people to apply, and increasing faith in the criminal justice system.

We want to get a better understanding of how people make their choices when they are thinking about applying to us, using a behavioural science¹ approach to get a greater understanding of our applicants so that we can improve our application process and design. This would be with the intention of increasing applications and working to reduce the number of people who apply to us when an alternative route would be more appropriate, for example if they haven't exhausted their avenues of appeal.

The key actions in this area will be:

Action	Owner	Duration
Completing the appointment of Head of External Affairs and Communication	Karen Kneller Chief Executive	Quarter 2
Development of new Communication and Engagement Strategy – including key proposals identified from strategy events	Head of External Affairs and Communication	Quarter 3 – Quarter 4
Deliver 25 th Anniversary plans	Peter Ryan Finance and Corporate Services Director	Quarter 1- Quarter 3
Development and implementation of Stakeholder Management plans for key stakeholders, including for sharing learning across the system – including key proposals identified from strategy events	Head of External Affairs and Communication	Quarter 3 – Quarter 4

¹ A behavioural science approach would use ethnographic research to understand how people's non-rational biases are affecting their decision making when thinking about applying to us.

Delivery of Applicant Engagement Strategy – including expanded outreach and proposals identified from strategy events	Cathy Dilks Applicant Engagement Manager	Quarter 1 – Quarter 4
Behavioural research looking at why applicants apply to us, or don't	Wayne Gough Head of Business Planning and Performance	Quarter 2 – Quarter 4

Strategic Aim 3 - Be an Employer of Choice

To deliver our core purpose we need to have the best people working for us across the CCRC, whether directly conducting casework, or supporting those that do. Under our first strategic aim we talked about the need to develop and retain a strong casework team, whilst this aim enhances that focus and expands to staff in the wider organisation.

Over the coming year we will review our equality, diversity and inclusion priorities and identify where we should focus our efforts to ensure that the CCRC is representative of the communities it serves, and that it understands the challenges different groups might face in applying to us, either for a job, or for a case review.

In conjunction with this we will be reviewing the way that we approach our recruitment, both to support our equality objectives, but also to understand how we can increase our reach, and secure a greater pipeline of talented staff, both in our casework and in our support services.

It is important that we continue to develop the staff we have, helping them to grow both in their roles and in the organisation. To do this we will be looking at our wider learning and development programme, supporting staff and their managers to develop personal development plans shaped around their aspirations and the needs of the role.

As a part of the work to develop our next corporate plan we will engage with our commissioners and our wider staff group, to consider our values and see if we need to refresh them to reflect the changes of recent years, and the challenges for the coming years.

Key actions for this area:

Action	Owner	Duration
Review of recruitment approach - incorporating suggestions from strategy events	Robin Davis Head of Human Resources	Quarter 2 – Quarter 3
Review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities	Robin Davis Head of Human Resources	Quarter 1 – Quarter 3
Improved Learning and Development offer - linked to staff development, and retention of staff	Robin Davis Head of Human Resources	Quarter 2 – Quarter 4
Staff lead process to review corporate values as a part of the development of Corporate Plan	Wayne Gough Head of Business Planning and Performance	Quarter 2 – Quarter 4

Strategic Aim 4 - Smarter More Agile Ways of Working:

As we have shown in our achievements for the past year, the CCRC has made great strides in working in smarter, more agile ways, has implemented a new case management system, and moved to a remote first approach.

However, we know that we are not yet making full use of the systems we have put in place, and over the coming year we will be focussing on how to take advantage of the tools at our disposal, including developing the use of a relationship management tool to support our outreach work, and implement changes to make contacting us easier, whether on the phone, online or through the post.

As with all organisations that are reliant on IT systems, we need to always maintain our cyber security, and in the coming year we will commission a review and implement the findings.

We will continue our quality journey by expanding the Quality Management System to our support functions and working towards the whole organisation operating in line with the ISO 9001:2015 quality standard.

Maintaining security and quality of systems is of fundamental importance to maintaining confidence in the reputation and work of the CCRC, and therefore confidence in the wider justice system.

Key actions for this area:

Action	Owner	Duration
Develop customer management system to support engagement work	Peter Ryan Finance and Corporate Services Director	Quarter 1 - Quarter 2
IT Cyber security review and implementation of findings	Peter Ryan Finance and Corporate Services Director	Quarter 1- Quarter 3
Quality System expansion to whole organisation	Joey Giddings Head of Quality	Quarter 1- Quarter 3

6. Performance

Our core purpose is finding and reviewing cases for potential miscarriages of justice. To ensure we are doing this to a high standard, as effectively and timely as possible, we monitor our performance against some key targets.

During 2021-22 our overall performance against these targets was strong, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the continuing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, which our remote first approach is helping to alleviate.

Outlined below are some of the performance highlights of the year and discussion of changes for the year ahead

Outcomes

We received 1,198 applications in 2021/22 and completed our consideration of 1,183 cases.

This compares to 2020/21 when we received 1,142 applications and completed our consideration of 1,109 cases and 2019/20 when we received 1,334 applications and completed 1,453 cases.

Referrals

During 2021/22, we referred 26 cases for appeal. 25 were conviction referrals. This means that 2.2% of cases closed in 2021/22 were referred for appeal.²

This business year 64 referrals have been heard and 57 quashed. Giving a 'success' rate of 89%, which is much higher than the long-term rate (766 cases heard, 536 quashed – 70%)

However, of the 64 cases heard, 51 are Post Office cases, of which 47 were quashed (92%) and 4 are Stockwell Six cases, all 4 of which were quashed (100%).

Of the other 9 cases that have been heard this year, 5 were quashed (56%) with retrials ordered in 2 of those 5. One case was partially quashed, 2 upheld and one abandoned.

Casework

² This reflects the reduction of Post Office cases, but is still above the average rate in the five years prior to Post Office cases, which was 21.2 referrals per year from 2015/6 – 2019/20

We continue to focus on the quality and timeliness of our case reviews – to ensure we get the right results, whilst ensuring swift access to justice.

The CCRC's casework performance is monitored using a set of Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs. Our performance for last year, 2021/22, is below.

KPI 1 - Cases closed within 12 months of application

In 2021/22 we aimed to complete a minimum of 85% of cases within 12 months of receiving the application.

At the end of the reporting year (31st March 2022), we closed **84.19%** of cases within 12 months of receiving the application. Although we narrowly missed the target, overall performance for the year was an improvement on 2020/21 with 10 months of the year above 84% and, in September 2021, 85.16% (0.16% over target) was achieved.

Our approach is constantly evolving, building on the quality of what we do. In 2022/23 we hope to build upon our improvements in timeliness for the benefit of applicants.

There is recognition that this KPI measures triage cases (initial assessment of reapplications and no appeal cases) along with review cases and is not quite providing the detail we need to target improvement opportunities. We should aim to complete triage cases as soon as possible and the majority of review cases within 12 months therefore, for 2022/23, this KPI will be adjusted to:

1a – percentage of all cases completed within 12 months – target 85% (2021/22 KPI1)

1b – percentage of review cases completed within 12 months – target 70%

1c – the percentage of triage cases completed within 4 months – target 80%

We recognise that making proper decisions within a reasonable timeframe is important to our applicants whilst maintaining our high-quality standards. In progressing reviews, we afford a degree of priority to those applicants who are in custody.

KPI 2 - Duration of a Review

We aim to make a decision within 36 weeks of a case review beginning (i.e., from when a case is allocated to a Case Review Manager). This is our KPI2.

Overall, in March 2022 we had achieved an average of 34.38 weeks. This is a significant improvement on 2020/21 where we ended in March 2021 at 35.13 weeks. In custody cases we exceeded our target by closing those cases in an average of 31.58 weeks. For liberty cases, the average was slightly longer at 40.21 weeks.

As we consistently achieved the target of 36 weeks in 2021/22 and the effect of the large amount of long running cases closing in 2020/21 have now gone, the target for this KPI will drop back to 30 weeks for 2022/23.

As the CCRC have a number of cases at any one time, decisions are routinely made (and reassessed) as to whether all or some of the work on specific cases should be given priority, and a degree of priority is afforded to those who are in custody.

In 2021/22 we have started to see a convergence of custody and liberty average review times. In March 2020/21 the difference between custody and liberty cases was 20.08 weeks, at the end of March 2022 that difference is down to just 8.63 weeks, showing that the improvement in delivery is across the board.

KPI 3 - Long-running Cases (KPI3)

We count a case as long running if it has been under review for more than two years. A proportion of our cases are complex and require careful investigation, many requiring expert reports. Sometimes we need to await the outcome of connected live court proceedings or criminal investigations, over which we have little or no control. We pay close attention to long running cases, through a sub-committee of the Board, to ensure that they are not taking longer than is justifiable, looking for new ways to resolve any problems arising in our reviews whenever possible.

Our target was that fewer than five percent of open applications should be under review for two years or more. At the end of the reporting year (31st March 2022), 6.24% (46) of applications fell within this category. At the end of March 2021 there were 43 LRCs, 5.96% of open applications so we have fallen back on this KPI, but a number of these cases are due decisions in the very near future, so we expect this KPI to drop closer to target in the coming months.

KPI 5 - Quality Assurance

During 2021/22 the Head of Quality built upon our enhanced approach to quality management at the CCRC. Implemented casework quality systems have been well received and are in use. Quality improvements to Casework are still underway but the new ways of working implemented so far have raised quality standards.

A revised approach to quality assurance checks, changes to the way continuous improvement is managed, and a wide scale review and restructuring of our casework policies and guidance, leaves the CCRC with a stronger quality assurance programme compared to last year.

Measure	Description	Target	Period	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
KPI 1: Timeliness of Review	85% of cases closed within 12 months	>85%	M	83.68%	82.79%	84.19%
KPI 2: Timeliness of Review	Average duration of review is <36 weeks over 12 months	< 36 wks	M	31.72	35.13	34.38wks
KPI 3: Timeliness of Review	< 5% of applications take 2 years to reach the final decision	<5% <35 cases	M	11.03%	5.96%	6.24%
KPI 4: Customer Service	Communication Complaints upheld over last 12m (proportion of cases closed in last 12m)	<0.4% <5 cases	BI-M	0.21%	0.09%	0.17% 2 cases
KPI 5: Customer Service	Cases requiring additional work as a result of JR, Complaint or QA (proportion of cases closed in last 12m)	<0.4% <5 cases	BI-M	0.28%	0.36%	0.42% 5 cases

KPI 6: Customer Service	Total complaints upheld in last 12m (proportion of cases closed in last 12m)	< 0.8% <10 cases	BI-M	0.41%	0.18%	0.34% 4 cases
KPI 7: Staff Absence	Days lost per month per FTE	0.62 days (m) 7.5 days (yr)	M	8.90 (yr)	5.55 (yr)	5.66 (yr)
KPI 8: Finance	Expenditure against budget within 2.5% Year to Date	> 2.5% +/-	M	-3.51%	0.3%	-10.8% Interim
KPI 9: Internal Audit	Internal Audit actions completed on time	95%	Q	N/A	91%	100%

7. Finance

	Budget BAU 2022/23 £k	Budget Change 2022/23 £k	Budget Total 2022/23 £k	Budget Total 2021/22 £k
Pay Costs				
Programme	5131	300	5431	5227
Admin	550		550	500
	5681	300	5981	5727
Non-Pay Costs				
IT & telecommunications	374	38	412	359
Printing, postage & office	112		112	128
Staff travel	55		55	38
Other	397		397	344
External Case Related Expenditure	45		45	115
	983	38	1021	984
Income / Other	(4)		(4)	(8)
Fiscal DEL	6660	338	6998	6703
Non-Cash Costs				
Depreciation	350		350	600
Total Resource DEL	7010	338	7348	7303
Capital DEL	213		213	868
AME (pension related costs)	266		266	258
TOTAL	7489	338	7827	8429

Further information

Further information about the Commission can be obtained from our website. We are very happy to receive comments about this plan or any other aspect of our work.

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