

Criminal Justice Inspection  
Northern Ireland  
*a better justice system for all*



# BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25

A BETTER JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR ALL



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# FOREWORD

BY THE CHIEF INSPECTOR

This year we are celebrating 20 years since the first CJI report was published. In the last two decades we have seen many changes to the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland and while some, like the devolution of justice, held the promise of a local Assembly and Minister of Justice we have not had the benefit of continual legislative change and policy reform to keep pace with the needs of our community.

Sometimes the criminal justice system feels like a misnomer in that is it really a system or is it a collection of individuals, organisations and services, independent of each other but all funded by the public, some with more resources and influence than others but all focussed on effective leadership and better outcomes for a safer Northern Ireland. When authentic collaboration and true partnerships exist real change has been and can be achieved.

Unfortunately big scratchy problems, like avoidable delay and providing effective victim and witness care, still persist but there have also been major advances in other areas including raising awareness of and tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse in our community and new technology enabled services. I welcome the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and a Minister of Justice as well as the scrutiny and oversight from a Committee for Justice.

I look forward to a new Programme for Government that reflects Ministerial criminal justice priorities and the quality services and outcomes our community needs and deserves. Ensuring pace and progress in implementing agreed recommendations for improvement will also be key to delivering a better justice system for all.

I developed this years' Inspection Programme following consultation with the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, the Lady Chief Justice, leaders of organisations we inspect, voluntary and community sector senior leaders, the Department of Justice Permanent Secretary and senior officials and Members of the Legislative Assembly. I listened carefully to their views and I decided on the final programme.

As usual there are some inspections ongoing at the end of the business year with reports for publication this year, however the general election restricts when we can publish reports as they fall due.

The adequacy of our budget to deliver a relevant risk-based inspection programme remains a concern. As a small Corporation Sole we are depend on essential and inescapable governance arrangements and service costs that utilise 7% of our allocated budget. This seems excessive compared to other similar organisations.

As an Inspectorate with a wide remit, our partnerships with other Inspectorates are vital and valued but they too are facing significant budget pressures and developing and resourcing joint inspections and specialist support will be very challenging.

I am grateful for the dedicated CJI team and we remain committed to continuing to provide quality inspection services that provide assurance and focus on shared ambitions for a better criminal justice system.



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**JACQUI DURKIN**

Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice  
in Northern Ireland

**May 2024**

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) is responsible for inspecting all aspects of the criminal justice system apart from the judiciary. It was established in 2003 as a Corporation Sole, an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), sponsored by the Department of Justice (DoJ).

CJI's vision is for *'a better justice system for all'* where the delivery of our services is aligned with the strategic priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive, as set out in the current draft Programme for Government (PfG), and the Minister of Justice. The Outcome that *'Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other'* directly relates to CJI's vision of inspecting to improve and other outcomes are relevant to our work.

We focus on helping the criminal justice system to deliver stronger governance and strategic planning, be more effective and efficient, ensure the vulnerable are protected and that key outcomes and results are achieved. When a new PfG is developed we will review our Corporate and Business Plans to reflect any changes or new priorities.

We are focussed on ensuring:

- the vulnerable are protected;
- strategy, governance and delivery can meet challenges within the criminal justice system; and
- outcomes lead to effective services and increased public confidence to the benefit of everyone.

In all aspects of our work we apply our organisational values of:

- Independence;
- Impartiality;
- Collaboration;
- Compassion;
- Excellence;
- Integrity; and
- Fairness.

A list of the organisations we inspect and within in our statutory remit is included at Annex A.

All of our internal processes are subject to continuous performance improvement, which is embedded in our ISO 9001:2015 accredited methodology and working practices.



A BETTER JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR ALL

## A BETTER JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR ALL - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY THEMES

We have set six strategic objectives in our 2023-2026 Corporate Plan to help achieve a better justice system.

### They are to:

**1**  
Effectively deliver a risk-based, responsive and relevant Inspection Programme;

**2**  
be an effective UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) body in support of the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT);

**3**  
focus on achieving better outcomes through recommendation implementation;

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4

**promote performance improvement and better collaboration within the criminal justice system, with relevant external organisations and our partner Inspectorates;**

5

**develop and implement a new communication strategy; and**

6

**value and invest in the professional connections and wellbeing of our staff team.**

The objectives and targets in this Business Plan support our strategic priorities for the second year of our Corporate Plan period. We will report our performance against them in the Annual Report and Accounts.

**The key themes of our inspection programme for this year continue the themes of:**

**BETTER SERVICES AND DELIVERY**

**BETTER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

**BETTER PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING**

**BETTER STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE**

**BETTER OUTCOMES**

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# HOW WE WORK

CJI will deliver our strategic and business objectives with a focus on:

## INDEPENDENCE

CJI will continue to provide independent, impartial and evidence-based information and expert opinion to the public, political representatives and criminal justice stakeholders about the work and performance of inspected bodies and the entire criminal justice system.

## PARTNERSHIP

We work in partnership with inspected bodies and other key stakeholders to prepare, conduct and publish a programme of inspections and reviews. CJI will ensure that inspections are risk-based and reflect the key challenges facing the criminal justice system.

We will also consider inspections or reviews when requested to by the Minister of Justice, where they fall within our inspection remit and doing so would be in the public interest.

We value our effective partnerships with other inspection, oversight and regulatory bodies in Northern Ireland where they also have a



statutory obligation to carry out inspections involving organisations and bodies within CJI's remit or provide services in those organisations. We partner with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) on prison and Juvenile Justice Centre inspections and have completed a pilot joint inspection on child protection. We also identify shared priorities and opportunities for partnerships with the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and avoid duplication when we can.

CJI values our essential partnerships with other Inspectorates such as His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS); His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) and His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI). This enables access to knowledge and expertise as well as benchmarking performance with services and organisations

in England and Wales and the development of our Inspection Team. We are also committed to maintaining relationships with relevant Inspectorates in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland like His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate. We also work with independent professional specialists and experts when required.

We have effective links with Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University and are keen to explore and develop new opportunities to share research and develop collaborative working relationships, including student placements.

We chair the Northern Ireland Subgroup of the United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism.

We continuously explore opportunities for a more explicit human rights based approach to inspections in our annual programmes.

## COMMUNICATION

CJI is committed to effectively communicating our work to a wide audience and continually developing ways to do that. Making reports and reviews accessible and available to all through the CJI website and raising awareness through social media messaging and podcasts are key elements in fostering public confidence and a more open and accessible criminal justice system. Providing briefings to the Minister of Justice and her officials, the Committee for Justice, All Party Groups, the Policing Board for Northern Ireland and political parties will also inform discussion and decision making about the issues facing and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

We will foster our links with local Universities, other Inspectorates and pursue appropriate opportunities to share information about our work through speaking engagements at conferences and other events in Northern Ireland and with neighbouring jurisdictions.

We will remain responsive to feedback and mindful of the wider context in which inspected organisations are delivering their services without compromising our independence and practice.

We will be active communication partners in supporting and highlighting our work as part of the United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism.



## PERFORMANCE

CJI aims to secure improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system through making strategic and operational recommendations that will be evidence-based, take account of benchmarking with other jurisdictions and sectors, promote and secure innovation and best practice. When appropriate, we will encourage and support inspected organisations to deliver recommendations and implement the required changes - this can involve facilitating cross-agency/Departmental working in line with the priorities of the Minister of Justice and the priorities and outcomes contained in the PfG.



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# WHO WE ARE

## OUR PEOPLE

The Chief Inspector, Jacqui Durkin, and Deputy Chief Inspector and Chief Executive, James Corrigan, have responsibility for the management of CJI.

We have six Inspectors and three Business Support Team staff, four of our team are part time.

## STAFF WELLBEING

Staff wellbeing, together with investment in training and development, is important to us. CJI is committed to supporting the physical and mental health of our team and to sustaining and building on our strengths.

CJI operates a blended working model. Staff are usually office based three days a week unless carrying out on-site inspection fieldwork or inspection report writing.

## BUDGET

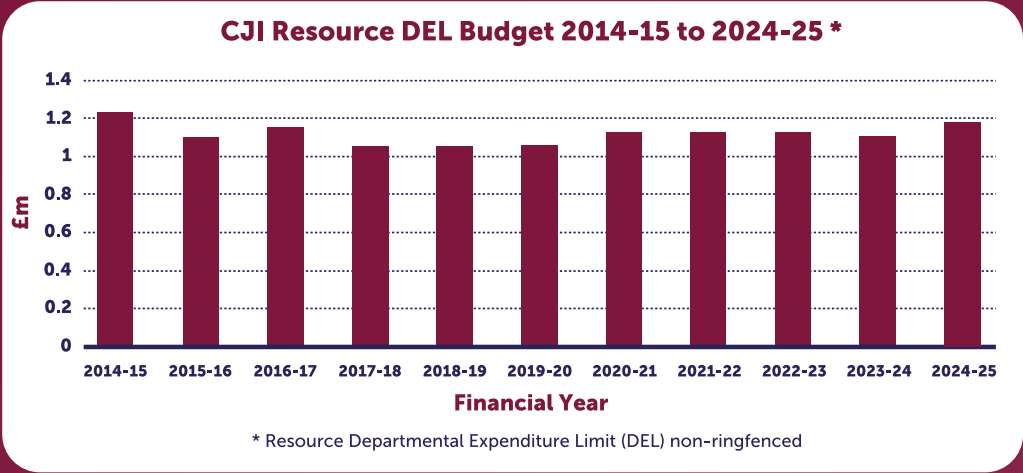
CJI is financed by revenue grants from the DoJ. The baseline budget settlement for 2024-25 is £1,181,000.

The vast majority of our budget relates to staff or inspection direct costs such as travel; there is very little discretionary spend and scope to reduce spending elsewhere.

Increased costs to shared services and required governance such as external audit fees have significantly increased and are inescapable. This has not been reflected in our budget allocation.

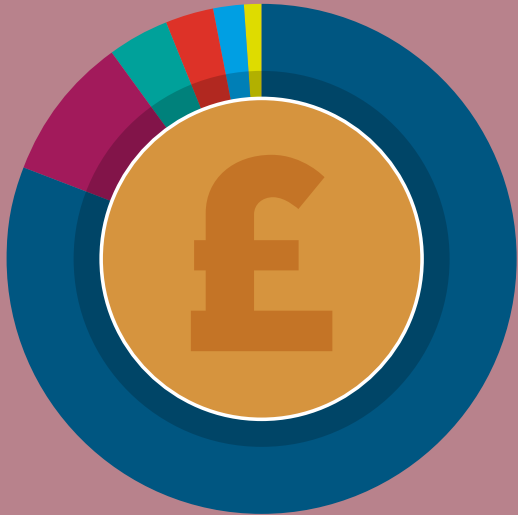
Therefore our small discretionary spending is squeezed even further and practically eradicates funding for external assistance on inspections that require particular expertise and other essential inspection delivery costs.

### CJI BUDGET 2014-15 TO 2024-25



#### CJI 2024-25 OPENING RESOURCE BUDGET ALLOCATION

- 81% Staff Costs - Pay
- 9% Business support services
- 4% Accommodation
- 3% Consultancy Support
- 2% Audit & Assurance
- 1% Other Professional Services
- 0% Other costs



## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate governance and effective risk management form a core part of the work of CJI with established arrangements in place for audit and accountability together with external accreditation through ISO 9001:2015.

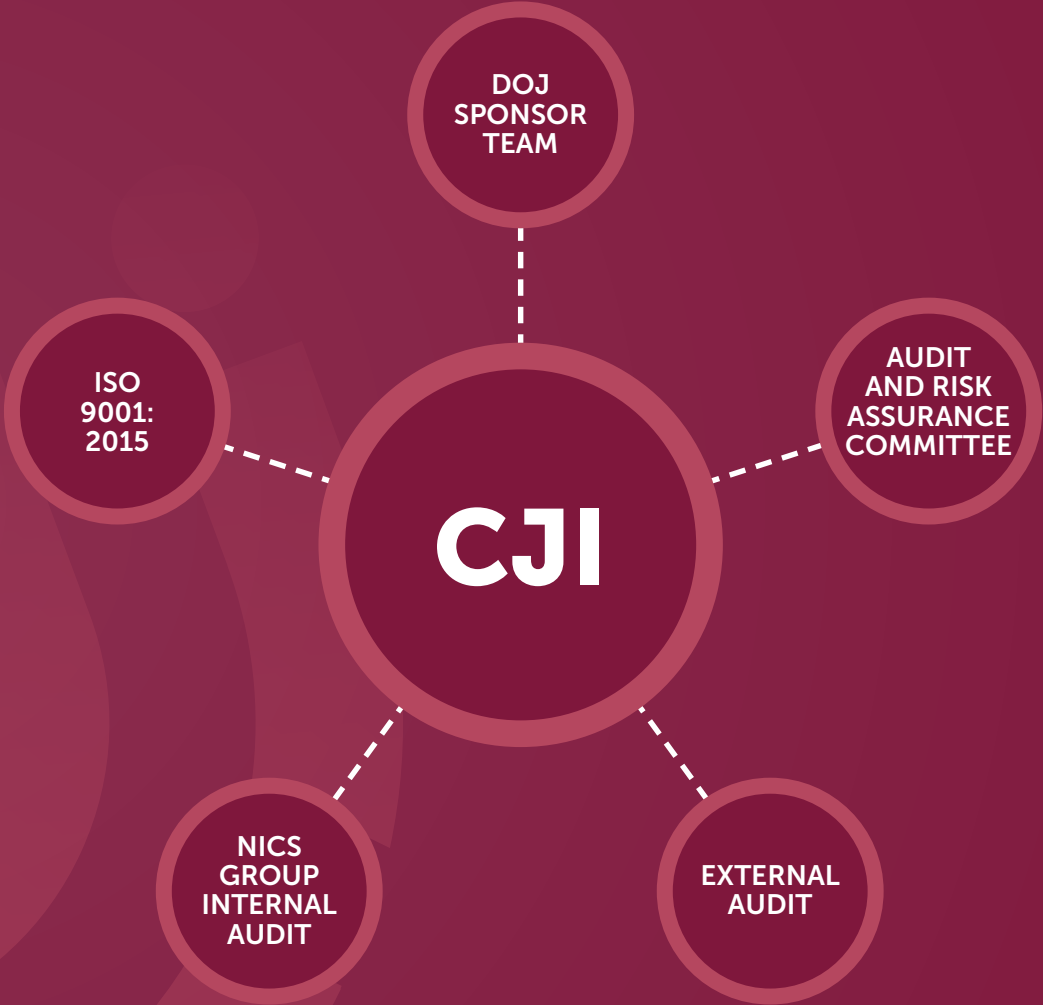
We will continue to maintain good working relationships with our DoJ Sponsor Team and operate under our Corporation Sole Partnership Agreement that reflects proportionality and risk appetite.

An Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is chaired by one of our two independent members.

The Accounting Officer's responsibility is delegated from the DoJ Permanent Secretary to the Chief Executive.







Northern Ireland Civil Service Group Internal Audit Service carries out internal audits of CJI's business processes on an annual basis. The Northern Ireland Audit Office carries out an external audit of CJI with the Comptroller and Auditor General reporting his opinion on CJI's financial accounts to the Northern Ireland Assembly each year. Inescapable accounting and audit costs equate to 7% of our total budget.





# BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25 TARGETS

CJI has set six **Corporate Plan Targets for 2023-26** aligned to the four strategic themes in the DoJ Corporate Plan 2022-25:

-  effectively deliver a risk-based, responsive and relevant Inspection Programme;
-  be an effective United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) body in support of the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Conventions Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
-  focus on achieving better outcomes through recommendation implementation;
-  promote performance improvement and better collaboration within the criminal justice system, with relevant external organisations and our partner Inspectorates;
-  develop and implement a new communications strategy; and
-  value and invest in the professional connections and wellbeing of our staff team.

**Business Plan targets have been developed to link to our Corporate Plan targets.**

## BUSINESS PLAN TARGETS

# INSPECTION PROGRAMME

- Effectively undertake the approved annual Inspection Programme by commencing 90% of Inspections and Follow-Up Reviews and progress in line with agreed Terms of Reference.
- Consider and respond to any Ministerial Requests for a Review, including resource implications.
- Monitor the acceptance and progress towards implementation of published Inspection Report recommendations.
- Maintain effective working relationships with criminal justice organisations in our statutory remit, relevant community and voluntary organisations and partners and review and explore opportunities for agreed joint cross cutting inspections.
- Effectively fulfil our responsibilities as a member of the UK National Preventive Mechanism, Chair the Northern Ireland National Preventive Mechanism Subgroup and support the 2024 Annual Conference.
- Inform the development of a Department of Health, Department of Education and DoJ framework for joint inspection in collaboration with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and the Education and Training Inspectorate.
- Review current arrangements for monitoring recommendation implementation outside the Follow-Up Review processes.
- Host the 2024 Five Nations Policing Inspectorates Forum.
- Clarify the required amendments to the listed organisations in CJI's statutory remit and engage with the DoJ on a suitable statutory vehicle and timeframe to make the required corrections.
- Consult on the 2025-26 annual Inspection Programme.

## CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS

- **Effectively deliver a risk-based, responsive and relevant Inspection Programme.**
- **Be an effective United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism body in support of the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Conventions Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**
- **Focus on achieving better outcomes through recommendation implementation.**
- **Promote performance improvement and better collaboration within the criminal justice system, with relevant external organisations and our partner Inspectorates.**

## BUSINESS PLAN TARGETS

# COMMUNICATIONS

- Publish all approved Inspection Reports and Follow-Up Review reports by laying or presenting before the Northern Ireland Assembly, publishing on the CJI website and promoting on social media.
- Maintain effective engagement, provide briefings and obtain feedback on CJI's work from the Minister of Justice, DoJ Permanent Secretary, heads of the main criminal justice agencies, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland; the Lady Chief Justice, the Committee for Justice, the justice spokespersons of the main political parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly, All-Party Groups and the Northern Ireland Policing Board.
- Maintain links to local Universities and participate in appropriate conferences and round table events as speakers and attendees.
- Develop the business case for a new quality, accessible and secure website for DoJ approval.
- Continue the development of digital communication and CJI's social media presence.
- Effectively implement CJI's 20th Anniversary communications throughout the year.
- Effectively respond to media queries, requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, input to DoJ Assembly Questions, Committee for Justice and other briefings.

## CORPORATE PLAN TARGET

- **Develop and implement a new Communications Strategy.**

## BUSINESS PLAN TARGETS

# PEOPLE

- Establish effective Human Resources policy contingency support arrangements.
- Effectively deploy the CJI Team to achieve business objectives and support their development.
- Identify and provide appropriate staff development and training opportunities to enhance their skills and experience including placements with partner Inspectorates.
- Explore the development of an Associate Inspector call off list to provide contingency and supplementary capacity if required.
- Maintain effective contingency and risk management arrangements to support the delivery of the Inspection Programme and core business activity and Inspection Programme.
- Promote and support CJI Team wellbeing.

## CORPORATE PLAN TARGET

- **Value and invest in the professional connections and wellbeing of our staff team.**

## BUSINESS PLAN TARGETS

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Effectively fulfil required Corporation Sole governance requirements by:
  - publishing an annual Business Plan incorporating an Inspection Programme which has been approved by the Minister of Justice;
  - maintaining effective and proportionate sponsor arrangements and relationships with the DoJ Sponsor Team in support of the Corporation Sole Partnership Agreement;
  - implement the Minister of Justice's agreed recommendations from the 2022 DoJ Review of CJI; and
  - maintain an effective and proportionate Audit and Risk Assurance Committee including non-executive membership in line with best practice.
- Effectively manage known financial pressures in partnership with the DoJ Sponsor Team by bidding for adequate funding to deliver the agreed Inspection Programme and Ministerial or Departmental Review requests and business cases to support required website improvements.
- Process all payments in line with DoJ targets and submit all financial management and governance returns to the DoJ in line with required timeframes.
- Obtain an unqualified audit certificate from the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland and publish, by laying before the Northern Ireland Assembly, CJI's Annual Report and Accounts for the year in the required timescale.
- Maintain a quality management system (ISO 9001:2015).

## CORPORATE PLAN TARGET

- **Our Business Plan Targets for Corporate Governance underpin and support all our Corporate Plan Targets.**

# INSPECTION PROGRAMME 2024-25

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The 2024-25 Inspection Programme was subject to consultation with the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General and the Lady Chief Justice. The heads of criminal justice organisations in our statutory remit and other stakeholders, including community and voluntary sector organisations and political representatives, were also consulted.


CJI works in partnership with a number of other Inspectorates where particular expertise and resources add value to the inspection or can reduce duplication. The involvement of other Inspectorates can add inspection costs that CJI must be adequately funded for.


The 2024-25 programme sets out:

- ongoing Inspections and Follow-Up Reviews scheduled for publication in 2024-25;
- new Inspections being planned or to commence in-year;
- Follow-Up Reviews planned to commence in-year; and
- recognises the potential for a Ministerial request for a review under Section 47(3) or 47(4) of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.


# ONGOING INSPECTIONS AND REVIEWS

## BETTER SERVICES AND DELIVERY


 Youth Justice Agency Youth Interventions – *draft report with inspected organisations for factual accuracy check Q1 2024-25.*

 The investigation of Abuse of Position complaints against Police Service of Northern Ireland Police Officers by the Office of the Police Ombudsman – *Terms of Reference completed Q1 2024-25.*


## BETTER STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE


 Transforming Justice – *draft report being finalised Q1 2024-25.*

## FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS


 Probation Practice – *fieldwork commenced Q1 2024-25.*


## BETTER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

 Effective Criminal Court Administration – *draft report with inspected organisations for factual accuracy check Q1 2024-25.*

 Case processing of criminal offences investigated by organisations (other than the Police Service of Northern Ireland) within CJI's statutory remit – *fieldwork commenced Q1 2024-25.*

## BETTER OUTCOMES


 Governance and Operation of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland – *fieldwork undertaken Q1 2024-25.*


 Police Custody – *rescheduled to commence in Q3 2024-25.*



# NEW INSPECTIONS 2024-25

## BETTER SERVICES AND DELIVERY


 Use of Community Resolution Notices by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

 The operation of Special Measures in the criminal Courts.

## BETTER STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE


 Performance Management and Corporate oversight and management of organisational performance in the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland – HMCPSI support to be agreed.

## BETTER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS


 The policing of harbours and airports in Northern Ireland.

## BETTER PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

 An unannounced prison inspection.

 Child Criminal Exploitation in Northern Ireland – planning and HMICFRS involvement to be agreed.

## BETTER OUTCOMES

 Part 1 Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 Review – Year 2 (subject to additional DoJ funding).


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## FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS

 Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland – 2020 report.

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## INSPECTION DEVELOPMENT

 Progressing a joint child protection inspection framework for Northern Ireland with relevant Departments, the RQIA and the ETI.

 Review current arrangements for monitoring recommendation implementation outside the Follow-Up Review processes.

## ANNEX A: ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE INSPECTION REMIT OF CJI

CJI has a remit to inspect a wide variety of organisations and bodies under s.46 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, and s.45 of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007, as amended by Schedule 13 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

They include:

- the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland;
- the Northern Ireland Prison Service;
- the Probation Board for Northern Ireland;
- the Youth Justice Agency;
- the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service;
- the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland;
- Forensic Science Northern Ireland;
- the State Pathologist's Department;
- the Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland; and
- the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

The remit of the Inspectorate however is wider than these core organisations. It includes other organisations and bodies with a regulatory or prosecutorial role that engage with the criminal justice system to a greater or lesser degree. They include:

- the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;
- the Health and Social Care Board and Trusts;
- the Department for the Economy;
- the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland;
- the Department for Communities (Benefit Fraud);
- the Department for Communities (Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division);
- Royal Mail Group;
- Belfast International Airport Ltd;
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners; and
- Larne Harbour Ltd.





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