



**Public
Prosecution
Service**

Independent
Fair
Effective

Annual Business Plan 2024-25

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Foreword

By the Director

I am pleased to present our Annual Business Plan for the 2024-25 financial year.

This document sets out our priorities as a Service and the milestones we will use to assess our progress.

Over the next 12 months we will take forward a number of strategic and collaborative initiatives that are aimed at reducing demand, stabilising our workforce and improving our service delivery.

In my foreword to the 2023-24 Annual Business Plan, I had highlighted the implementation of a new joint Working Together Programme with the PSNI. Substantial progress has now been made in the development of the programme and a detailed framework has been set out, consisting of three main project strands. These focus on modernisation and transformation, improving efficiency and effectiveness and advancing opportunities for the streamlining of current working arrangements. Achievement of the agreed programme objectives will be a priority for the PPS and police during the year ahead, and this dovetails with workstreams both organisations are leading on through our partnership working at the Criminal Justice Board



***Stephen Herron
Director of Public
Prosecutions for
Northern Ireland***

Tackling avoidable delay remains a key objective for the PPS as we engage in a range of criminal justice initiatives with the Department of Justice and other CJSNI partners. This includes the ‘Speeding up Justice’ Programme and the reforms set out in the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

‘PPS 2030’ continues to provide a strategic vision for the future of the Service, setting out a programme of work over the coming years to deliver a more efficient organisation that will target its resources to those areas of greatest priority and where greatest value can be added.

Turning to the key issues that face us in the year ahead, it must be said that the current budgetary position for the PPS – like all criminal justice agencies – is a difficult one. Delivery of the full range of our statutory duties, while also maintaining progress on service improvement, will prove challenging within our allocation. The

key objectives outlined in this document, such as strengthening our capacity to deal with domestic and sexual abuse cases and delivering against a new sexual offences strategy, can only be achieved if sufficient resources are in place.

If we are to improve our service delivery and better meet victims' needs, I believe that a longer term outlook is required in respect of financial and resource planning, allied to a more strategic approach to the modernisation and transformation of the justice system. Additional investment is required to make sure we have the tools needed to operate effectively, to help us address backlogs, and to empower and support our staff to bring about meaningful change.

Reducing demand will be an important component within this strategy, and this document provides details of several initiatives that we have launched in conjunction with police with this broad aim. These include a new 'No File Decision' Pilot, whereby police are no longer required to submit all files in a limited class of cases where a no prosecution recommendation is made for each of the suspects on the file. Other measures include the expansion of Community Resolution Notices (CRNs), providing front line police officers with a wider range of disposals to deal with lower level offending.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the PPS's staff. We have been faced with unprecedented pressures in recent years but our people at all levels have continued to deliver a first class service. I am grateful for the continued commitment and hard work of staff at all levels of the organisation.

I hope that this plan demonstrates the many ways in which we are seeking to improve the services we provide. It will be a challenging year ahead as we look to reform and modernise, while aiming to improve performance and address delay. However, with a high performing workforce dedicated to public service, I am confident that we will achieve our objectives over the next 12 months.



Stephen Herron
Director of Public Prosecutions
for Northern Ireland

June 2024

Our Purpose

We will provide an independent, fair and effective prosecution service for the people of Northern Ireland. We will act impartially and in the interests of justice at all times, applying the highest professional standards and treating everyone fairly and with respect.

We are at the heart of the criminal justice system and will work with partners to build a safer community in which we respect the law and each other. We will strive to deliver a modern, innovative and transparent service that shows compassion and understanding towards victims of crime while meeting our obligation to ensure fairness to all.

Our Values

Independence and Integrity

We will maintain our independence and act at all times with integrity, fairness and impartiality. We will seek to deliver justice in every case in accordance with the law, respecting the human rights of all persons.

Openness and Honesty

We will communicate openly and honestly, in accordance with our professional duties. We will set clear standards about the service the public can expect from us.

Respect

We will respect each other, our colleagues and the public we serve, showing courtesy, sensitivity and understanding.

Excellence

We will make the best use of our people and resources, seeking to achieve excellence in everything we do.

Partnership

We will work in partnership within the criminal justice system to better serve the community

Our Organisation

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases initiated or investigated by the police, it also considers cases initiated or investigated by other statutory authorities, for example HM Revenue and Customs.

The PPS was established in June 2005. The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 defines the PPS, its statutory duties and responsibilities, and the legislative framework within which it must provide its services.

Since the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly in April 2010, the Service has been designated as a non-ministerial government department. Funding for the PPS is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly and, as Accounting Officer for the Service, the Director is responsible for ensuring that the public monies provided are used efficiently. All staff, other than the Director and Deputy Director, are members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

PPS Services

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. Additional services are also available which have been designed to enhance the effectiveness of the Service, including the provision of prosecutorial and pre-charge advice.

Options are available to allow prosecutors to deal with offenders other than through prosecution. These include cautions, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Course.

PPS Structures

The PPS is a regionally based organisation. There are two regions:

- Belfast and Eastern; and
- Western and Southern.

Each region is headed by an Assistant Director (AD). The AD is responsible for working with the courts and the police to provide a high-quality prosecution service in their area. The regions deal with a wide range of cases, from the less serious

summary cases, which are heard in the Magistrates' Courts, through to more serious indictable cases which are heard in the Crown Court.

In addition there are four legal sections, based in PPS Headquarters, which are also headed at AD level. These sections are as follows:

- The Serious Crime Unit deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and other serious sexual offences, human trafficking, prostitution and related offences.
- Central Casework Section deals with some of the most high profile and difficult cases in Northern Ireland, including files relating to terrorism and organised crime.
- Fraud and Departmental Section deals with serious and complex fraud files submitted by the police, as well as files from Government Departments and agencies.
- High Court and International Section deals with a range of specialist legal matters, including High Court bail applications, restraint and confiscation orders, extradition, international letters of request, judicial reviews, appeals to the Court of Appeal and cases referred by the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Corporate Services provides the PPS with a variety of professional, technical and other support services, and includes the Policy and Information Unit, Victim and Witness Care Unit, Information and Communications Technology, Resource Management Team, Finance and Fees, Communications Unit, Strategic Improvement Team, Modernisation Team and Property Management.

An Organisation Chart for the PPS is presented at **Annex A**.

Working in Partnership: Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland (CJSNI)

The PPS works in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland.

The Director is a member of the Criminal Justice Board which is chaired by the Minister of Justice. This was established by the Minister to improve engagement between the most senior leaders within the criminal justice system and to provide strategic oversight for the work of the CJSNI.

Managing Change

PPS 2030

'PPS 2030' provides a strategic vision for the future of the Public Prosecution Service, setting out a programme of work over the next 5-6 years to deliver a more efficient organisation that will target its resources to those areas of greatest priority and where greatest value can be added.

The overarching objectives of the programme are to:

- Redesign and optimise our service delivery model and processes to deliver our business more effectively;
- Develop arrangements to allow cases to be dealt with proportionately and contribute to the reduction of avoidable delay;
- Support staff and key stakeholders to work in a changing environment; and
- Achieve a sustainable financial operating model for the PPS in the longer term.

Delivery of PPS 2030 will be through the identification of a portfolio of projects based around one or more of the following themes:

- *Effective Processes*
We will review our practices and procedures to facilitate more effective decision making.
- *Proportionate Processes*
We will implement more proportionate methods of handling casework in order to optimise the use of prosecutorial resources.
- *Digital Processes*
We will enhance current digital ways of working in order to improve services and efficiency, both internally and in conjunction with our CJSNI partners.
- *Victim Processes*
We will work with partners to improve information and services to victims and witnesses.

PPS 2030 supersedes the Service Improvement and Innovation Programme (SIIP). This was established by the Management Board in 2019 to provide a framework for the oversight and delivery of strategic CJSNI service improvement initiatives. With the advent of PPS 2030, tackling avoidable delay will remain a key objective for the Service and we will continue to engage in a range of criminal justice initiatives with the Department of Justice and other CJSNI partners. This includes the 'Speeding up Justice' Programme and the reforms set out in the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, including Committal Reform. An important step has already been taken with

the abolition of oral evidence at the committal stage. The Service is also implementing the CJSNI Digital Strategy.

A Modernisation and Project Management Office has been established in order to progress the delivery of PPS 2030. The team is responsible for the coordination, prioritisation and control of modernisation projects throughout the organisation, utilising established project management techniques and practices.

Speeding Up Justice initiatives will continue to be supported by the Strategic Improvement Team and the Policy and Information Unit.

The Working Together Programme

The review of file quality and disclosure by Criminal Justice Inspection NI, published in June 2023, highlighted the need for the PPS and PSNI to strengthen their collaboration to improve the quality of prosecution files and the pace of case progression.¹

While the inspection report recognised the progress made in recent years, the senior teams within the PPS and PSNI acknowledged that more needed to be done to address the issues highlighted by inspectors. Following the publication of the report, the PPS / PSNI working arrangements have been subject to significant reform. This has included the establishment of a new joint programme ('The Working Together Programme'), supported by a Board chaired jointly by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions and the Assistant Chief Constable for the PSNI's Justice Department. Members include the two PPS Senior Assistant Directors and the PSNI's Head of Justice Branch.

A detailed framework for the new programme has been agreed, consisting of three main project strands, as follows:

- ***File Quality and Disclosure***

The File Quality and Disclosure Working Group is seeking to implement robust file build standards for all case types, in tandem with joint PPS/PSNI gateway arrangements to improve compliance. It is also developing agreed early engagement arrangements for the provision of prosecutorial advice, as well as disclosure management processes, in order to streamline case progression and tackle avoidable delay. The workstream is jointly led by the PPS's Head of Strategic Improvement and a PSNI Chief Inspector.

¹ [An Inspection of File Quality, Disclosure and Case Progression and Trial Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic \(CJI, June 2023\).](#)

- *Modernisation and Transformation*

The Modernisation and Transformation Working Group is focused on digital transformation and innovation. The workstream is jointly led by the PPS's Head of Modernisation and a PSNI Superintendent.

- *Out of Court Disposals*

The remit of the Out of Court Disposals Working Group is to assess and implement measures to reduce demand within both organisations, the introduction of new (non-court) disposal types and the wider use of existing police discretionary disposals. The workstream is jointly led by the PPS's Head of Policy and Information and the Head of PSNI's Criminal Justice Branch.

Strategic Improvement Board

The Strategic Improvement Board (SIB), chaired by the Deputy Director, is responsible for the internal oversight of all major change initiatives taken forward by the PPS. With the commencement of PPS 2030 and the new Working Together Programme, as well as other ongoing initiatives, the SIB's role as a main forum for the prioritisation and oversight of all project activity across the Service is a crucial one. This recognises the ongoing need to ensure that all new projects, regardless of their origins, are considered by senior management in the context of finite project management, policy, ICT and other resources within the organisation.

The Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change and Senior Assistant Director for Serious Crime and Regional Prosecutions act jointly as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the agreed suite of projects.

Current priority projects include the implementation of the new Remote Evidence Centres, the introduction of electronic summons signing and enhancements to the PPS Case Management System.

Key Issues for the Year Ahead

Ahead of each annual business planning cycle, it is important that we assess our current operating context. As well as helping to plan for the year ahead, this allows us to focus on key priorities and to respond to any new opportunities and challenges, so that we can provide our managers and staff with the information and support they need. The summary below outlines a number of the key themes identified for the year, including the ongoing impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

This business plan should be regarded as a 'living document'. The PPS is operating in a very dynamic environment, and we must be willing to adapt as circumstances dictate. Therefore throughout 2024-25, the PPS Management Board will take regular opportunities to look ahead to identify emerging trends, so that our approach can be adjusted as necessary. In particular, there is a need to keep the financial situation under review as regards the organisation's capacity to meet our statutory obligations and business priorities.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse are among the most challenging crimes prosecuted by the PPS. Over the next year, we will build on our capacity in this area, for example through the provision of additional training and guidance for prosecutors and ongoing quality assurance.

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act 2021, which commenced in February 2022, represented a major step forward in terms of our ability to deal with domestic abuse cases. These provisions have now been in place for two years and there is a much greater understanding of the evidence required to prove a course of abusive behaviour which is an essential element of the domestic abuse offence. The operation of the 2021 Act has been the subject of a recent review by Criminal Justice Inspection.² The PPS has responded to the review by way of a detailed action plan and the necessary changes will be implemented over the course of the 2024-25 financial year. Key actions will include a renewed focus on the identification and prosecution of the domestic abuse offence and the recording of reasons for our decisions in all cases involving domestic abuse.

A comprehensive Service Level Agreement has also been implemented between the PSNI and the PPS, clearly setting out our respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the investigation, management and prosecution of cases involving

² [Review of the Effectiveness of Part 1 of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2021 \(CJI, April 2024\)](#).

domestic abuse. Over the year ahead, the joint PPS/PSNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group will work to ensure that the agreed working arrangements are operating effectively.

The PPS and PSNI are in the process of agreeing a joint Serious Sexual Offences Strategy, building upon ongoing work to strengthen and improve the quality and efficiency of the investigation and prosecution process. Quality investigation and prosecution will be reinforced through investing in learning and development for staff. Case progression will be a strategic focus, including the importance of reducing delay and building a strong working partnership between the PPS and the PSNI. The Strategy will focus on a trauma informed approach and seek to provide enhanced support to victims. Enhanced victim communication and support will help those affected to stay within the process and reduce the chance of re-traumatisation.

The Strategy will incorporate key indicators to monitor progress and evaluate actions taken. It is intended that an Action Plan will accompany the document and provide clear deliverables for both organisations.

We will continue to provide support for the new overarching strategies being progressed elsewhere, including the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy led by the Department of Health and the Department of Justice, and the 'Equally Safe' Strategy, led by the Executive Office which aims to tackle violence against women and girls.

Victims and Witnesses

Over the coming year, we will contribute to the delivery of the agreed objectives set out in the CJSNI's Victim and Witness Strategy. This will include the development of mechanisms to monitor how well we are delivering the rights and entitlements as laid out in the Victim and Witness Charters. We will also work with the Department of Justice and other partners to ensure that the Remote Evidence Centres (RECs) in Belfast and Craigavon are utilised effectively. It is essential that appropriate special measures applications are made for use of the RECs. Additional training and guidance will be provided for prosecutors and other staff as required.

We will also support the Victim and Witness Steering Group in identifying and responding to emerging issues and taking forward initiatives to improve outcomes for victims and witnesses.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has presented the PPS and our partners across the CJSNI with very significant challenges. As a Service, we now have the ongoing challenge of addressing case backlogs at court, and the associated delay which inevitably built up over the pandemic period. Substantial progress has already

been made in reducing backlogs, but much work remains to be done, particularly in the Crown Court. We will remain fully engaged in cross-criminal justice recovery activity over the next financial year, subject to funding being available to do so. We will also continue to provide regular information and updates to victims and witnesses who are of course central to these efforts.

Managing Resources

The PPS's budget position remains a difficult one. Details of the budget allocation for 2024-25 are set out at page 22 of this document. Delivery of the full range of PPS services, while also maintaining progress on recovery, will prove challenging and we will seek to address these pressures as we move through the financial year.

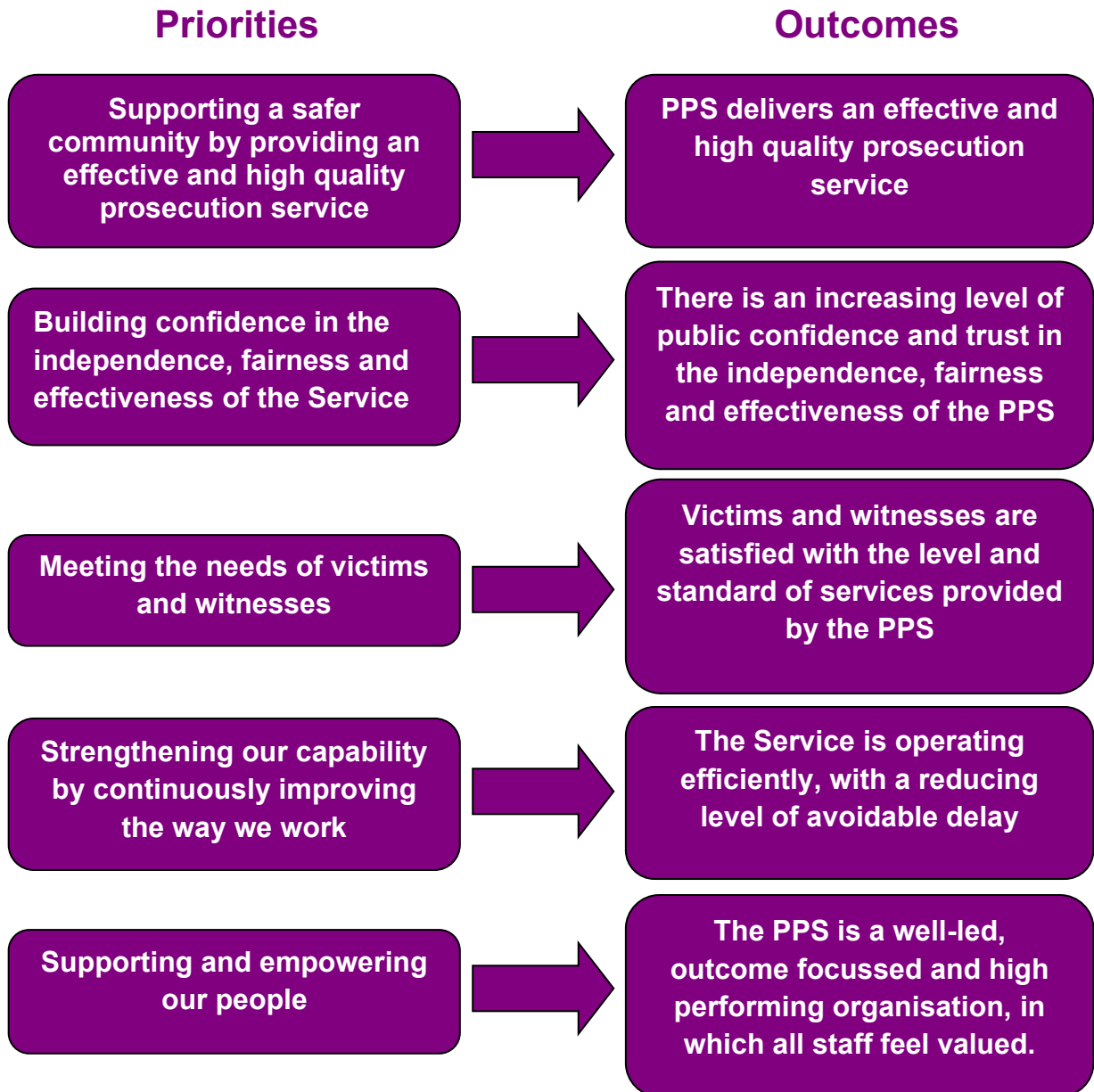
In light of these circumstances, the senior teams within the PPS and the PSNI have initiated a series of reforms of the agreed file submission arrangements. In taking forward these reforms, which are supported by the Department of Justice, it was recognised that a new approach is required if we are to improve our service delivery and better meet victims' needs in the context of the long-term financial and resourcing pressures on both organisations.

Initiatives being taken forward include a new 'No File Decision' Pilot. Under the pilot framework, which commenced on 29 November 2023, police are no longer required to submit all files in a limited class of cases where a no prosecution recommendation is made for each of the suspects on the file. The offences covered by the change are those generally directed upon by a Public Prosecutor in the PPS. These range from assault (AOABH and below) to minor motoring offences. A number of exclusionary criteria apply as an additional safeguard and the PPS continue to take decisions in the more serious files where police have recommended no prosecution – including those usually directed upon by Senior Public Prosecutors, such as murder, manslaughter, possessing firearms or explosives with intent, rape, sexual assault, grievous bodily harm and non-fatal strangulation. Evaluation is a crucial aspect of the pilot and formal review points have been established, including an interim review to be conducted in Summer 2024.

Other measures to be progressed during 2024 include the expansion of Community Resolution Notices (CRNs), providing front line police officers with a wider range of appropriate disposals to address lower level offending.

Our Priorities

PPS corporate planning is based around five strategic priorities which act as a framework to drive our planning outcomes and our approach to managing performance and risk.

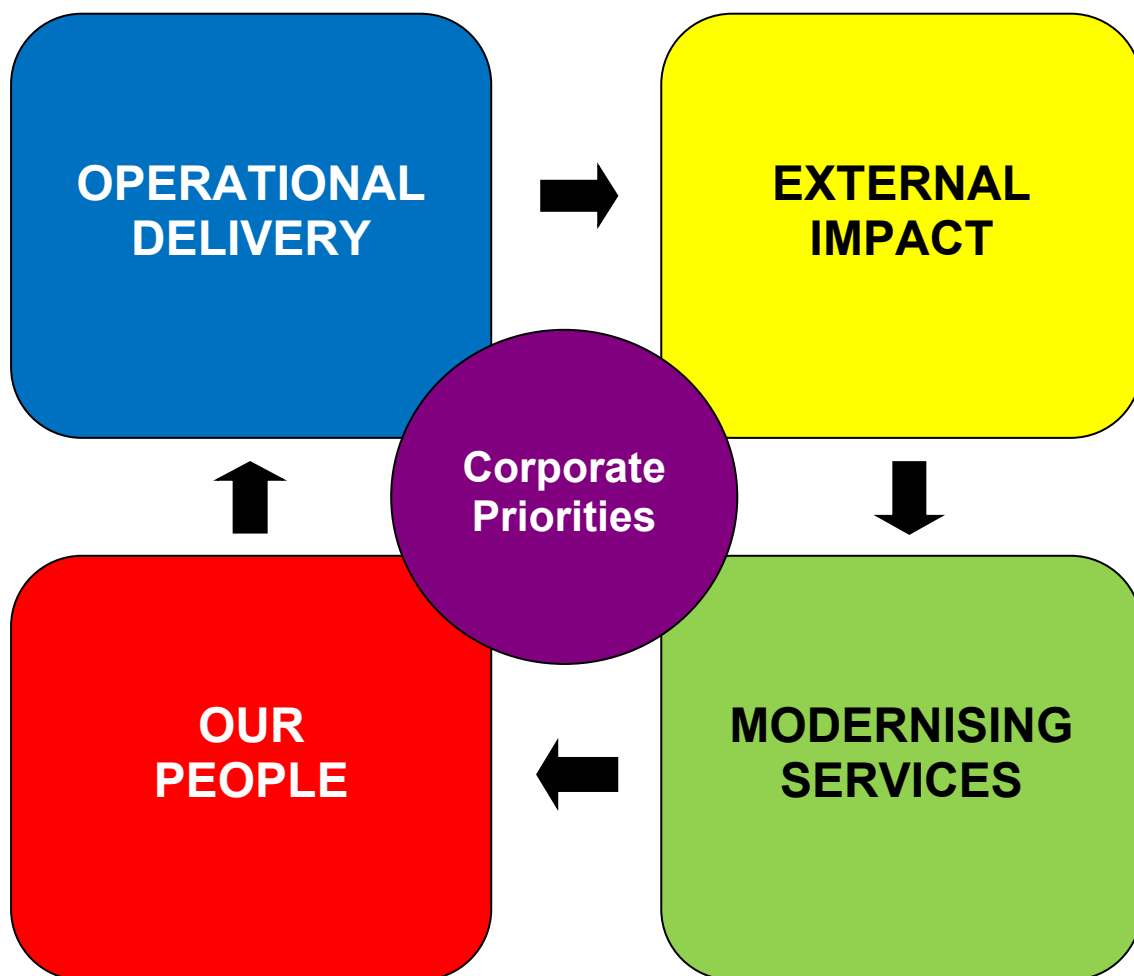


What We Plan to Achieve in 2024-25

Our Annual Business Plan for 2024-25 is in the form of a ‘Balanced Scorecard’. This sets out the actions and initiatives we intend to take forward as the focus of our work programme over the next 12 months, in support of delivering our business priorities and associated outcomes.

Our Scorecard is based around four areas:

- **Operational delivery** (for example, maintaining or improving the standard of our casework and advocacy).
- **External impact** (for example, the delivery of victim and witness services).
- **Modernising services** (for example, greater use of digital / IT processes).
- **Our people** (for example, supporting staff engagement and well-being).



2024-25 Scorecard Areas

Operational Delivery

| Priority | Initiatives and actions |
|---|---|
| <p>Priority 1: Supporting a safer community by providing an effective and high quality prosecution service</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of action plans in response to Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland recommendations and ongoing monitoring of agreed action plan objectives. • Development of legal policy and guidance, including the publication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy for Prosecuting Cases Involving Stalking (for Consultation). ○ Revised Victim and Witness Policy (for Consultation). • Agreement of a five-year Sexual Offences Strategy (jointly with PSNI), including the development of a suite of key performance measures. • Delivery of the PPS Quality Assurance Review Programme, including the assessment of casework against the Service’s Prosecution Quality Standards (PQS) via monthly dip sampling. • Agreement of working arrangements with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR), including access to PPS information. • We will continue to work with CJSNI partners to implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The agreed recommendations of the Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland. ○ The remaining recommendations arising from the Gillen Review, including the ongoing development and evaluation of the Remote Evidence Centres (RECs). • We will work with CJSNI partners on agreed Covid-19 ‘Recovering the Justice System’ initiatives and the ongoing development and delivery of operational recovery plans on a cross-agency basis. |

External Impact

| Priority | Initiatives and actions |
|--|---|
| <p>Priority 2: Building confidence in the independence, fairness and effectiveness of the Service</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the PPS Communications Strategy and agreed objectives for 2024-25. • Publication of Official Statistics and performance data in line with the agreed schedule, including statistical bulletins on hate crime and sexual offences. • Management of complaints and requests for review, identifying learning to inform improved services and processes for victims and witnesses and other service users. • Publication of the Annual Report of the Independent Assessor of Complaints and the implementation of agreed actions. • Achievement of action plan objectives for 2024-25 in support of the PPS Equality Scheme and Disability Discrimination Act. |

External Impact

| Priority | Initiatives and actions |
|--|---|
| <p>Priority 3: Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with CJSNI partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver agreed objectives set out in the CJSNI’s Victim and Witness Strategy, including the development of mechanisms to monitor how well we are delivering the rights and entitlements as laid out in the Victim and Witness Charters. ○ Support the Victim and Witness Steering Group in identifying and responding to emerging issues and the delivery of improved outcomes for victims and witnesses. ○ Provide continued support for the Registered Intermediaries Scheme. ○ Provide appropriate support for the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy led by the Department of Health and the Department of Justice and the ‘Equally Safe’ Strategy, led by the Executive Office. ○ Progress the actions agreed by the PPS/PSNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group. • Ensure effective consultation and engagement with stakeholders via the PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum (SEF). |

Modernising Services

| Priority | Initiatives and actions |
|--|---|
| <p>Priority 4: Strengthening our capability by continuously improving the way we work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the effective operation of the 'PPS 2030' programme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management of existing priority projects and the Identification of potential projects to be taken forward under the programme umbrella. ○ Regular monitoring by the PPS Strategic Improvement Board. ○ Internal and external stakeholder engagement as required. • We will work with PSNI to build on the Working Together Programme and progress agreed action plan objectives in respect of the main project themes, including File Quality and Disclosure, Modernisation and Transformation and Out of Court Disposals. • Delivery of key operational PPS projects and inter-agency initiatives under the CJSNI Speeding Up Justice Programme. • We will engage with the Youth Justice Agency and police to progress a new early intervention process in youth cases, including the framework for an operational pilot (Southern Region). • Implementation of PPS ICT Strategy objectives for 2024-25, including development support for CJSNI initiatives and enhancements to the PPS Case Management System. |

Our People

| Priority | Initiatives and actions |
|--|---|
| <p>Priority 5: Supporting and empowering our people</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of agreed PPS People Plan objectives for 2024-25 across the six People Priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Improvement of internal communication. (2) Strategic workforce planning and timely, responsive vacancy management and supply. (3) More flexible and innovative ways of working. (4) Review of the performance management system. (5) Improved focus on both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. (6) Improvement and development of leadership skills. • Development of an updated PPS Capacity Model, setting out the numbers and grades of staff required to support the operation of the PPS. • Ongoing evaluation of 'New Ways of Working' and the NICS Hybrid Working Policy. • We will commence the process of reaccreditation under Investors in People. • Implementation of PPS Corporate Social Responsibility and well-being objectives for 2024-25. • Delivery of the Annual Corporate Training Plan. • Maintenance of effective employee relations within the PPS. • Implementation of the Health and Safety Work Programme for 2024-25. |

Key Delivery Measures

The following are the key delivery measures for 2024-25 against which the performance of the PPS will be assessed. Performance against these measures will be accounted for in our Annual Report for the coming financial year.

Priority 1:

Supporting a safer community by providing an effective and high quality prosecution service

- **Casework Quality Assurance (Dip sampling)**
 - Percentage of prosecution decisions taken in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors.
- **Unsuccessful outcomes**
 - Number of No Bills granted in the Crown Court.
 - Number of Acquittals by Direction in the Crown Court.

Priority 2:

Building confidence in the independence, fairness and effectiveness of the Service

- **Criminal Justice Inspection**
 - Monitoring of agreed recommendations (i.e. assessed as achieved / partially achieved / not achieved).
- **Public confidence**
 - Public confidence in the provision of a fair and impartial prosecution service.
- **Complaints**
 - Number of complaints by type of issue raised.
 - Percentage of complaints (a) acknowledged within 3 working days (b) dealt with within 30 working days.
- **Requests for a review of a decision not to prosecute**
 - Percentage of requests (a) acknowledged within 3 working days (b) dealt with within 8 weeks.

Key Delivery Measures

Priority 3: Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses

- **Northern Ireland Victim and Witness Survey**
 - Percentage victim and witness satisfaction with the services delivered by the VWCU.
- **Delivery against Victim and Witness Charter Commitments (VWCU)**
 - Percentage of notifications to the victim within 7 days of decision.
 - Percentage of notifications of file submission within 7 days of receipt.
 - Percentage of notifications of arraignment within 7 days of scheduling.
- **Special Measures**
 - Number of special measures applications applied for / percentage granted.

Priority 4: Strengthening our capability by continuously improving the way we work

- **Timeliness of decisions issued (Regions / Serious Crime Unit)**
 - Median time taken for issue of decisions by type of decision.
- **Decision information requests (DIRs) to Police**
 - Percentage of indictable / summary decisions where a DIR was required.

Priority 5: Supporting and empowering our people

- **Staff satisfaction (NICS People Survey)**
 - Percentage of staff who agree that the PPS is a good organisation to work for.
 - PPS Employee Engagement Index (%).
- **Performance management**
 - Percentage of staff with an agreed Personal Performance Agreement by the agreed target date.
 - Percentage of end of year Performance Management Reports completed by the agreed target date.
- **Training**
 - Number of agreed training events delivered.

PPS Resources 2024-25

For the 2024-25 financial year the Service has been provided with an allocation of £39.4 million resource, £4.2 million non-cash, and £0.7 million capital.

Details of the allocation are set out below.

This proposed baseline budget is currently split across the Service's spending priorities as follows:

| Spending Area | £m |
|--|-------------|
| Staffing | 27.3 |
| Legal and Court Costs (including Counsel Fees) | 7.3 |
| Accommodation, IT and Other Costs | 4.8 |
| IFRS16 Leases / Depreciation Costs | 4.2 |
| Capital | 0.7 |
| Total | 44.3 |

Managing Risk

The PPS faces a range of risks and uncertainties in delivering its priorities and objectives over the next year. The identification and review of corporate risks is the responsibility of the Management Board. All corporate risks are owned by members of the Board and will be actively managed over the course of the financial year.

The corporate risk areas identified at the beginning of the 2024-25 financial year include the following:

Priority 1: Supporting a safer community

- Progressing serious and high-profile cases.
- Maintaining the Service's capacity to deliver legacy casework.
- Funding pressures and our capacity to address current caseloads and to tackle backlogs and delay.

Priority 2: Building confidence

- The effectiveness of our approach to stakeholder and public engagement in building confidence in the Service.

Priority 3: Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses

- Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses in terms of the services provided.

Priority 4: Strengthening our capability

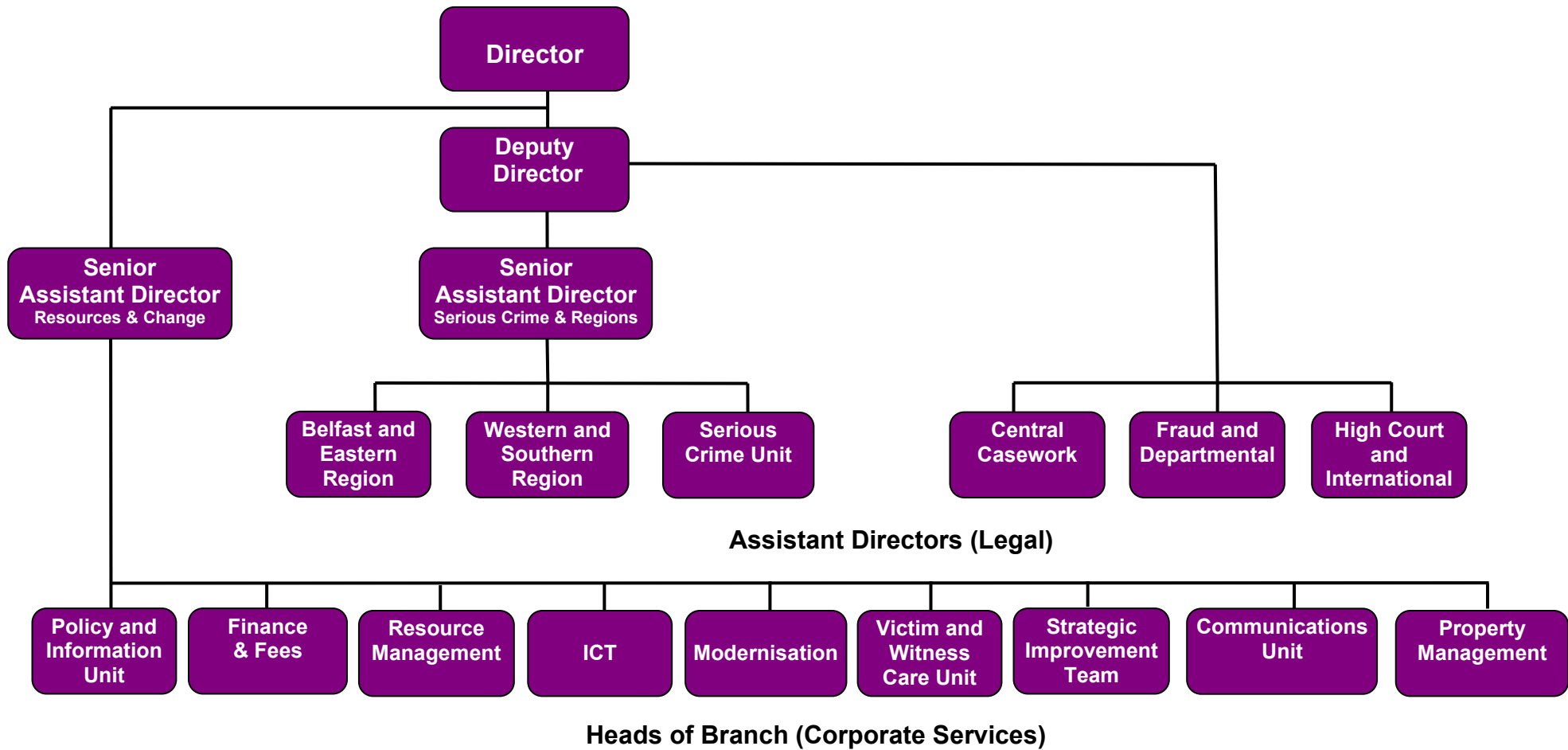
- The Modernisation and Working Together Programmes (and related change initiatives and delivering the anticipated business benefits and outcomes.
- Compliance of PPS systems and procedures in respect of information management and security requirements.

Priority 5: Supporting and empowering our people

- Delivery of the PPS People Plan.

- Addressing challenges to staff wellbeing.
- Workforce planning and the retention and recruitment of staff.

Annex A: PPS Organisation Chart





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Effective

Contact Us

If you require any further information about the PPS, or a copy of this document in an alternative format, please contact:

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