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Our Aims, Visions and Values

Delivering you justice

Our Aim

is to ensure effective and accessible **justice**, protect the **rights** of citizens and modernise the law and **constitution**.

Our Vision

We want to:

- provide world class justice services
- be a place where our staff are proud to work
- be valued by our customers
- inspire public confidence
- provide value for money

Our Values

We will value:

- customers
- achievement
- leadership and teamwork
- personal responsibility
- diversity

Foreword by Chief Executive

I am pleased to present the Court Service Business Plan 2004-2005, which sets out our strategic objectives and targets for this period.

The period covered by this report will include the lead up to the launch of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) on 1 April 2005. Her Majesty's Courts Service will replace the Court Service and the 42 Magistrates' Courts Committees. Considerable effort will be spent in the period to April 2005 carrying out the necessary preparations for HMCS.

Other changes that will be rolled out over this period include new Information Technology that will enable us to move the management of courts into a new era. We will see the roll out of the link infrastructure to all criminal courts and most civil courts over this year; and the installation of the Xhibit system (which allows the electronic exchange of hearing information with other criminal justice agencies) in 39 Crown Courts.

Whilst all this change is occurring it is critical that we do not let our focus slip – delivery against the PSA targets we have been set is crucial, and we will continue to concentrate and deliver on them. Improved customer service will be important in attaining those goals, as will continuing the useful collaboration between Criminal Justice Agencies through the Local and National Criminal Justice Boards.

Our people will be crucial in all of this. Crucial to the delivery of our PSA targets, crucial to the implementation of changes leading to Her Majesty's Courts Service and crucial to ensuring that justice is delivered effectively in England and Wales. I have every confidence in our ability to deliver these tough tasks and am grateful for the continued hard work of all those working for the Court Service.



Sir Ron De Witt
Chief Executive

Section I: Overview

About the Court Service

The Court Service is an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). The overall aim of the Department is to promote justice, rights and the **constitution**.

The purpose of the Court Service is the **delivery of justice**. We are responsible for administration of the civil, family and criminal courts in England and Wales (with the exception of the Magistrates' Courts - which will come together with the Court Service in a new unified administration on 1 April 2005 - and the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords).

Our role in the Department

As a key delivery-arm of the Department, the Court Service plays an important part in delivering the Department's overall aims and objectives. The chart at Annex (A) shows how our objectives support the Department's strategic objectives and the Government's aims.

Public Service Agreement (PSA)

As part of the settlement for the last Spending Review, the Department agreed a challenging set of PSA targets for the 2003-2006 period. A full list of the PSA targets showing how the Court Service contributes to their delivery is at Annex (B).

Our headline targets

We have developed high level targets to ensure that we have effective and meaningful measures of progress against our objectives. These targets reflect our contribution to the PSA targets.

Headline Targets	Target 2004 - 2005
<p>To support Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) in meeting their targets, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the proportion of Crown Court ineffective trials ; • ensuring cases are disposed of promptly (measured as a % percentage of Crown Court defendants and appellants whose cases are heard within target time); • reducing the period from charge to sentence for Persistent Young Offenders; and • increasing sitting days in the Crown Court, (in line with the increase in the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice) to 1.2m by 2005/06. <p>(contributes to PSA 1 and 2)</p>	<p>from 24% to 17% by March 2006</p> <p>78%</p> <p>71%</p> <p>104,200 sitting days</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing year on year the level of satisfaction in four key areas of service delivery <p>(contributes to PSA 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of court staff at the public counter • knowledge of court staff on the telephone • speed of resolution of complaints • helpfulness of written replies
<p>to reduce the issue of non-family claims in the civil courts</p> <p>to reduce the proportion of non-family cases allocated for hearing that are resolved by a hearing</p> <p>to reduce the number of non-family hearings</p> <p>to increase the proportion of contact and ancillary relief orders made by consent</p>	<p>from a baseline of 1,790k in 2002/03 to 1,580k by March 2006.</p> <p>From a baseline of 48.9% in 2003 to 47% by March 2006</p> <p>From a baseline of 71,300 in 2003 to 64,700 by March 2006</p> <p>From a baseline of 70.6% in 2003 to 73.4% by March 2006</p>

Priorities for the coming year

Our priorities for the coming year include;

- **The Unified Courts Administration Programme:** supporting the Unified Courts Administration Programme in planning for a smooth transition to the new unified administration on 1 April 2005 without adverse impact on service delivery;
- **Improving the delivery of Justice:** by making a full and effective contribution to the development of cross-CJS partnerships, particularly through Local Criminal Justice Boards;
- **Increasing customer satisfaction of users of the civil and family courts:** by ensuring that the Department understands customers' current and future needs and responds to them - and helping to give effect to Government policy that the courts should be the dispute resolution method of last resort;
- **The Departmental Change Programme:** contributing to the programme to ensure that service delivery is at the heart of the Department's policy, planning and funding arrangements;
- **Our People:** ensuring that our human resource strategy supports both the implementation of the Unified Courts Administration Programme and continuity in existing business and that we achieve re-accreditation as an Investors in People (IIP) employer);
- **Reducing delay in Family cases:** the target level for this year has been retained at 70%. Performance is currently (37%) of cases being dealt with within target¹, (therefore, to increase performance an additional 2,000 sitting days has been allocated); ;
- **Charter Mark:** we plan that all courts and probate offices will achieve Charter Mark recognition by March 2005.
- **Information Technology:** complete the rollout of the Link infrastructure to 100% of criminal courts and 76% of civil courts; install the Xhibit system (which allows the automatic electronic exchange of hearing information with other criminal justice agencies) in 39 Crown Courts.

¹Cumulative performance data from Apr 2003 – Feb 2004 including time spent in Family Proceedings Court (FPC)

Section 2: Business Plans 2004 - 2005

The Criminal Courts

The Crown Court hears the more serious criminal cases, and is located at 78 centres across England and Wales. The Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) usually sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in London and deals with appeals by defendants in criminal cases from the Crown Court.

Working closely with our CJS partners (the police, the prosecutors and the prisons), the Court Service plays a full role in delivering the Government's aims for the CJS:

- to reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- to ensure the effective delivery of justice; and
- to deliver effective custodial and community sentences to reduce re-offending and protect the public.

These targets are designed to achieve a better service for citizens and users of the CJS. The Government's policy is to give local areas the freedom to set their own priorities for action through Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs), which manage performance in each criminal justice system area and decide how they can best meet national targets. LCJBs consist of Chief Officers of the core CJS agencies, the courts, the police, Probation Service and the Crown Prosecution Service. Each appoints its own Chair, from among its members. Local boards report to the National Criminal Justice Board, which comprises ministers and senior officials from CJS departments, and which determines overall CJS strategy.

The Department's Strategic Objective and PSA targets

To support the Government's aims for the CJS, the Department will work towards delivering the following Strategic Objective and PSA targets:

Strategic Objective	Target
To ensure the effective delivery of justice.	PSA1: Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2 million by 2005/06; with an improvement in all CJS areas, a greater increase in the worst performing areas and a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials.
	PSA2: Improve the level of public confidence in the Criminal Justice System, including increasing that of ethnic minority communities, increasing year on year the satisfaction of victims and witnesses, whilst respecting the rights of defendants.

Both targets will be delivered through a combination of both national reform and local initiatives taken forward by LCJBs in the 42 CJS areas. Planned reforms include the Effective Trial Management Programme (designed to improve case management at every stage of the CJS process), the electronic exchange of case information (the Xhibit project); witness care pilots, a programme to improve the level of fine enforcement.

This year will also see the completion of plans and preparations for the launch of a unified administration, bringing together the Court Service and the magistrates' courts from the 1 April 2005.

The Department works closely with other criminal justice agencies through a joint CJS Confidence Unit to deliver the confidence target. DCA plans to focus on six key issues that affect confidence and satisfaction with the criminal courts. The Court Service plays a leading role in all these activities:

- Ensuring that all CJS staff are able to make an effective contribution to overall CJS delivery
- Improving awareness and understanding of the CJS through public education and community engagement
- Improving the level of effective fine enforcement in the Magistrates' courts
- Improving the experience of contact with the CJS for victims and witnesses; and
- Establishing a new Community Justice Centre in Liverpool to the role of the court in the community and to the treatment of offenders.

Our headline targets measuring success against our objectives are:

	Target
To support Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) in meeting their targets, including;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the national level of ineffective trials in the Crown Court; 	From 24% to 17% by March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining the percentage of Crown Court defendants and appellants whose cases are heard within target time; 	78%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the period from charge to sentence for Persistent Young Offenders; and 	71%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sitting days in the Crown Court, facilitating the increase in the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2m by 2005/06. 	104,200 days

Other activities, targets and milestones:

Reducing the number of ineffective trials	Target/Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the number of trials not reached on the day are listed does not exceed 3% of all cases listed. 	By March 2005

Improving the level of public confidence in the Crown Court	Target/Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that victims and witnesses needs are taken into account when cases are listed; ensure that appropriate facilities are made available when attending court; and engaging with local communities. 	<p>There are no key indicators for this target.</p> <p>Targets to be agreed as part of the joint CJS delivery plan.</p>

Planning and workload assumptions for 2004 – 2005

The Crown Court

Year*	Workload			Resources	
	Trials	Sentences	Appeals	Sitting Days	Total Resources* (£m)
2001-2002	79,227	25,907	12,213	98,774	295
2002-2003	84,264	29,165	11,807	103,325	320
2003-2004	83813	31319	12019	101,500	345***
2004-2005	89,424	229889	11214	104,200	309#

*figures exclude some corporate overheads and judicial superannuation

*** includes judicial superannuation

#Figure are down on last year due to restructuring of Court Service HQ, and central budgets

The Narrowing the Justice Gap (NJG) initiative will lead to more cases reaching the Crown Court. Our target is to increase the number of offences brought to justice from the current level of 1 million to 1.2 million, by the end of 2005-2006 and, at the same time, to reduce the proportion of ineffective trials from 24% to 17%. It is expected that the Crown Court will handle in the region of 9,600 of these 1.2 million cases.

The Crown Court sat 102,238 days in 2002-03 against a planned 101,300 days, an increase of 3% from 2001-02. The planned level of sitting days for this year is 104,200. This level takes account the need to take some courtrooms out of use for the installation of our new IT infrastructure, which we will manage through the acquisition of more accommodation in critical areas to make good the shortfall.

Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)

Year	Applications for leave against conviction	Applications for leave against sentence	Resources (£m) (Shared with Administrative Court)
2000-2001	2,029	5,545	6
2001-2002	1,900	5,530	6
2002-2003	1,950	5,960	6
2003-2004	1,797	5,525	7
2004-2005	2,000	6,000	7

Notwithstanding that the annual total of applications received appears to be static (if not reducing), the workload for the Full Court is increasing with conviction appeals up by 38% and renewed applications for leave to appeal against conviction up by 20% (giving an overall rise in full Court workload of 27%).

The projections for 2004 - 2005 do not take account of the workload expected to arise from implementation of new statutory provisions, which came into force during 2003 – 2004 or are due to come into force during this financial year. There are several new jurisdictions for the Court to assimilate and many changes to Criminal evidence and practice that will affect the workload of CAO in relation to conviction and or sentence applications.

The following provisions (affecting sentence applications) have already been implemented, although the projected increase in workload is difficult to assess:

- The Proceeds of Crime Act (PCA) began a rolling implementation in December 2002. The PCA allows the Crown Court to issue restraint and confiscation orders where there is evidence to suggest the defendant has gained wealth due to their involvement in crime. The impact on the Crown Court is unpredictable, but police estimate a significant number of applications to be made. Confiscation orders with attendant restraint orders could now potentially be made in over 46,000 cases per annum. If the usual parameters were to be applied, the Court of Appeal Criminal Division (CACD) may receive between 5% and 10 % of this workload, which equates to somewhere between 2,300 and 4,600 cases.
- Tariff setting for those sentenced to life imprisonment in force 18/12/03), has led to the creation of a new section (LIMIT), to review tariffs for prisoners currently subject to life imprisonment.

- The extension of s.9 Criminal Appeal Act 1968 to include the tariff element of a life sentence for murder, which will lead to an increase in sentence applications,

The following provisions (affecting sentence applications) have yet to be implemented:

- The extension of the types of offences in respect of which a reference may be made by the Attorney-General for a determination that a sentence is unduly lenient,
- The extension of the power of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) to consider appeals in relation to any sentence passed on a committal for sentence,

The following provisions (affecting conviction applications) are contained in the Criminal Justice Act 2003:

- Interlocutory appeals: preparatory hearings extended to apply to serious offences and to encompass issues of severance and joinder;
- Prosecution appeals: Prosecution to have a right of appeal in respect of terminating rulings made by the Trial Judge. It is estimated there may be 100 such applications per year of which about one-third will be “heard within days” in order to enable the trial to continue should the appeal be successful. This is due to be in force by April 2005 at the latest, but the Attorney General is keen to implement these provisions sooner if possible.
- Abolition of the law relating to “double jeopardy”: The Crown may seek a retrial for acquitted defendants in relation to specified serious offences where there is new and compelling evidence. Although these are unlikely to be large in number they may be complex and lengthy and will be very high profile.
- Trials on indictment without jury: The Crown may apply for a trial by Judge alone where the complexity and/or length of the trial is likely to be burdensome for the jury or where there is a real and present danger of jury tampering. The decision to hold a trial without a jury is appealable to the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division). Although it is not anticipated that these appeals will be numerous they are likely to be contentious.
- Changes to criminal evidence, law and practice: as with all major changes to criminal evidence and practice many appeals are generated until the new law becomes settled as a result of determinations by the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division).

The cumulative effect of the additional workload as a consequence of the changes identified above is likely to be significant.

The Administrative Court

Year	Judicial Review	Cases Stated	Statutory Appeals	Resources (£m) (Shared with Court of Appeal)
2000-2001	4,379	115	404	6
2001-2002	4,893	147	424	6
2002-2003	5,495	142	430	6
2003-2004	6,000	120	970	7
2004-2005	6,000	140	2000	7

The work of the Administrative Court has increased over 2002 -2003 to include emergency immigration applications under Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002 – projected receipts in 2003-2004 in all categories at year end is 7,090. The projections for 2004 should take into account work expected to be generated under the Extradition Act 2003 via which the Home Office will seek to fast track the subject of a European Arrest Warrant. The volume of this is as yet unknown.

Additionally, implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 on 18 December 2003, brings another jurisdiction to the Administrative Court, namely the setting and reviewing of minimum terms to be served by prisoners serving mandatory life sentences. This change was brought about following the House of Lords decision in *R (on the application of Anderson & Taylor) v Secretary of State* for the Home Department in which the power of the Secretary of State to fix tariffs for mandatory life prisoners was declared unlawful. Under the Act any person serving a sentence of mandatory life imprisonment or custody for life may apply to the High Court for a review of the term already notified to them by the Secretary of State as the minimum term to be served before release on licence. As no tariffs have been set by the Secretary of State since the decision in *Anderson & Taylor*, in anticipation of a change in the law, it is estimated that there are in excess of 600 prisoners for whom a tariff has to be set.

The Civil Courts

The civil courts deal with a broad caseload ranging from proceedings to recover debts and deal with housing matters, to actions for personal injuries and highly complex commercial and contractual disputes.

The 218 county courts deal with the majority of civil cases. Certain civil cases are dealt with by the High Court, based at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, but others are heard at our major Crown Court centres and in the county courts. The workload of the High Court is spread across three divisions; Chancery, Queen's Bench and Family. The Court of Appeal, which also sits at the Royal Courts of Justice, deals with appeals in civil cases from the lower courts.

The civil courts exist to resolve those disputes that cannot be avoided or resolved elsewhere. They underpin the broad legal framework within which individuals and organisations conduct their everyday transactions.

The Court Service Objective for Civil Justice

In support of the Department's overall objective, we are working towards the following objective for the civil courts:

- To ensure a fair and effective system of civil and administrative law

Civil Justice Public Service Agreement (PSA)

The Department has two PSA targets relating to the civil courts:

PSA	Objective
PSA 3	Reduce the proportion of disputes resolved by resort to the courts
PSA 4 ²	Increase year on year the level of satisfaction of users by taking speedy, high quality decisions and reducing unnecessary delay and cost, and by ensuring that outcomes are enforced effectively

PSA 3 Key Activities and Milestones for 2004-05:

There are two strands of activity to achieving PSA target 3:

- encouraging the avoidance of litigation by helping people resolve their claims without the need to issue court proceedings (; and
- encouraging the settlement of claims before trial, where proceedings have been issued.

²PSA 4 also includes targets relating to family courts. See page 15.

Activity	Milestone
<p>avoiding litigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce fixed success fees for all Road Traffic Accident cases To introduce fixed success fees for employers liability and public liability Evaluation of effectiveness of pre-action Protocols 	<p>May 2004</p> <p>December 2004</p> <p>May 2004</p>
encourage settlement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be running a number of pilot schemes to test ways in which the courts can actively promote mediation Establish an on-site mediation advisor at Manchester County Court Introducing a new scheme at Central London Civil Justice Centre whereby a selection of cases will be automatically referred to mediation Continuing to test the effectiveness of a range of advice leaflets at 28 pilot courts We will continue to support the court based mediation schemes at Birmingham, Central London, Exeter, Guildford and South West Wales; and look to establish new schemes where there is local interest. 	<p>April 2004</p> <p>May 2004</p> <p>Evaluation by Autumn 2004</p>
The objectives of the measures is:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reduce the issue of non-family claims in the civil courts to reduce the proportion of non-family cases allocated for hearing that are resolved by a hearing to reduce the number of non-family hearings to increase the proportion of contact and ancillary relief orders made by consent 	<p>from a baseline of 1,790k in 2002/03 to 1,580k by March 2006.</p> <p>From a baseline of 48.9% in 2003 to 47% by March 2006</p> <p>From a baseline of 71,300 in 2003 to 64,700 by March 2006</p> <p>From a baseline of 70.6% in 2003 to 73.4% by March 2006</p>

PSA 4 (Civil & Family) Key Activities and Milestones for 2004-05:

There are four strands of activities to deliver the civil and family PSA 4 headline and supporting targets:

- improving customer satisfaction;
- reducing unnecessary delay;
- reducing unnecessary cost; and
- ensuring outcomes are enforced effectively.

Performance against the PSA will be measured through four Headline Targets and fourteen supporting targets.

We aim to achieve continuous improvement against the PSA Headline Targets, building on the successful performance in 2003-2004 where significant improvement was achieved in three of the four measures: **knowledge of counter and telephone staff and helpfulness of written communication**. **Customer satisfaction with speed of resolution of complaints** is an extremely challenging target, requiring a step improvement in both performance and customer perception.

Through the Court Service **Customer Experience Improvement Plan** a range of activities to improve performance against the four Headline Targets will be implemented in 2004-2005, including an improved **complaints management system**, which will be a key tool to improving complaints handling and management.

Improving customer service	Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a range of Customer Experience Improvement Plan priority recommendations between April 2004 – March 2005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A knowledge pack for customer service staff - National Standards for customer service staff - An improved national complaints management system - Revised complaints handling standards - A new complaints handling guide - Complaints awareness and training modules - Guidance to staff to manage expectations on provision of procedural/legal advice - Review of CaseMan & FamilyMan standard letters and implementing recommendations for improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All remaining courts to apply for Charter Mark accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2005

Reducing unnecessary delay and ensuring outcomes are enforced effectively	Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of an improved national complaints management system • Introduction of new Attachment of Earnings Order target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2004 • April 2004

Reducing unnecessary cost	Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost indicator introduced for Civil and Family business • 17 estate integrations (or co-locations) to be delivered by March 2005³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2004 • March 2005

Other Civil Justice Key Activities for 2004-05:

The Court Service is continuously seeking to improve our civil justice practice and processes. Initiatives in 2004-2005 include:

- Extending an ongoing study to consider the impact of extending the range of hearings that can be dealt with by telephone, and
- Developing a pilot to test the concept of County Court Bailiffs and Magistrates Enforcement Officers working together as a single team to make judgment and fine enforcement more effective.

Planning and Workload assumptions

Civil Court Process

Year	Total Issue	Small claims allocated for hearing	Fast Track allocated for hearing	Multi-Track allocated for hearing	Warrants
2000-2001	2,025,619	99,539	38,485	34,948	608,563
2001-2002	1,923,992	99,364	38,312	23,516	525,137
2002-2003	1,615,758	80,496	40,987	25,168	511,853
2003-2004	1,538,679	75,510	52,079	28,801	456,482
2004-2005	1,429,565	69,570	50,314	31,026	410,773

³ This target covers cumulative delivery of 17 integrations (or co-locations) of county and magistrates courts over the first two years of the PSA period from April 2003 – March 2005. At least 30 co-locations will be delivered over the full three years of the PSA.

Sitting days and Resources

Year	Circuit Judge sittings	District Judge sittings	Total Resources (£m)
2000-2001	40,532	94,451	208
2001-2002	37,000	95,000	271
2002-2003	37,967	96,478	275**
2003-2004	34,121	96,129	320***
2004-2005	33,481	96,034	279#

*figures exclude some corporate overheads and judicial superannuation

***includes judicial superannuation

#Figure reduced on last year due to restructuring of Court Service HQ and central budgets.

The Court of Appeal (Civil Division)

Year	Applications filed	Appeals filed	Total workload	Total Resources (£m)
2001-2002	3,041	1,511	4,552	2
2002-2003	3,140	1,359	4,499	3
2003-2004*	3,105	1,193	4,298	3
2004-2005	3,040	1,263	4,303	3

Although both appeals and applications show a slight reduction on last year's figures, this reflects the effect of the Civil Procedure Rules. The new rules have filtered appeal work by quality so that only demanding cases come to the Civil Appeals Office, with routine, lower quality work dealt with at lower court level. The lowering of figures for appeals in particular is also related to the universal introduction of permission to appeal (PTA) which has ensured that many cases are disposed of at the PTA stage and never reach the stage of a substantive appeal.

In summary, the level of work has remained broadly stable, but the complexity of cases has improved, ensuring that the court deals with the work most appropriate to it.

Queen's Bench and Chancery

Year	Queen's Bench claims	Technology and Construction Court	Admiralty and Commercial Court	Chancery Division claims	Bankruptcy / Companies Court	Resources (£m)
2000-2001	5,541	441	1,420	5,715	19,955	18
2001-2002	4,758	380	1,390	4,866	17,647	18
2002-2003	4,653	386	1,276	3,116	21,709	18
2003-2004	3,846	429	1,090	4,395	23,834	18
2004-2005	4,024	450	1,200	4,500	25,000	18

The workload in Bankruptcy has increased on debtors and creditors bankruptcy petitions – particularly debtors – but has decreased on the issue of originating process such as Interim Orders. The number of both companies' petitions and originating applications has decreased slightly. In April 2004 new Rules relating to bankruptcy will come into force which may affect the number of petitions.

TCC saw a drop in the workload in 2001/2002 as a result of the introduction of mediation and arbitration schemes. During the latter part of 2003/2004 we have seen a steady increase in work returning to the court, this may in part be due to the degree of case management by the judiciary and the speed at which cases are now being brought to hearing.

Court Funds Office

Year	Lodgements	Suitors	Casework
2000-2001	83,000	63,000	87,000
2001-2002	80,000	55,000	95,000
2002-2003	80,000	55,000	102,000
2003-2004	120,000	110,000	105,000
2004-2005	110,000	120,000	105,000

The Court Funds Office is the office of the Accountant General of the Supreme Court Group (SCG). The Court Funds Office (CFO) provides a banking service for the court; receiving, investing and administering funds deposited in Court. Monies paid to the Court Funds Office are invested with the National Debt Commissioners by virtue of the Administration of Justice Act 1982. This produces sufficient income from investments to cover liability and interest paid to customers and also the running costs of the office.

- Lodgments: this area deals with all of the payments made into the Court Funds office;
- Suitors: these are payments made out from the Queen's Bench area; and
- Casework: all the other payments made from the Court Funds Office.

The CFO took on additional workload from the county courts from 1 April 2003 in the form of satisfaction payments. Forecasts for 2003-04 have therefore taken this into account and current trends reflect this increased workload.

This increased workload is now being managed more effectively since a review of the office organisation in the summer of 2003.

The Family Courts

In addition to civil cases, 174 county courts also deal with family proceedings, including divorce, children's care cases and adoption. The type of work each of the family courts deals with depends on their jurisdiction. Family Hearing Centres deal only with divorce and private law family cases; Care Centres deal with all private and public law Children's Act cases. The High Court has jurisdiction to hear all cases relating to Children's welfare and interests, and has exclusive jurisdiction in wardship cases.

The Court Service Objective for Justice for the Family

In support of the Department's overall objective, we are working towards the following objective for the civil courts:

- To improve the delivery of justice in the family courts, with particular regard to protecting children and the vulnerable

Family Justice Public Service Agreement

Within PSA 4 the Department has two targets relating specifically to the family courts:

Area	Target
Public and private law Children's Act cases	70% of cases to be dealt with (from commencement to final order) within 40 weeks
Adoptions	70% of cases to be dealt with (from commencement to final order) within 20 weeks

PSA 4 (Family) Key Activities and Milestones for 2004-05:

Performance against the targets for Public law Children's Act cases and Adoptions in 2003-2004 was significantly below target. A for judicial case management protocol was introduced in November 2003, through the impact of this on performance will take time to be seen. A programme of work to tackle delay is already underway, including a significant increase in the number of family court joint working between all the agencies involved in managing these cases (e.g. CAFFCAS, Local Authorities and Magistrates' Family Proceedings Courts). In addition, local family courts are working with the Department of Health Adoption task force to identify and tackle causes of delay.

Activity	Milestone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 weeks after new protocol for judicial case management in Public Family Law Children Act cases (introduced November 2003) • New procedures for adoption forming part of Adoption and Children Act 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2004 • December 2004

Planning and Workload assumptions

Family Division of the High Court (including the Probate Service)

Year	Divorce Petitions	Children Act Applications	Adoptions	Grants of Probate
2000-2001	9,544	6,064	307	258,120
2001-2002	8,552	6,025	405	261,973
2002-2003	9,263	7,782	505	268,611
2003-2004	9,157	6,100	576	273,420
2004-2005	9,013	6,002	610	275,000

Family Courts workload

Year	Divorce Petitions	Children Act Private Law Applications	Children Act Public Law Applications	Total Children Applications
2000-2001	150,652	77,567	7,058	84,625
2001-2002	156,296	81,244	9,902	91,147
2002-2003	165,077	89,681	11,392	101,073
2003-2004	164,833	76,340	9,560	85,900
2004-2005	164,243	76,078	8,932	85,010

Section 3: Working with the judiciary and supporting our people

This section sets out our objective to work closely with the judiciary. It is also explained here how we will support and help our people and provide them with the tools to deliver excellent service to our customers.

Working with the judiciary

To ensure that the Court Service continues to be an efficient and effective Agency, we have set the following objective:

For the Judiciary

To work in partnership with the independent judiciary

Local managers are responsible for providing effective support to the judiciary, to ensure that performance targets are met.

Supporting our people

Human Resources Directorate providing HR Services to our people

Our Human Resources Directorate provides support throughout England and Wales to over 13,000 people across the Department as a whole, 10,000 of which make up the Court Service. This year we aim to deliver the outcomes described in the Pay and Workforce Strategy, which is in place to support the effective delivery of the Court Service aims and objectives through its people whilst moving towards embracing the magistrates courts under a new unified courts administration, creating a new agency and growing from a department of 13,000 to over 23,000 people.

Our goals for 2004/5 are:

- To achieve a better skilled, better motivated workforce
- To increase focus on service delivery and the customer
- To improve leadership and develop leaders capable of supporting change and transforming our organisation and the way we work
- To provide an affordable, transparent and responsive reward structure, to allow us to recruit and retain people needed for delivering our business
- To make the Court Service an employer of choice

To achieve a better skilled, better motivated workforce

- We will undertake a wide-ranging review of selection and recruitment which is aimed at:
- delivering an integrated selection framework providing choices to managers to fill vacancies both from the external and internal market which will meet the test of time;
- modernising the processes in order to encourage greater response from a broader field of applicants;

- modernising the processes so that applications can be received via a range of media;
- developing all systems and processes as an exemplar employer meeting diversity; propriety and statutory requirements.
- All current staff in the magistrates' courts will be transferred into the new Unified Administration organisation and staff pay and conditions will be harmonised over 2-3 years.
- We will continue to provide support to the business to improve management of attendance

To increase focus on service delivery and the customer

We will develop a skills strategy to support staff and enable them to improve the experience of the customer. We will provide staff with a new programme of complaint handling training, and continue our programme of customer service training, supported by knowledge packs for quick and easy access to key information. We shall continue to ring fence funds to support people who wish to work towards a NVQ level 3 in customer service and will be offering centrally-supported modern apprenticeships to staff between the ages of 16-25 who do not have the equivalent of 5 GCSEs. We will continue to support courts and offices in achieving and retaining the Charter Mark award demonstrating our focus on good customer service skills.

To improve leadership and develop leaders capable of supporting change and transforming our organisation and the way we work

Across the Department we are placing greater emphasis on leadership skills and we will continue to implement a strategy for improving leadership capability. We have tested critical leadership behaviours in most senior managers through assessment centres and will work with them to remedy deficiencies through active career management. Our leadership profile for all staff has been revised to align with our new focus that we are expecting, and rewarding the same key behaviours in all our people. We will continue to develop skills for our senior leaders through 'Leading Through Change' events and leaders at the first line management tier through our 'Unlocking Potential' development course.

To provide an affordable, transparent and responsive reward structure, to allow us to recruit and retain the people needed for delivering our business.

We are seeking to develop a structured system of pay progression to move staff performing effectively, or better, through their pay ranges, with a view to having such a system in place from August 2004. Unified administration will present an opportunity to consider a more differentiated and market-focused approach to setting pay levels in what will continue to be a widely-dispersed business.

To make the Court Service an employer of choice

We are committed to ensuring that all staff are able to do what is needed of them. The Department, including the Court Service, has received IIP accreditation and work continues to ensure that the standard is maintained.

In addition to progressing towards our goals we will also continue to manage the day to day HR services for our people and will:

- provide recruitment and selection processes;
- provide a wide range of learning and development activities i.e. business skills; development training; leadership programme and change management;
- provide a centralised HR casework function, including the preparation of cases for Employment Tribunals and the Civil Service Appeal Board;
- provide advice on a wide range of HR issues to managers and a mediation service;
- supporting managers to improve the performance of their staff through the performance management system.

ICT and e-Government

The eDelivery Group provides effective IT-enabled business change and IT service management to its customers and stakeholders across the Department

A major programme of investment will enable the Court Service to radically improve the way that the courts work. Over the next year we will:

- continue delivering the IT infrastructure for the Crown and county courts, to achieve 100% coverage of our criminal business and 76% of civil;
- begin rolling out an electronic listing diary to the Crown Court by October 2004;
- support the introduction and use of Criminal Justice IT (CJIT) secure e-mail capability in all Crown Courts as they receive new IT infrastructure;
- roll-out the Xhibit system to 39 Crown Court sites to allow hearing information to be exchanged with other criminal justice organisations by March 2005;
- begin rolling out an electronic listing diary to the civil and family courts by December 2004;
- run and complete a pilot offering online access to civil court forms by December 2004;
- begin rolling out a new system for the judiciary (the Judicial Portal) by February 2005.

The new IT infrastructure in the courts will provide users with computers and desktop services, including standard office automation and our Intranet, along with access to existing business systems. Users will have e-mail and access to other facilities, through the Government Secure Intranet, such as the Internet and other online services.

Facilities Management Group

The Facilities Management Group will continue to support the Court Service by delivering and maintaining an accommodation network, procurement/contract management services, security and health and safety systems that meet business needs, and provide customers and users with high quality facilities. It will be involved with the planning and delivery of projects in support of future strategy as well as meeting day-to-day operational needs.

Supporting day to day needs:

- Manage and maintain the estate;
- Procure and manage goods service and IT contracts;
- Provide cost effective and secure Judges' Lodgings; and
- Ensure health and safety systems and standards are maintained.

Supporting future strategy to deliver an integrated 'fit for purpose' estate:

- Deliver 7 estate integration opportunities with the Magistrates' Court Service;
- Identify potential estate integration opportunities with the Tribunals for Users Programme;
- Deliver new or refurbished court buildings;
- Dispose of surplus buildings;
- Support the Narrowing the Justice Gap initiative;
- Complete works at the third and final tranche in order to achieve compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and
- Support the National Property Board to provide strategic direction to the Court Service property management function.

Deliver Improved Security:

- Install more secure docks in Crown Courts;
- Extend CCTV to more hearing centres;
- Develop and pilot Court Security Officer training and recruitment processes; and
- Introduce magistrates' court baseline security standards.

Prepare for the replacement of existing ICT and related services contracts:

- Review and initiate re-negotiation of exit provisions in existing IT contracts;
- Identify user requirements for new ICT and related services contracts;
- Identify the procurement strategy for new contracts.

Provision of infrastructure and IT framework to support the Courts and Tribunals Modernisation Programme:

- 109 sites are being equipped with appropriate data and power cabling to support in court technologies, as part of rollout to Crown and co-located courts.
- IT systems are currently being rolled out to Crown and co-located courts and to nominated county courts.

Unified Courts Administration:

- Deliver the complete amalgamation of the Magistrates' Courts estate and the Court Service estate, and their transfer into the new Courts Agency at agency launch. The current planning assumption for launch of the new agency is 1st April 2005; and
- Ensure that integrated arrangements are in place for the unified management of the unified estate.

Provide an integrated Procurement Service for the new Unified Courts Administration:

- Develop and implement a strategy for future sourcing and contract structure and ensure service continuity during the transition.

Table of Performance Indicators 2004/2005 Annex A

PSA Target	PSA Description	High Level Target	Secondary Measures
<p>PSA 1</p>	<p>Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.2m by 2005/2006, with an improvement in all CJS areas, a greater increase in the worst performing areas and a reduction in the proportion of ineffective trials.</p>	<p>Overall national reduction in ineffective trials from 24% to 17% by March 2006</p> <p>To support Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) in meeting their Crown Court target for the number of defendants/appellants whose cases are heard within target time – 78%.</p>	<p>The percentage of defendants whose committals for trial commence within 16 weeks – 78%</p> <p>The percentage of defendants whose committals for sentence commence within 10 weeks – 78%</p> <p>The percentage of appellants whose cases start within 14 weeks – 78%</p> <p>The percentage of defendants sent for trial whose cases start within 26 weeks – 78%</p> <p>The percentage of juror sitting days to attendance and non attendance days</p> <p>The percentage of witnesses waiting 2 hours or less from time asked to attend courtroom to time called or released – 50%</p> <p>Standard fees submitted after hearing paid within 10 days – 95%</p> <p>Final payment made, where no advance payments within 20 days of receipt of graduated fee claim – 95%</p> <p>The percentage of claims determined within three months – 85%</p> <p>The percentage of claims determined within 6 months 95%</p>
<p>PSA 2</p>	<p>Improve the level of public confidence in the Criminal Justice System, including that of ethnic minority communities, increasing year on year satisfaction of witnesses and victims, while respecting the rights of defendants.</p>	<p>Overall increase in British Crime Survey measurement of public confidence of 1%</p>	

Table of Performance Indicators 2004/2005 cont

PSA Target	PSA Description	High Level Target	Secondary Measures
PSA3	There is no headline target (or secondary measures) that directly supports PSA target 3. However, page 13 of this plan explains some of the activities that Court Service staff will need to support to help deliver this target.		
PSA4	Increase year on year the level of satisfaction of users by taking speedy, high quality decisions, and reducing unnecessary delay and cost, and by ensuring that outcomes are enforced effectively	<p>Percentage improvement in four key areas of dissatisfaction against the benchmark results from the 2002-03 customer satisfaction survey.</p> <p>HT1 – Knowledge of court staff at public counter.</p> <p>HT2 – Knowledge of staff on telephone service</p> <p>HT3 – Speed of resolution of complaints</p> <p>HT4 – Helpfulness of written communication.</p>	<p>Public Satisfaction</p> <p>St1: 95% of courts successfully apply for a Charter Mark</p> <p>St2: Percentage of complaints answered within target:</p> <p>(a) Complaints received by Ministers - 85% in 17 working days</p> <p>(b) Complaints received at CSHQ Customer Service Unit - 5% in 15 working days</p> <p>(c) Complaints received by Group Managers - 85% in 10 days</p> <p>(d) Complaints received by Court Managers - 85% in 5 days</p> <p>St3: Percentage of administrative process completed within 5 days - 94%</p> <p>St4: Reducing Unnecessary delay 4% of small claims heard within 15 weeks (from allocation to track hearing) - 77%</p> <p>St5: % of fast track cases heard within 30 weeks (from allocation to track hearing - 77%</p> <p>St6: % of multi track cases heard within 50 weeks (from allocation to track to hearing) - 77%</p> <p>St7: The percentage of public and private law children act cases dealt within 40 weeks (from commencement to disposal) - 70%</p>

PSA Target	PSA Description	High Level Target	Secondary Measures
PSA4	Continuation from Page 28		<p>Public Satisfaction St8: Percentage of adoptions heard within 20 weeks - 70%</p> <p>Reducing Unnecessary Cost St9: At least 30 opportunities for county courts to share accommodation used by magistrates' courts will be realised by April 2006</p> <p>St10: A cost indicator will be established by April 2004</p> <p>Effective Enforcement St11: 80% of the total value of enforceable warrants</p> <p>St12: Charging Orders: From application to interim order: 2 weeks – 70% From interim order to final order: 10 weeks – 70%</p> <p>St13: Third Party Debt Orders: From application to interim order: 2 weeks – 70% From interim order to final order: 10 weeks – 70%</p> <p>St14 Attachment of earnings order (new for 2004-05): From application to the first order (suspended or full): 10 weeks – 70%</p>

Table of Performance Indicators 2004/2005 cont

PSA Target	PSA Description	High Level Target	Secondary Measures
PSA6	To increase year on year the number of people who receive suitable assistance in priority areas of law involving fundamental rights and social exclusion	There is no headline target (or secondary measure) that directly supports PSA target 6. However, to help the Department achieve this target, court staff need to be aware of the agencies that can help and support the socially excluded and be able to refer people to them.	

Chart detailing the hierarchy of Government, Department and Court Service objectives

The Government's Aims



Department for Constitutional Affairs

The aim of the Department is justice. To support that aim, the Department has six strategic objectives:

1	To ensure the effective delivery of justice	3	Reduce social exclusion and protect the vulnerable	4	Modernise the constitution and ensure proper access to information by citizens	5	Increase consumer choice in legal services by improving information and by promoting competition	6	Deliver justice in partnership with the independent judiciary
2	To ensure a fair and effective system of civil and administrative law								

The Court Service

The Court Service is an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Our purpose is the delivery of justice
To meet our purpose, we work towards five strategic objectives:

	For Civil Justice	For Justice for the Family	For justice in the Tribunals	For the Organisation
For Criminal Justice	To improve the delivery of justice in the civil courts and ensure that disputes are resolved in a way proportionate to the issues at stake, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing the satisfaction of users improving enforceability of judgments ensuring that disputes are resolved quickly, effectively, in a manner and at a cost proportionate to the issue at stake, without compromising access to justice 	To improve the delivery of justice in the family courts, with particular regard to protecting children and the vulnerable	To improve the delivery of justice in the tribunals, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> faster turnaround of cases working in partnership with first tier tribunals and other Government Departments 	To work in partnership with the independent judiciary