

# Cutting Crime, Delivering Justice

A summary of the Strategic Plan for  
Criminal Justice 2004-08

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The Strategic Plan Summary has been produced by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) on behalf of three Government departments: the Home Office, the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Law Officers' Departments.

OCJR is the cross-departmental team that supports all criminal justice agencies in working together to provide an improved service to the public.

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The full CJS Strategic Plan and summary versions in English and Welsh are available online at: [www.cjsonline.gov.uk](http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk)

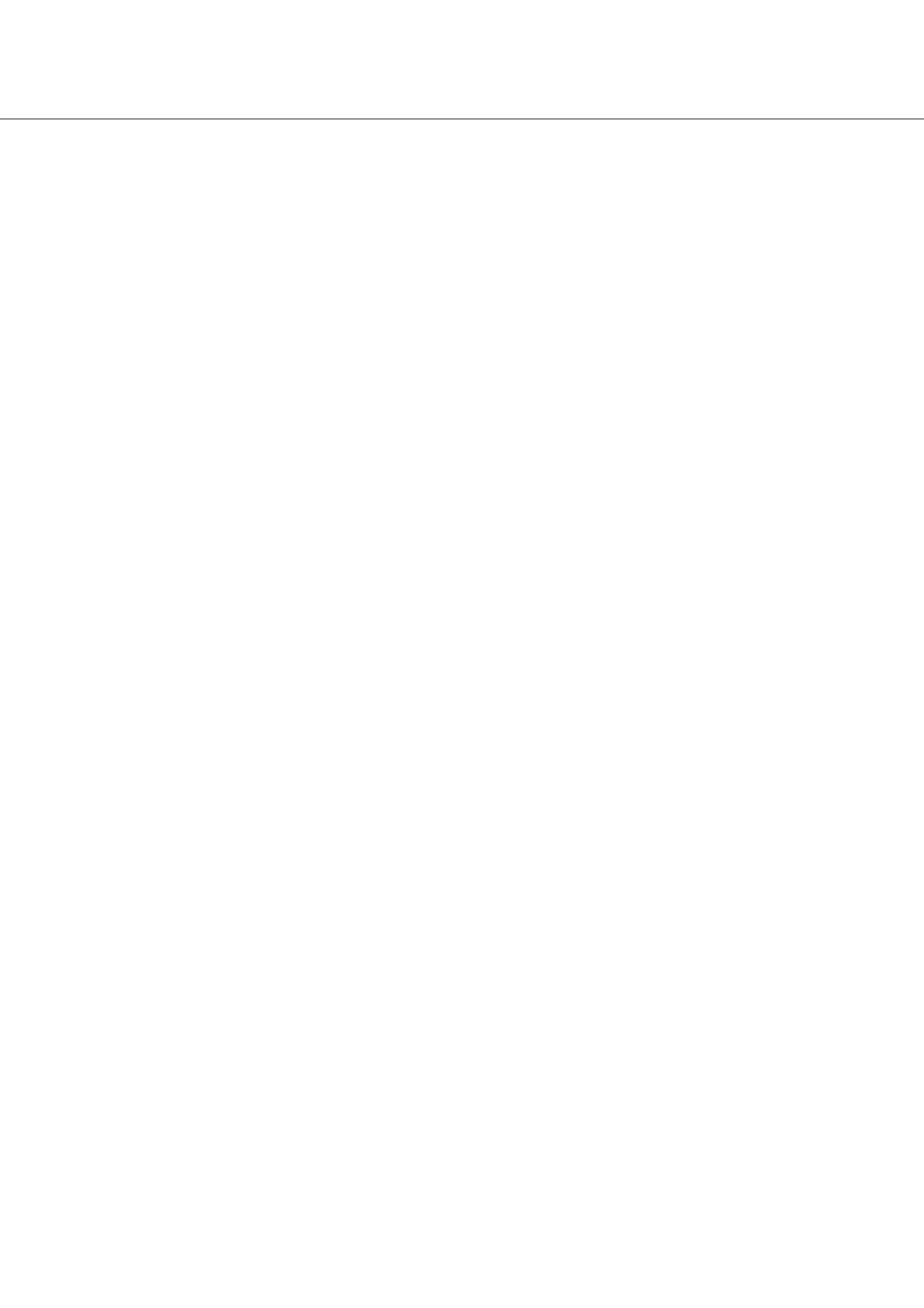
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## Foreword



As the three Ministers responsible for criminal justice, we are pleased to present our Strategic Plan. An effective Criminal Justice System is a vital source of public confidence in strong government and the rule of law. This plan sets out our shared vision for criminal justice reform.

Our primary objective is to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and to make people feel safer. We will achieve this in a number of ways – wherever possible, by stopping crime from happening in the first place; when a crime does happen, by catching the offender swiftly and bringing them to justice; and, once an offender has been convicted, by giving them a punishment which addresses why they committed the crime in the first place, so that they are less likely to offend again. Our strategies for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour are published in two parallel documents. *Safer Streets, Confident Communities* shows how we will prevent crime and reduce reoffending. This plan focuses on how we will bring more criminals to justice, improve the way different agencies work together and give victims and witnesses better services.

The overriding principle of this plan is to deliver criminal justice that puts the victim of crime and the law abiding citizen first. Underpinning this principle are two key themes:

- unifying the system so that it is efficient, gets things right first time, and produces outcomes that are effective in protecting the innocent, deterring criminals and rehabilitating offenders; and
- engaging with the community so that its concerns are reflected and people's confidence maintained.

We have come a long way since 1997, and the results are starting to show. Most importantly, crime is falling, by over a quarter since 1997. More offences are being brought to justice – the latest performance shows an increase of 7% compared with two years ago. After a period of decline, public confidence is starting to improve. Agencies are working together and as a result people's experiences of criminal justice are better: more trials go ahead on time, and witness attendance rates have improved.

This provides a solid foundation upon which we can build. Over the next five years, we want to improve criminal justice even further, with what is today best practice becoming the standard everywhere. Our goal for 2008 is to provide a service that as matter of everyday routine:

- is visible and responsive to law abiding citizens;
- is sensitive to the needs of the victim, ensuring that victims are supported and that their voices are heard;
- operates fairly, protecting the innocent and pursuing the guilty;
- is joined up in a modern and efficient process that works;

- applies appropriate punishments, focused on tackling the causes of offending, and makes sure they are completed; and
- exploits the potential of modern IT to improve the experience of all users.


Together, the criminal justice agencies in each local area will listen to the concerns of its communities, including black and minority ethnic communities, and act upon them. And the lessons of our flagship Community Justice Centre in Liverpool will be applied in every area.

Victims of crime will be treated sensitively by staff; they will be kept informed of the progress of their case and they will be told the outcome. They will have the opportunity to make a Victim's Personal Statement, explaining how they feel about what has happened to them. Each agency will work to common standards of service for victims and witnesses and agencies will be held to account for these. Victims will also be able to complain to an independent Ombudsman.

Performance will improve. More criminals will be caught (and caught more quickly), prosecuted fairly but firmly, punished and given the help they need to change their behaviour. We will focus our attention and resources on prolific offenders. And we will encourage the guilty to admit their guilt early rather than drag out proceedings to trial.

Where a trial is necessary, it will be a rare exception that it does not go ahead at the time and on the date appointed. And the decisions of the court will be enforced. Fines will be paid, criminals' assets recovered and community punishments completed.

This is the core business of criminal justice, and we will make sure that it happens. With the hard work of those working in the field, and with the support of our partners in the community and the general public, we aim to deliver a criminal justice service in which we can all take pride.



**Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and the Attorney General.**

## Introduction

This is a summary of *Cutting Crime, Delivering Justice*, the strategic plan for criminal justice 2004-2008, published on 19th July by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Charlie Falconer, and the Attorney General, Peter Goldsmith.

It sets out the vision for criminal justice over the next five years, and how we plan to achieve it. Its overriding principle is to deliver a system of criminal justice which puts the law abiding citizen at the heart of all we do.

Full copies of the plan can be viewed at the Criminal Justice System website ([www.cjsonline.gov.uk](http://www.cjsonline.gov.uk)) and are available from The Stationery Office priced £10.50.

### Why Criminal Justice Matters

The effective delivery of justice matters. Strong criminal justice has a crucial role to play in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and making people feel safer. A joined-up system, with all the agencies pulling together to make sure that criminals are pursued and justice is delivered swiftly, fairly and effectively, is a vital source of public confidence in strong government and the rule of law.

### Where we were, and what we have done

Since taking office in 1997 we have made significant progress towards our goals of reducing crime, bringing more offenders to book and raising public confidence in criminal justice as a public service:

- crime is falling, down by 25% since 1997 – the chances of being a victim of crime are now at their lowest for 20 years;
- more victims are seeing their offender brought to justice: 7% more offences are being brought to justice now compared with two years previously;
- the decline in public confidence has been arrested and is starting to improve: by 3% in the last twelve months.

## Where we're going

We have achieved a great deal but still have considerable issues to tackle. To show what reform will have achieved in five years' time, we have devised the following vision which describes the delivery of criminal justice in 2008. Public Service Agreement targets on bringing offenders to justice and building public confidence reinforce these priorities.

### A vision for criminal justice in 2008

**The public will have confidence that the Criminal Justice System is effective and it serves all communities fairly.**

**Victims and witnesses will receive a consistent high standard of service from all criminal justice agencies.**

**We will bring more offences to justice through a more modern and efficient justice process.**

**Rigorous enforcement will revolutionise compliance with sentences and orders of the court.**

**Criminal justice will be a joined up, modern and well run service, and an excellent place to work for people from all backgrounds.**

### Our Public Service Agreement targets

- to reduce crime by 15% and further in high crime areas by 2007-08
- to improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.25 million by 2007-08
- to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the Criminal Justice System without compromising fairness

## Communities: building confidence

**The public will have confidence that the Criminal Justice System is effective and it serves all communities fairly.**

### What will be different in 2008

- Criminal justice will be better at delivering its core business of reducing crime and bringing offenders to justice.

### If you are a member of the public:

- you will have confidence that the system puts the law abiding citizen at the heart of all that it does.

### If you are a victim of crime, or a witness:

- you will be treated with respect and understanding and provided with the information, facilities and support you need;
- you will receive a high quality service which meets clear common standards. Criminal justice agencies will be held to account for delivering these.

### If you are from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background:

- you will have more confidence that criminal justice treats you fairly;
- unjustified racial disparities in stop and search and in sentencing will have been reduced.

### And those working in criminal justice:

- will have made better efforts to get balanced information about criminal justice in the media, particularly the local media;
- will be better at engaging communities and responding effectively to their concerns. Where appropriate, the courts will hold specialised sittings for drugs, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour cases.

## Our strategy to deliver this

Our confidence strategy has two distinct strands: improving satisfaction by improving criminal justice performance (for example, by reducing crime and bringing more offences to justice); and ensuring that the service communicates better with staff, users and the public.

### Providing better services to the public

People cite the criminal justice experience of their friends and family as one of their most important sources of information about criminal justice. Too often in the past this has been negative. Improving the way that we treat the public, particularly victims and witnesses, is essential to enhancing levels of confidence.

### Responding to community concerns

Criminal justice agencies should understand and respond to local concerns – such as the public's everyday experiences of anti-social behaviour. We believe that communities and the public should be able to see courts responding to the problems in their local area:

- we are supporting local criminal justice agencies to improve their arrangements for engaging with and involving communities in setting their priorities;

- specialist court hearings will be introduced where they can make a difference; for example for drugs, antisocial behaviour and domestic violence;
- we are piloting a Community Justice Centre in North Liverpool to tackle low level crime and anti-social behaviour, and we will apply the lessons elsewhere where appropriate.

## Improving fairness of treatment of black and minority ethnic communities

Research shows that people from some ethnic minority communities have lower than average confidence in the fairness of criminal justice:

- we are working with outside organisations and interests as well as Local Criminal Justice Boards to develop a better understanding of the scale and causes of the under- and over-representation of people from ethnic minorities in the Criminal Justice System;
- the *Stop and Search Action Team – Strategy 2004/05* outlines our strategy for increasing confidence among black and minority ethnic communities in how the police use their powers, and reduce unjustified disproportionality;
- we are also planning a comprehensive two year study into whether there is any quantitative evidence of different sentencing between people in different BME and other white populations.

## Engaging with staff

Staff working in criminal justice have a major impact on public confidence through the quality of service they provide and the messages they send out. We are undertaking a wide-ranging programme of staff engagement activity including staff magazines and monthly staff bulletins; a regular staff confidence survey; and a series of roundtable discussion events in which Ministers and frontline staff meet to discuss key criminal justice issues.

## Better information to the public

The more people know about criminal justice and the work of the different agencies the higher their levels of confidence. We are providing LCJBs with support and resources to help them improve their communication with the public and the media so that the public has access to balanced and accurate information about criminal justice.

## Victims and witnesses: consistent high standards of service

### Victims and witnesses will receive a consistent high standard of service from all criminal justice agencies

#### What will be different in 2008

Criminal justice will be organised to support the victim and thwart the offender. If you are a victim of crime, or a witness:

- you will have a statutory right to high standards of treatment from criminal justice agencies, spelt out in a Code of Practice; criminal justice agencies will be held to account for delivering these;
- you will be kept informed at regular stages of the case about what is happening to catch the perpetrator of the crime;
- you will be offered support by a Witness Care Unit in all cases where someone is charged with an offence. This means a named contact will keep you updated on the progress of the case and provide information, support and advice to enable you to attend court and give evidence;
- all Crown Court buildings and 90% of magistrates' courts' buildings will have separate waiting facilities for victims and witnesses;
- we will reduce unnecessary waiting for witnesses who have to attend court;
- if you are a victim or witness in significant fear for your safety, you will be offered greater protection from new witness protection legislation;
- the Victims Fund, which will pay for better support services for victims, will be boosted by a surcharge on all criminals who are convicted.

### Our strategy to deliver this

Our strategy to improve the experience of victims and witnesses is based on delivering a better basic customer service, one that meets the needs of the people who are supposed to be at the centre of the system. Every victim of crime needs to know that criminal justice agencies will do everything in their power to bring the perpetrator to justice, and that they will be supported and protected through this process both as victims and, if necessary, as witnesses.

### Minimum standards of service and treatment for all victims

The Victims Code of Practice in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, will provide consistent, minimum standards of service for victims of crime. We are also establishing an independent post of Victims Commissioner to provide a voice for victims at the heart of Government and placing the Victims Advisory Panel on a statutory basis.

### Supporting people to attend court and give evidence

We will see the **nationwide introduction of Witness Care Units**, run jointly by police and the CPS to provide information, advice and support – such as transport and childcare provision – to victims and witnesses from when a suspect is charged right through to sentence.

We want all courts to have **discrete waiting facilities for victims and prosecution witnesses**, separated from defendants and their witnesses. By 2008 all Crown Courts and 90% of magistrates' courts will have separate facilities.

We will **reduce unnecessary waiting**. Coming to court should be a businesslike affair that doesn't involve a long wait or a useless journey.

We will **use technology to keep victims and witnesses better informed** about their case:

- using the XHIBIT system piloted at Snaresbrook Crown Court, display screens in the court premises give witnesses sighting of the status of the trial in each court room, giving them a better indication of waiting time;
- the Court Service website shows the status of court proceedings for each court room, updated every 10 minutes; and
- electronic results and bail information are sent directly to the police from the Crown Court, which enables the police to keep victims and witnesses accurately informed about their hearing.

We will **tailor the court process** to deal better with victims of crimes that need particular special treatment, for example, specialist courts for victims of domestic violence.

We will tackle the problem of **witness intimidation in serious and organised crime cases**, providing witnesses in this small number of cases with a much greater level of protection. They may need to be relocated or even have their identity changed.

We will support and drive through further **cultural change to improve customer service**. Management standards, underpinning the Victims Code will help deliver measurable improvements in victim and witness satisfaction.

## Empowering victims

We will continue our drive to empower victims of crime and give them more input into and confidence about the justice process:

- a victim will continue to receive information about the case after the criminal has been sentenced.
- where an offender receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more for a sexual or violent crime, the Probation Service must keep victims informed about the custodial process for the offender, likely timescales for release and whether they will be subject to any conditions upon release.

We are also pioneering new ways of involving victims in seeing the offender brought to justice. Restorative justice schemes are in place in most Youth Offending Teams and pilots are underway for adults.

## Supporting victims whose offender is not identified

It is important to remember that for many victims, despite the police's best efforts, the offender is never found. The key things we can do here are to reassure the victim, help them not to become a victim again, and offer the specialist support they need.

We know that some people are victims of crime time and time again, particularly if they live in high crime areas. We are taking specific action to reduce **repeat victimisation**, focusing on the crimes that cause the greatest harm.

Recognising that some victims need **specialist advice** and support we are taking steps to expand the resources available and develop better provision through the **Victims Fund**. We will introduce a surcharge on all criminal convictions, and on certain Fixed Penalty Notices which could boost the total value of the Fund to up to £30 million.

£4 million from the proceeds of crime is already in the Fund to support **victims of sexual offending**. We are extending the number of sexual assault referral and counselling centres, and exploring the feasibility of a national helpline and capacity building of local voluntary sector provision.

## Offenders: bringing more offences to justice

### We will bring more offences to justice through a more modern and efficient justice process

#### What will be different in 2008:

- We will bring 150,000 more offences to justice;
- We will raise the detection rate from 19% to at least 25%, by improving police effectiveness and deploying new technology including enhanced DNA testing and Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems across the country to target criminals more effectively;
- To get the charge right first time, the CPS will provide 24 hour legal guidance seven days a week to the police on what charge to bring;
- We will relentlessly target the top 15-20 prolific offenders in each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area, and more in bigger areas, and give the police, the CPS and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency the powers they need to take on the most serious and organised criminals;
- We will divert more people from court who do not need to be there by extending the use of Fixed Penalty Notices to a wider range of offences by March 2005 and roll out CPS powers to issue conditional cautions;
- Where cases do need to come to trial, we will ensure that they arrive at court ready to proceed, reducing the numbers of wasted trial hearings by 2007-08 by another fifth in the Crown Court and another third in the magistrates' courts;
- We will have reformed the legal aid system to eliminate time wasting and delay and focus help and support where it is most needed;
- With new Witness Care Units to support witnesses as their cases progress, we will raise witness attendance, leading to fewer adjournments and reducing the temptation for defendants to delay guilty pleas.

### Our strategy to deliver this

Our goal is to stop crimes happening in the first place. But when crimes are committed, the public has a right to expect that the Criminal Justice System will do all that it can to bring the offender to justice. That will involve:

- high quality policing to identify a suspect and gather all the evidence needed to achieve a conviction, caution or Fixed Penalty Notice;
- close CPS and police co-operation to ensure that the system gets the charge right at the outset;
- bringing evidence, defendants and witnesses together on the right day so that if the offender does contest the charge, the trial goes ahead on the days it is meant to;
- if the offender is convicted – a sentence which fits the criminal as well as the crime and a rapid update for the victim on what the court outcome has been.

### Driving up the number of detections

In order to meet our target to bring 1.25 million offences to justice, we calculate that the average detection rate across England and Wales will need to be raised by at least 6 percentage points to

25% by 2007-08. This improvement will be delivered by improving efficiency and effectiveness and making sure that best practice is shared and deployed in every force:

- better distribution of tasks between police officers, Community Support Officers and civilians;
- improving technology, with enhanced fingerprint and DNA capability and better use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition;
- spreading good practice on cautioning and encouraging offenders to admit to further offences to be taken into consideration by the court.

Strong performance management will also be crucial to close the gap in detection rates between comparable forces.

### Getting the charge right

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 transfers responsibility for charging from the police to the CPS. Pilot schemes which place a trained CPS prosecutor alongside the police an early stage, advising them on what charge to bring and on the evidence they need to assemble to bring a successful case, have had a dramatic impact with fewer cases being discontinued, more cases reaching an early guilty plea and a drop in attrition (cases which do not reach the courts).

We will roll the scheme out nationally by March 2007.

### Reducing the number of trials that do not go ahead on the day

Until recently, there has been no clear accountability or system for ensuring that cases turn up at court ready to proceed. The Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) has produced a framework which sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties to progress criminal cases; and a process which ensures that cases are properly prepared and ready to go ahead on the day they are listed to be heard.

We are also taking steps to make sure that defendants attend court when they are supposed to. Where offenders fail to turn up trials may proceed in their absence and they will be punished for failing to attend. Pilots of the ETMP in three criminal justice areas show encouraging early results.

### Maximising witness participation

Ensuring that the witness attends court can be pivotal to bringing an offence to justice. 22% of ineffective Crown Court trials and 26% of ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts are caused by the failure of a prosecution witness to attend.

Our plans to roll out Witness Care Units were set out in the earlier section on victims and witnesses.

### Improving efficiency

Some cases which currently go through the full criminal justice process could be dealt with as effectively through alternative procedures. Extending the use of Fixed Penalty Notices to a wider range of minor offences, such as shoplifting and criminal damage, and the use of conditional cautioning powers, will enable the courts to focus on getting the right result from every serious case. Where cases do need to come to court, we will be proactive in encouraging it to be

resolved as quickly as possible, by encouraging early guilty pleas and cutting unnecessary hearings.

### Tailoring the criminal justice process to fit the crime

By tailoring the criminal justice process to the type of crime involved, we can make a big difference to how effectively we deal with it.

We will establish more specialist courts where a customized approach to justice is required:

- we have already introduced specialist ASB prosecutors and ASB Response Courts in 12 areas;
- we are piloting specialist drugs sittings. We will set up the first full drugs courts in 2005, and establish these courts in every place where they are needed by 2008;
- for crimes where the rate of conviction is very low, such as domestic violence, we are looking specifically at how we can take special action. Six specialist domestic violence courts, providing tailored support to victims, are up and running, and we plan to extend this approach to other areas.

And in addition:

- we will focus our energy on tackling prolific offenders;
- organised crime will get a dedicated response; and
- powers to seize, confiscate and recover criminal assets have been strengthened.

Differentiating the process to the crime in this way will help us to make sure that the number of criminals whose crimes go unpunished is reduced dramatically.

## Enforcement: ensuring court orders and sentences are carried out

### Rigorous enforcement will revolutionise compliance with sentences and orders of the court

#### What will be different in 2008:

- Defendant attendance at court will have improved and we will be better at apprehending those who fail to appear;
- Smarter sentences will punish the offender, protect the public but will also help criminals to stop offending, including through intensive drug treatment;
- The police, CPS, courts and other agencies like the Serious and Organised Crime Agency will be able to keep at least 50% of the value of all the criminal assets they help seize;
- The percentage of fines collected will be higher;
- Community penalty breaches will be brought to court faster and more reliably;
- Using the Police National Computer, the police will be able to target defaulters, and tell at a glance whether people they pick up are on the run from court, have outstanding fines or have breached a community sentence;
- We will tackle loopholes that allow offenders to escape enforcement by improving information sharing and giving officers more powers;
- There will be financial incentives for enforcement staff for good performance.

### Our strategy to deliver this

The public expect us to deliver justice, and to do so efficiently. This goal is frustrated if defendants due in court or sentenced to fines or probation are able to default without swift and robust penalties.

### Ensuring defendants attend court

Currently, defendants fail to turn up in 5% of all magistrates' court hearings and 3% of all Crown Court hearings. We are tackling this problem in several ways:

- strengthening the rules on bail;
- use of electronic tagging and the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) for serious and persistent young offenders;
- where bail conditions are breached there will be swift action to bring offenders before the court, using improved technology and better information sharing;
- harsh consequences for breaching bail. Bail will generally either be revoked or stricter conditions applied; trials may proceed in the defendant's absence; and separate penalties, usually a jail sentence, will be applied for the bail offence.

### Making sure offenders pay their fines

Almost 70% of people sentenced by the court are given a fine. Fines are often an appropriate penalty, but too often they are not paid. Where offenders cannot afford to pay, they will have the opportunity to convert it to equivalent hours of compulsory work. This will soon be piloted and will roll out nationally if successful for those who genuinely cannot afford to pay a fine.

And we are working hard to make sure that every offender who defaults on their fine is pursued and made to pay it. Our approach includes:

- frontline enforcement staff will be given greater powers – powers of search and entry. And new measures to recoup revenue are also being piloted, such as attachment of earnings, deduction of state benefits, and car clamping;
- better management – accountability has been sharpened by the appointment of fines champions in every Magistrates' Courts Committee, coupled with a new, much more restrictive policy for writing off fines;
- new financial incentives for teams and for the Court Service as a whole.

We have already improved enforcement performance, so that the proportion of fines paid stood at 75% last quarter (March to May 2004), and a national target of 78% has been set for 2004/5. Using the new powers and systems now in place, we will deliver year-on-year improvement in collections over the next five years.

### Acting effectively where community penalties are breached

The Government believes community penalties are appropriate and cost-effective punishments in many cases. But to command confidence among victims, sentencers and the public in general they must be rigorously enforced.

Last year, over 40,000 warrants were issued for offenders who had failed to attend court when summoned following a community penalty breach. It then takes time before the offender is tracked down and made to answer for the breach. Most of the warrants do not allow bail so once the offender has been located, they will be held in custody until they appear before the judge.

We need to speed up the process and improve its effectiveness. We plan to do this by:

- prioritising prolific offenders – we will target our resources to best effect for the community. We will develop a fast track national standard to ensure prolific offenders are returned rapidly to court;
- tightening up procedures – the Criminal Justice Act 2003 removes Probation Officers' discretion not to breach an offender where they fail to complete their penalty. And sentencers will have to impose a new penalty on the offender for breaching their community penalty;
- setting clear end-to-end targets for improvement – for 2005 onwards, we plan to redesign our targets for community penalty breach enforcement to take into account the full end to end process from when an offender breaches to their appearance in court;
- fostering closer working relationships between probation and the courts, through the steps we are taking to improve joint working across the system.

Making these changes will demonstrate that defaulting on a community penalty is taken very seriously by the criminal justice system, and ratchet up the credibility of community penalties among sentencers, and the public.

## Users: better service for customers

### Criminal justice will be a joined up, modern and well run service, and an excellent place to work for people from all backgrounds

#### What will be different in 2008

- High common standards of customer service will be delivered across all agencies involved in criminal justice; victims and witnesses will have a statutory right to minimum service standards;
- Leading edge technology will have transformed the detection of crime and the processing and management of offenders; developments will include a national intelligence system for all police forces; a modern replacement for the Police National Computer; enhanced DNA and fingerprint databases, and a facility to match potential offenders by palmprints;
- Through a further £800 million investment in CJS IT on top of the £1.2 billion already pledged, criminal justice staff will be able to communicate swiftly and efficiently through a single linked IT infrastructure. Electronic case management systems will have transformed case handling between the police and prosecution team, in the courts, and in the management of offenders;
- As the teams which bring together chief officers at local level, Local Criminal Justice Boards will be well established bodies, resourced and empowered to deliver;
- The relationship between the criminal justice departments will have been strengthened, underpinned by the creation of the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, a trilateral centre for the Criminal Justice System;
- We will have the right numbers of staff, with the skills, remuneration and powers they need to do their jobs effectively;
- The criminal justice workforce will be better motivated with low staff turnover, low levels of sickness absence and high levels of job satisfaction;
- The workforce in each criminal justice agency will be more diverse, more fairly representing the local community it serves.

## Our Strategy to deliver this

We aim to raise criminal justice performance. But we also want service users to feel the change. We aim to raise service standards across the system so that every victim, witness and other customer knows that they will experience the same high standard of treatment from whoever deals with them.

## Modern technology for modern criminal justice

Modern technology offers the potential to revolutionise the experience of those who work in criminal justice, and those who use its services.

Our vision is that by March 2008 anyone involved in criminal justice – users of it or people working within it – should have electronic access to the information they need when they need it. We are investing over £2 billion in systems and infrastructure up until 2007-08 which will deliver for the first time:

- **modern IT infrastructure**, so that people working in criminal justice have access to standard office applications such as email and internet-based services;

- **national systems for managing cases** with priority given to the police, CPS and magistrates' courts;
- **linking up the case management systems** so that information can be shared between them and **making information available** to those who are authorised to see it. We are also working with practitioners to help them make the business changes necessary to achieve the full benefits of the technology.

## Working together in criminal justice

The roles and responsibilities of the criminal justice agencies are separated to ensure that the interests of justice are served. But the agencies need to co-ordinate their day to day operations if justice is to be delivered efficiently and effectively.

## Office for Criminal Justice Reform

On a cross departmental basis, the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) takes on most of the functions and staff of what was Criminal Justice Group in the Home Office. In future the OCJR will report jointly to the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Attorney General, and its task is to support the National and Local Criminal Justice Boards in developing and delivering cross-CJS targets.

## Local Criminal Justice Boards

Local Criminal Justice Boards have a vital role to play in driving up the standards of customer service, and delivering the service that the local community wants. It is through local agencies that services are delivered to the public, and the Boards are the focus of our drive to join up criminal justice.

If we are to achieve our goals, and raise the standards of service for the public, we need to invest more in the basic infrastructure to ensure that each LCJB has the human and financial resources and the time to do the job.

## Performance management

The Office for Criminal Justice Reform will co-ordinate the performance management of Local Criminal Justice Boards and cross-CJS targets. To do this, it will work with CJS departments and agencies to use the levers they have over local agencies to ensure that they deliver cross-CJS, as well as individual agency, goals.

## Getting the best from the criminal justice workforce

The workforce is the most valuable asset criminal justice has. It is through them that we will reduce crime, bring more offences to justice and improve overall confidence. A good employer attracts and retains high quality staff, and inspires its workforce to succeed, by creating the best environment within which to deliver its aims and objectives. It is only if they are suitably motivated that they will implement the tangible improvements we require.

Over the last seven years, we have invested in our workforce, with more police officers, prosecutors, and prisons and probation staff. And we have created new jobs: community support officers supporting the police; fines officers to free up court time; designated caseworkers to prosecute straightforward cases; higher court advocates to present cases; and youth offending teams to tackle youth crime.

Where we need to, we will continue to increase the number of frontline staff and we will continue to review roles to meet new priorities:

- we will give frontline officers powers they need to do the job;
- co-ordinated training packages, and promoting secondments, loans and transfers between CJS agencies to facilitate greater understanding of the role each plays in fair and effective criminal justice;
- we will promote alternative career paths, for example the CPS' Legal Trainee scheme provides opportunities to staff from non-traditional backgrounds to undertake a legal career;
- we will continue to modernise pay and conditions – not just rates of pay, but also other aspects (pensions, flexible working, provision of child care support and family friendly working practices, overall job satisfaction) which will attract people to criminal justice.

## Judiciary

From 2006, a new Judicial Appointments Commission will be responsible for the process of selecting candidates for the judiciary, with a carefully balanced role for the executive and the judges. The Commission will be specially tasked with making every effort to attract qualified candidates from those groups that are currently under-represented in the judiciary. There will be more transparent procedures for handling complaints.

We will raise the profile of magistrates, promoting the lay magistracy and broadening the pool from which it is drawn.

## Diversity

One of the key principles underpinning this strategic plan is to make criminal justice responsive, accessible and trusted by the community. We recognize that the make-up of workforce needs to reflect the diversity of its community wherever possible.

To achieve a more representative workforce, we need to ensure that a career in criminal justice is attractive to groups who are under-represented in the workforce, and that any barriers to progression are removed. Work to create effective employment policies, terms and conditions, and compliance with legislation and other best practice guidance, will be supported by positive outreach work.

We shall be setting consistent targets on increased representation and progression of certain groups within the community across criminal justice. Progress against these targets will be monitored.

