

Developing Court Diversion and Community Engagement

Joanna Morris

Assistant Director Policy

Crown Prosecution Service



About the CPS

- ❖ **Created in 1986**
- ❖ **Employs 7,808**
- ❖ **2,723 qualified lawyers**
- ❖ **24 / 7 service**

Performance in 2004 – 05

- ❖ **1.25 million prosecutions**
- ❖ **1.15 million convictions**

The Role of the CPS

- » Advise police on possible prosecutions
- » Review cases submitted for prosecution
- » Determine the charge
- » Prepare cases for court
- » Present cases in court

Code for Crown Prosecutors

Is there enough evidence to realistically secure a conviction?

Is it in the public interest to proceed with the case?

Why do we need to develop our Court Diversion & Community Engagement Strategies?



- ❖ **Pace of legislative change**
- ❖ **Crime rate is decreasing but the fear of crime is increasing**
- ❖ **A prison population at record levels**
- ❖ **Empirical evidence that prison fails many inmates**
- ❖ **Government manifesto pledge to put RESPECT back into society**



The RESPECT Agenda

The CPS will be working with other criminal justice agencies to deliver this commitment.

Likely to include:

Anti-social behaviour

Hate crimes

Crime targeting young, elderly or vulnerable members of society

Street crimes and robbery

Drug and alcohol related crime

Crimes against public sector workers

Crime in sport – on and off the pitch



Court Diversion

Reasons for change

1. Delay in getting cases to Court
2. Reduce the cost of the Legal Aid bill
3. Court and prison does not address the underlying cause

Current Options

No further action on public interest grounds

Police can issue a range of penalty notice

Reprimand or final warning to young offenders

Caution

CPS conditional caution



Court Diversion

Proposed future options

Prosecutorial fines

Attendance centres

Warning letters

Suspension of prosecution

Anti-social behaviour orders

Drug, alcohol or anger treatment courses

Developing Community Justice Centres

Must change public perceptions about Justice and appropriate sentences



Community Engagement

Already engage on a number of levels:

Local Criminal Justice Boards

Community panel pilot schemes

Race impact assessments

Consult public interest groups:

Domestic violence

Deaths in custody

Reckless transmission of HIV



Conclusion

