



DEBATE PACK

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Funding of Crown Prosecution Service

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Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on the subject of the funding of the Crown Prosecution Service has been scheduled for 1630hrs on Wednesday 11 January 2017. The Member in charge of this debate is Karl Turner MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

1.1 CPS budget outturn

The table below shows the budget outturn figures for the Crown Prosecution Service between 2010/2011 and 2015/16:

Budget outturn

£000s

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Serious Fraud Office	38,258	32,104	39,315	52,674	71,020	48,500
Crown Prosecution Service	615,551	591,128	562,628	551,595	508,514	488,179

Source: Annual reports, various years

Further detail of the annual budget of the CPS can be found in its annual report and accounts which are available on the CPS website www.cps.gov.uk/publications/reports/.

The [most recent of these \(2015-2015\)](#) states, in the performance analysis: overview section:

The CPS's net funding, as voted by Parliament, for the year to 31 March 2016 was £499.8 million. In delivering the public prosecution service the Department spent a total of £557 million. After taking into account £68.8 million income, the total net resource requirement (including capital) as shown in the Statement of Parliamentary Supply was £488.2 million which was £11.6 million or 2.3% less than the sum Voted to the CPS by Parliament.

1.2 HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

The [most recent annual report of HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate](#) (2015-2016) makes the following comment regarding the CPS budget:

Previous recent annual reports have commented on the overall reduction in the CPS budget and the impact this has had, as reflected in reduced staffing levels and the closure of offices. However, the 2015 Government Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed that the CPS budget would be maintained with a sufficient increase to cover pay and price inflation.

1.3 Director of Public Prosecution's evidence to the Justice Committee

In December 2015 the Director of Crown Prosecutions Alison Saunders gave [evidence to the Justice Committee on the work of the CPS](#). Asked

whether the CPS had the resources it needed to prosecute to the standards that we all want she said:

Yes, we think we do, particularly now that we have the CSR settlement. I am not saying that it is easy; let me say that first. Over the last five years, our budget has reduced by 23% or so. Where we have been able to make sure that we maintain or improve the service—we have improved our performance in some areas across those five years—we have taken the majority of the money out of things like IT, by becoming digital, and estates, by closing buildings and reducing the number of buildings we are in. We have reduced our headquarters by about 50% on the non-operational side. When I say non-operational, I mean people who are prosecuting. What will help us, and what we need to deliver going forward, with the spending review, is transforming summary justice, better case management in the Crown court, which is the equivalent, and continuing digitalisation. Those are all key to being able to maintain our performance.

2. Media

2.1 Articles and blogs

BBC Wales

[Miscarriage of justice warning over CPS funding cuts](#)

Jenny Johnson and Paul Heaney 5 February 2016

The Times [Registration required]

[With more prosecution cuts, the future is bleak, says Nazir Afzal](#)

Frances Gibb 12 November 2015

The Guardian

[Crown Prosecution Service chief inspector signals concern over funding](#)

Owen Bowcott 23 September 2015

BBC online

[Is CPS on 'brink of collapse'?](#)

Danny Shaw 15 September 2015

Civil Service World

[Former chief prosecutor \[Lord Macdonald\] warns of "dangerous" cuts to Crown Prosecution Service](#)

15 September 2015

Evening Standard

[Rise of 'DIY justice' as funding cuts hit CPS](#)

Paul Cheston 17 October 2014

Law Society Gazette

[Health check shows impact of cuts at CPS](#)

Catherine Baksi 10 July 2014

[Refers to HM CPS Inspectorate report covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014]

Bureau of Investigative Journalism

[CPS under fire from judges as its ranks are cut by a third since 2010](#)

Maeve McClenaghan 15 April 2014

Guardian

[CPS severely hampered by lack of resources, says report](#)

Owen Bowcott 10 July 2013

2.2 Press releases

Crown Prosecution Service

[CPS prosecuting and convicting more cases of rape, domestic abuse, sexual offences and child abuse than ever before](#)

6 September 2016

Women's Aid

[Our statement on Crown Prosecution Service's annual report on Violence against Women and Girls](#)

6 September 2016

National Audit Office

[Efficiency in the criminal justice system](#)

1 March 2016

Crown Prosecution Service

[CPS response to the Spending Review](#)

26 November 2015

Attorney General's Office; HM Treasury

[Law Officer Departments' settlement at the Spending Review 2015](#)

25 November 2015

FDA

[Crown Prosecution Service needs sustainable levels of funding to meet demands placed upon it, says FDA](#)

15 September 2015

3. Parliamentary Business

3.1 Parliamentary Questions

[Crown Prosecution Service: Temporary Employment](#)

Asked by: Nick Thomas-Symonds

To ask the Attorney General, how much the Crown Prosecution Service spent on agency staff in the last 12 months.

Answered by: Robert Buckland | Department: Solicitor General for England and Wales

In the last full financial year, 2015-16, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) spent £7,842,489 on agency staff.

21 November 2016 | Written questions | PQ 53465

[Crown Prosecution Service](#)

Asked by: Nick Thomas-Symonds

To ask the Attorney General, what the staff budget of the Crown Prosecution Service was in each year since 2010.

Answered by: Robert Buckland | Department: Solicitor General for England and Wales

The staff budget of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), in each year since 2010, is given below:

Financial Year	Staff Budgets £'000s
2010-11	737,667
2011-12	372,627
2012-13	361,278
2013-14	347,260
2014-15	313,169
2015-16	291,472

21 November 2016 | Written questions | PQ 53463

[Crown Prosecution Service](#)

Asked by: Judith Cummins

What discussions he has had with the Director of Public Prosecutions on the consequences of the Law Officers' Department's spending review settlement for the Crown Prosecution Service's operations.

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

The Director of Public Prosecutions and I have regular discussions about Crown Prosecution Service operations. We both believe that the spending review settlement enables the CPS to respond effectively to a changing case load and an increase in complex and sensitive cases. We also continue to discuss how the CPS can be more efficient and effective in the work that it does.

HC Deb 14 January 2016 c978

[Crown Prosecution Service](#)**Asked by: Judith Cummins**

Does the Attorney General agree with the former Director of Public Prosecutions, Lord Macdonald, that as the CPS is forced to shed thousands of jobs, a potentially dangerous situation could develop in which the CPS no longer has the necessary expertise to do its important job of delivering justice to the people of this country?

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

No, I do not agree, and, more to the point, neither does the current Director of Public Prosecutions. I draw the hon. Lady's attention to two things in the settlement and what they have led to. The CPS can almost double in size its counter-terrorism unit, which has a growing case load, as she will appreciate. It can also recruit 100 more prosecutors to conduct work on serious sexual cases. In both those areas, the number of cases that the CPS has to deal with is growing substantially, and it is now in a position to do so.

HC Deb 14 January 2016 c978

[Crown Prosecution Service](#)**Asked by: Robert Neill**

Will the Attorney General confirm that his response is entirely consistent with the evidence that the Director of Public Prosecutions has given recently to the Select Committee on Justice? The willingness of the Crown Prosecution Service to look innovatively at the ways in which it organises itself is being reinforced by its co-operation with the chief inspector's proposal to carry out thematic reviews of its financing at a corporate level, which will drive further efficiencies.

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend, and it is important that the Crown Prosecution Service inspectorate takes that role. As I have indicated, it is

keen to ensure that its work is conducted as efficiently as possible, and it will need to do that in continuing difficult economic times. It is not right to suggest that the CPS does not have the resources that it needs to do its job well.

HC Deb 14 January 2016 c979

[Crown Prosecution Service](#)

Asked by: Karl Turner

This time last year the Director of Public Prosecutions asked the Attorney General for an extra £50 million to prosecute complex cases properly, but the spending review revealed a real-terms cut of 2.1% to the Law Officers Department. Given that the vast majority of the budget is taken up by the CPS, will the Attorney General confirm that the DPP is saying that she no longer needs the extra £50 million for which she was pleading just 12 months ago?

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

May I start by congratulating the hon. Gentleman on his well deserved promotion? I point out, however, that I think four people have done his job in the time that I have been doing mine, so I wish him at least a comparatively long career in opposition.

As he knows—we have discussed this issue across the Dispatch Box previously—it is important to listen to what the CPS is saying now, not what it said a year ago, and what it is saying now is what I read to him in my initial answer. At the time, the CPS comment, with which the DPP fully agrees, was:

“This settlement will allow the CPS to respond to a changing caseload and the significant increase in complex and sensitive cases, such as terrorism, rape and serious sexual assaults and child sex abuse.”

That is what the DPP believes. She says that this is a good settlement, and I agree with her.

HC Deb 14 January 2016 c979

[Crown Prosecution Service: Funding](#)

Asked by: Keir Starmer

What steps he has taken to ensure that the measures relating to the Law Officers Department in the comprehensive spending review enable the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute cases effectively.

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

Throughout the spending review process, I have been keen to ensure that, while saving money wherever possible, the CPS received sufficient funding to prosecute its current case load effectively. I believe that the settlement we have achieved does indeed do that, and I particularly welcome the £4.4 million that has been ring-fenced for the CPS

counter-terrorism division, which will nearly double in size, and the extra funding provided to recruit 100 additional prosecutors to deal with serious sexual offences.

HC Deb 26 November 2015 c1474

[Crown Prosecution Service: Funding](#)

Asked by: Keir Starmer

Should I need to declare an interest, I should tell the House that I was the head of the Crown Prosecution Service for five years, from 2008 to 2013.

One of the reasons that the CPS has coped well with the cuts in the past five years is that the case load of referrals from the police has gone down. What level of assurance can the Attorney General give me that if the case load goes up significantly or becomes more complex, further funding will be made available to enable the CPS to carry out its service?

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

As the hon. and learned Gentleman would expect, if circumstances change in that regard, we will speak to the Treasury again about money to be made available to deal with them. The settlement takes account of, and helps us to deal with, the substantial changes and significant shifts in the case load that took place over the time when he was Director of Public Prosecutions and subsequently.

HC Deb 26 November 2015 c1474

[Crown Prosecution Service: Funding](#)

Asked by: Robert Neill

Will my right hon. and learned Friend ensure that priority is given to dealing with the woeful state of the CPS IT system, which has been a long-running problem for many years? Secondly, will he ensure that all changes to CPS systems to ensure efficiency are aligned with the proposals that Sir Brian Leveson made in his report for overall efficiencies within the criminal justice system?

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

Yes, certainly. On my hon. Friend's latter point, he will know that the CPS has been closely involved with the Leveson review, and a large number of Sir Brian's conclusions come from what he has been told by the CPS. As my hon. Friend will have noticed, some £700 million was made available for digitalisation of the courts in the spending settlement announced yesterday, through the Ministry of Justice settlement. The CPS will benefit from and contribute to that process immensely.

HC Deb 26 November 2015 c1474

[Crown Prosecution Service: Funding](#)

Asked by: Karl Turner

At the beginning of the year, the DPP asked the Attorney General for an extra £50 million to plug the funding gap so that the CPS could properly prosecute complex matters, such as historical sex cases. He confirmed to this House that he was talking to the Treasury about this extra funding and that he thought it would understand the case he was making, but there was no mention in yesterday's autumn statement of this extra, special funding for historical sex cases. What went wrong?

Answered by: Jeremy Wright | Department: Attorney General

The hon. Gentleman should pay close attention to what the CPS is saying now, as much as to what it said then. Let me tell him what it said yesterday in response to the settlement. It said:

"This settlement will allow the CPS to respond to a changing caseload and the significant increase in complex and sensitive cases, such as terrorism, rape and serious sexual assaults and child sex abuse."

The CPS is making the same point that I am making today about this settlement: it is a settlement that recognises the need to deal with precisely the type of increase in case load that he is talking about.

HC Deb 26 November 2015 c1475

4. Organisations and further reading

Crown Prosecution Service
[Annual reports](#)

HM Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service, [Five Year Review and Annual Report 2014-2015](#) , 2015

House of Commons Justice Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Crown Prosecution Service \(15 December 2015\)](#) , HC 669, 12 January 2016

Evidence given by Alison Saunders, Director of Public Prosecutions

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