



Criminal Cases Review Commission

QUALITY POLICY

Policy Title: **CCRC Quality Policy**

Reference: **Q-POL-01**

Version: **2.0**

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The CCRC's Quality Statement

The CCRC is committed to achieving high-quality case reviews as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this, we operate under a Quality Management System; this policy document provides further information. Our policy documents are available on our website: <https://ccrc.gov.uk/>.

If you or someone you represent has difficulty accessing the internet then please contact us via 0300 456 2669 (calls charged at local rate) and we will send a hardcopy of the relevant policy free of charge.

This is a quality-controlled document. Significant changes from the last issue are in grey highlight: like this. Significant deletions are shown as: [text deleted].

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Introduction

The content of this policy is aligned to, and informed by, the CCRC's Corporate Plan (CCRC-SD-02) and Business Plan (CCRC-SD-03). They, along with the other documents mentioned in this policy, are available on our website: <https://ccrc.gov.uk/corporate-information-and-publications/>.

This policy outlines the CCRC's commitment to providing a quality service, in carrying out our statutory function to independently find, investigate and refer potential miscarriages of justice and, in doing so, promote public confidence in the justice system. We carry out our purpose vigorously, impartially, and objectively to the very best of our ability.

You may find it helpful to read this policy alongside 'CW-POL-04 Case Review Process' as this will provide more information concerning how we operate.

Key Points

- 1) The CCRC is completely independent.
 - 2) The CCRC operates under a Quality Management System aligned with ISO 9001:2015 and relevant Government Functional Standards.
 - 3) The CCRC promotes a quality culture based on candour, accountability, openness to change, commitment to continuous improvement and public service values.
 - 4) All casework is guided by overarching principles.
 - 5) The CCRC's work is underpinned by five core values: Independence, Passion, Professionalism, Fairness and Accountability.
 - 6) The strategic priorities of the CCRC are People, Communication and Excellence.
-

Definitions

| Key Word | Meaning |
|-------------------|---|
| CJS | Criminal Justice System |
| Lawyer | A legal professional i.e. a legal executive, solicitor, or barrister |
| MoJ | Ministry of Justice |
| Personnel | Unless otherwise stated, this refers to permanently employed staff, those working at the CCRC on fixed term contracts / agency workers, Commissioners, and Board members. |
| Quality objective | A result to be achieved in relation to the quality of our work. |

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| Key Word | Meaning |
|----------|---------------------------|
| QMS | Quality Management System |

Policy Content

1 Organisation Context

- 1.1 Our purpose is to find, investigate, and refer potential miscarriages of justice and thereby protect the integrity of, and promote confidence in, the criminal justice system.
- 1.2 The Criminal Cases Review Commission is usually called the CCRC. We are based in Birmingham and were created to look at criminal cases.¹ We are a public body and have a statutory (legal) responsibility to look at cases where people believe they have been wrongly convicted of a crime or wrongly sentenced. Usually, we look at cases where people have already lost their appeal. We only work in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 If we find something wrong with a conviction or a sentence, we have the power to send (refer) the case back to an appeal court. For us to be able to send a case for a fresh appeal -
 - There must be a **'real possibility'** the court will quash the conviction or reduce the sentence in that case.
 - Usually this must be based on some important evidence or argument that was **not** used at trial or appeal.

This can be very hard to find and many cases cannot be referred for appeal.

- 1.4 The CCRC is completely independent. We do not work for the courts, police, or the prosecution. We do not work for the people who apply for a review of their cases. We stay independent of all sides so that we can investigate alleged miscarriages of justice impartially.

1.5 Important Points

¹ We were created by Section 8 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995 and started work on 31 March 1997.

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- a) We can investigate a criminal conviction or sentence from the Magistrates' Court, Crown Court, Youth Court, Court Martial or the Service Civilian Court².
- b) Only the appeal courts can overturn a conviction or reduce a sentence. Our role is to look at cases and send them back to the appeal courts.
- c) We have special legal powers to help us investigate cases. We can analyse evidence and consider new case law.³
- d) We can look at old cases, there is no time limit to apply to us.
- e) Applications can be made without legal representation.

1.6 Further information about the work we do, the legal test we have to apply, and our powers can be found in 'CW-POL-01 The CCRC'.

2 Quality Culture

2.1 We strive to provide the best service possible to our applicants, their representatives, and the wider Criminal Justice System (CJS). To achieve that, our quality culture is based on our personnel being:

- a) Candid - honest about mistakes, seeking to correct them as quickly as possible, and acting with professionalism throughout.
- b) Accountable - held responsible for their actions.
- c) Open to change - embracing improvements to how we carry out our role to ensure previous errors are not repeated.
- d) Committed - to the ethos of continuous improvement.
- e) Public servants - work will be carried out with fairness and in accordance with the CCRC Code of Conduct, Seven Principles of Public Life, and the CCRC's values (see [Section 5](#)).⁴

² We can only look at cases from the Court Martial or Service Civilian Court if the conviction was on or after 31 October 2009.

³ See 'CW-POL-15 Development of Law as a Ground for Referral'.

⁴ The CCRC Code of Conduct and the Seven Principles of Public Life can be found in 'CCRC-POL-01 CCRC Code of Conduct for Staff'.

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2.2 Our Quality Management System (QMS) supports us in achieving the above by operating in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 international quality standard and relevant Government Functional Standards⁵.

2.3 Our quality objectives are documented in 'Q-SD-07 Quality Objectives'.

3 Overarching Principles

3.1 All casework carried out will follow a clear strategy moving the case review towards a properly reasoned and well-documented outcome.

3.2 We are responsible for making decisions and working in a way that:

- a) Does not compromise our independence.
- b) Is proportionate to achieve a reasoned outcome in an efficient, effective, and reasonably consistent way.
- c) Only lasts as long as is necessary in order to reach the reasoned outcome.
- d) Explains, as clearly as possible, our decision and rationale.
- e) Is fair to our applicants.
- f) Is fair to victims in line with the Victims' Code⁶ and Victim Charter.⁷
- g) Promotes public confidence in the CJS.

3.3 Our personnel work in accordance with:

- a) The law, precedent, and previous judgments of the Courts.
- b) Relevant policies, procedures, and guidance issued by the CCRC's QMS and external sources.⁸

⁵ See [Functional Standards - GOV.UK](#) for further information.

⁶ Official title 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales'.

⁷ Official title 'Victim Charter: A Charter for Victims of Crime.' This document is specific to Northern Ireland only.

⁸ This is a non-exhaustive category which encompasses important documents including the Victims' Code, the Victim Charter, and the Codes relevant to the use of investigatory powers (such as the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) etc.

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4 Values and Strategic Direction

- 4.1 The CCRC Board are responsible for setting our core values and the strategic direction, both of which are documented in:
- a) 'CCRC-SD-02 Corporate Plan' and
 - b) 'CCRC-SD-03 Business Plan'.
- 4.2 Everything we do is underpinned by our core values:⁹

Independence

Our work is independent. It will not be influenced by external partners, and our only consideration is whether a miscarriage of justice might have occurred. We will provide feedback on developments in the criminal justice system without influence or interference, based on what we see is necessary to ensure justice is served.

Passion

We are passionate about our work. We believe strongly in the importance of our role in the criminal justice system.

Professionalism

We are professional. We work with skill and competence, delivering quality work to meet our high standards.

Fairness

We are fair. Our work is impartial and we treat everyone with respect, taking account of people's needs to ensure equal access to justice.

Accountability

We are accountable. As a unique organisation we must, both individually and collectively, take responsibility for our work, maintain our quality, and continuously improve.

- 4.3 We have identified three strategic priorities:
- a) People: being an employer of choice
 - b) Communication: enhanced engagement with applicants and stakeholders
 - c) Excellence: continuously improving how we work
- 4.4 The strategic priorities provide the basis for this quality policy.

⁹ The core values are stated in 'CCRC-SD-03 Business Plan'.

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5 Strategic Priority 1 - People

- 5.1 To deliver our core purpose we need to have the best people working for us across the CCRC, whether directly conducting casework, or supporting those that do.
- 5.2 To make sure we can deliver excellent outcomes we must be able to attract and retain good people and support them in their development. We recognise the importance of ensuring we recruit people with the right skills and attitude, train them to a high standard, confirm their competency, and nurture their professional development.
- 5.3 Our personnel will:
- 1) Work with honesty and integrity.
 - 2) Recruit new staff in accordance with our recruitment and selection policy.¹⁰
 - 3) Act in a manner which promotes inclusion, actively valuing equality and diversity.¹¹
 - 4) Provide an effective induction and training programme, support continuous professional development, and ensure personnel are regularly re-assessed to maintain their competency.

6 Strategic Priority 2 - Communication

- 6.1 For us to achieve our core purpose of finding, investigating and referring potential miscarriages of justice, people need to be aware of what we do and have faith in our ability and independence, so that they will feel confident in applying to us.
- 6.2 Our personnel will:
- 1) Treat applicants, their representatives, and interested parties with courtesy and respect, in a professional manner.
 - 2) Communicate effectively and promptly with applicants, their representatives, and any other parties who have a legitimate

¹⁰ See 'Recruitment and Selection Policy' available on our website.

¹¹ See 'Single Equality Scheme' available on our website.

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interest, in an accessible manner including the use of a translator (if one is required).

- 3) Provide sufficiently detailed, regular, and meaningful updates, using straightforward non-legal language (where possible) and presented in an accessible manner.

6.3 In addition to the above objectives, the CCRC is also committed to being as transparent as reasonably possible.¹² Our website contains a document on how to make Freedom of Information requests¹³ as well as our Privacy Notice.¹⁴

7 Strategic Priority 3 - Excellence

7.1 The core purpose of the CCRC is to find, investigate and refer potential miscarriages of justice. We deliver this through excellent casework by ensuring that we have the resources in place to conduct timely case reviews to a high standard, following the principle of 'correctly reasoned outcome, on the first occasion, in a timely manner'.

7.2 Our casework personnel will:

- 1) Think ahead, anticipate, and resolve issues proactively through effective case planning (where necessary).
- 2) Conduct the case review in a proper and timely manner.
- 3) Comply with our procedural obligations.
- 4) Promptly and accurately record what we have done and why in a way which is proportionate, so that our position is clear and work is not duplicated.
- 5) Take all appropriate steps to ensure that, at the appropriate time, the decision-makers are provided with recommendations which take account of key evidence, all other relevant information and relevant unused material, and are:

¹² However, our founding legislation (the Criminal Appeal Act 1995) does place some restrictions on what we can say about certain aspects of our casework.

¹³ See 'Guidance on Requests for Information Under FoI and DPA' available on our website.

¹⁴ See 'CCRC Privacy Notice' available on our website.

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- a) Factually correct
- b) Logically and legally-sound
- c) Clearly reasoned
- d) Accurate, and
- e) Timely and
- f) Represent the interests of justice.

7.3 Our decision-makers will:

- 1) Correctly apply the law in each case.
- 2) Make decisions which are:
 - a) Factually correct
 - b) Logically and legally-sound
 - c) Clearly reasoned
 - d) Accurate
 - e) Timely, and
 - f) Represent the interests of justice.
- 3) Promptly and accurately record decisions in a way which is proportionate, so that our reasoned position is clear, can be understood by others, and is capable of withstanding scrutiny.

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Relevant CCRC Documents

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CCRC-POL-01 | CCRC Code of Conduct |
| CCRC-SD-02 | Corporate Plan |
| CCRC-SD-03 | Business Plan |
| CW-POL-01 | The CCRC |
| CW-POL-04 | Case Review Process |
| CW-POL-15 | Development of Law as a Ground for Referral |
| Q-SD-07 | Quality Objectives |

The 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales' is available for free from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime>

The 'Victim Charter: A Charter for Victims of Crime' is available for free from: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/victim-charter>

The Criminal Appeal Act 1995 is available for free from: www.legislation.gov.uk

Document Control

Document author: Senior Quality Manager
Issue authorised by: Amanda Pearce (Chief Executive Officer)

Version History

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|-------------|---------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 18/02/2021 | 1.0 | First Issue | 20-02 |
| 02/10/2025 | 2.0 | Complete re-write (no grey highlight) | 22-73 |
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Appendix 1 - Quality Policy Statement

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is a purpose-led organisation passionate about our core function of finding, investigating and referring potential miscarriages of justice.

The CCRC aims to provide excellence in case reviews, as quickly as possible, without undermining the policies and procedures which are in place to ensure high-quality outcomes. Our work, in turn, promotes public confidence in the criminal justice system.

All that work at the CCRC are committed to delivering an effective, efficient, and robust case review process in order to effectively meet our statutory obligations and the strategic objectives of the organisation.¹⁵

Establishing the Quality Policy (Q-POL-01)

Q-POL-01 is aligned to, and informed by, 'CCRC-SD-02 Corporate Plan' and 'CCRC-SD-03 Business Plan'.¹⁶ Q-POL-01 also provides a framework for setting our quality objectives.

The Quality Assurance Framework exists to provide a controlled structure in which the management and personnel of the CCRC operate. Its purpose is to ensure that all business services are delivered with competency and consistency. The CCRC is committed to satisfying the applicable requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 quality standard.

The CCRC is committed to the continual improvement of its case review activities, and overall business performance.

Personnel within the CCRC will adhere to the policies and procedures that form the CCRC's Quality Assurance Framework.

Our business activities will be carried out in accordance with documented methods, relevant statutory primary and secondary legislation, and other external sources of policy and guidance as deemed necessary.

Personnel will be supported by effective management and provided with training and development to ensure their competence in delivering these services.

¹⁵ See 'CCRC-SD-02 Corporate Plan' for further information.

¹⁶ All documents are available on our website: <https://ccrc.gov.uk/corporate-information-and-publications/>.

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Communicating the Quality Policy (Q-POL-01)

This Quality Policy Statement and Q-POL-01 will be available and maintained as documented information within the CCRC QMS. The Chief Executive and Directors¹⁷ have overall responsibility for defining, documenting, implementing, and reviewing our quality policy in consultation with the Senior Quality Manager, management teams and other personnel as deemed necessary. The quality policy is reviewed at least annually, as part of the management review programme or at a frequency determined by:

- a) The changing needs and expectations of relevant interested parties, and/or
- b) The risks and opportunities that are presented through the risk management process.

This Quality Policy Statement and Q-POL-01 will be communicated, understood, and applied within the CCRC. This will be achieved through communication to all personnel on joining the organisation and when amendments are made and is available in the QMS to all personnel. Personnel understanding of our policies and objectives is determined as part of the Quality Assurance programme¹⁸.

Q-POL-01 will be available to relevant interested parties by virtue of being hosted on our publicly accessible website. In addition, a copy will be made available to anyone who makes a request directly to the CCRC either via a Freedom of Information request or any other suitable method of request.

Quality Policy Statement - Authorisation

I authorise this Quality Policy Statement in my capacity as Chief Executive.¹⁹ I confirm that this Quality Policy Statement and the associated 'Q-POL-01 CCRC Quality Policy' has been, and will continue to be, established, implemented, and maintained by the CCRC's Senior Leadership Team and those who we may delegate authority to from time to time.



Signed: _____

¹⁷ Casework Operations Director, and Finance and Corporate Services Director.

¹⁸ See CW-POL-11 Quality Assurance Programme

¹⁹ The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the Top Manager. The CCRC's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is comprised of the CEO and the two Directors, Head of Business Planning & Performance, Head of Casework, Head of Communications and External Affairs, Head of HR and In-House Counsel. The SLT is also the Top Management (as defined in ISO 9000:2015 clause 3.1.1) for the purposes of ISO 9001:2015 clause 5.1.1.

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