

# CPS undercharging

Sir, The scandal of the CPS grossly undercharging defendants continues. You report (Oct 15) that a defendant smashed a wine glass into a woman's face, thereby causing her permanent scarring to the cheek. That was plainly an offence of unlawful wounding under section 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, which carries a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

Yet the CPS, presumably from a concern to save the additional costs of the case going to the crown court, charged the defendant with the summary-only offence of assault by beating, which carries a maximum sentence of 26 weeks' imprisonment.

If the CPS continues to undercharge, it risks the public losing confidence in the criminal justice system and being tempted to take the law into their own hands.

ROBERT RHODES, QC  
London WC2

*Times 17.10.15*