



Home Office

Permanent Secretary

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Dame Meg Hillier DBE MP
Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP
Chairs, Public Accounts Committee and Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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25 April 2024

Dear Dame Meg and Dame Diana,

Thank you for hosting my colleagues and me at the 'Asylum Accommodation and UK-Rwanda partnership' session on 15 April. Please find below the additional information we promised.

1. Access to full Accounting Officer (AO) assessment, AO assessments that have been written but not published (including how many), advice on the Safety of Rwanda Bill and the (Sovereign Borders Programme) advice relating to the Illegal Migration Act (Q3, Q9, Q24, Q26)

As is standard practice, I receive regular advice on AO issues on a range of Home Office matters, with this being distinct from formal summary AO Assessments. Managing Public Money requires AO Assessments to be prepared and published for each project in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) once they have reached Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. These are subsequently updated in light of key developments.

As I said, I am committed to ensuring that summary assessments are published as appropriate. For Large Sites, I am due to publish a summary assessment once the full AO Assessment is completed.

For the Sovereign Borders Programme, my summary AO Assessment was published on 2 April 2024. This covered the Nationality and Borders Act only, as this was the scope of the OBC at the time. The OBC is currently being updated to incorporate the Illegal Migration Act and Safety of Rwanda Bill, and I will then update the published summary AO Assessment for the Programme to reflect this.

Outside the standard process set out above, I have committed to considering sharing with the Committees the underlying detailed AO advice of the Sovereign Borders Programme. This consideration would be based under the normal terms and would follow the Government's Guidance on Giving Evidence to Select Committees.

2. Update on out-of-date document (related to leaked MEDP documents) (Q31)

We are working hard internationally to tackle the challenge of illegal migration. As part of this work, we speak to countries about all kinds of cooperation. Working closely with FCDO, other countries have been approached to assess their level of interest in working with the UK on a third country model. I can confirm there has been no direct funding for negotiations with other potential third country asylum partners. For this reason, and to respect the privacy of these discussions, I am unable to provide more details at this stage.

3. Latest numbers of how many people will be impacted by the duty to remove under the Illegal Migration Act (Q51-52)

Through the UK's partnership with Rwanda, all individuals – apart from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who have (a) arrived in the UK through dangerous, illegal and unnecessary methods since 1 January 2022, and (b) whose cases are considered suitable for safe third country inadmissibility – will be considered for relocation to Rwanda. This is set out in our published inadmissibility guidance ([Inadmissibility – third country cases: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inadmissibility-third-country-cases-caseworker-guidance)).

How the provisions within the Illegal Migration Act apply to an individual depend upon that person's date of entry to the UK and the circumstances of their arrival. Individuals who arrived between 7 March 2023 and 19 July 2023 are subject to the leave to enter, settlement and citizenship bans only. Individuals who arrived from 20 July 2023 (date of Royal Assent for the Illegal Migration Act) are subject to these bans, as well as the duty to remove (section 2 of the Illegal Migration Act), once commenced. The exact number of people in each of these two cohorts will only be confirmed once the full triage of all arrivals during those periods is completed.

4. Training costs for existing escorts under Mitie's current contract (Q.103)

Detainee Custody Officers or "escorts" are specialist contractors, who must be trained and accredited before they can commence duties. The Home Office does pay for these training costs under the current escorting contract with Mitie. The training costs in the NAO report relate to new staff being recruited. Where the Home Office requires additional staff to be brought on stream to deliver new or expanded services, as is the case here, it is required to pay for the recruitment and training of those staff.

5. Examples of contracts between the Home Office and a firm providing staff where the Home Office pays for the training (Q.105)

The escorting contract with Mitie is a specialist custodial contract, with bespoke training and accreditation requirements. The Home Office has similar specialist custodial contracts for our Immigration Removal Centres. In these contracts, the Home Office pays for training.

6. Level of deterrence required to make assessment on Value for Money of Migration Economic and Development Partnership (Q.117)

Analysis published in the Illegal Migration Act Impact Assessment compared the marginal cost of relocating someone to, and supporting them in, a Third Country with the marginal cost of supporting them through the UK asylum system. This was published in 2023.

Broadly speaking, the marginal cost of supporting someone through the UK asylum system was estimated to be two thirds that of relocating them to, and supporting them in, a Third Country. On that basis, this implies that deterring a third or more of illegal migrants, either in any given year or across years, will see the policy achieve value for money.

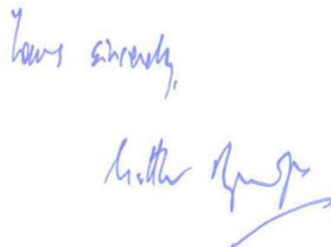
7. Recording of costs of accommodation sites in NAO report (Q.214)

An additional cost associated with this work is noted as not recorded in the NAO report. Because the main contract is an MoJ agreement costs are instead recorded via an MoJ system, and we are given monthly reports of costs to date for the services provided at both sites. All costs associated with this work were included in the figures quoted by the NAO as planned expenditure. Actual costs will be contained within the Home Office annual report and accounts for 23/24.

The Kier contract was fully compliant for Home Office use. The MoJ provides property-related services to the Home Office, allowing us to access this contract for use at Wethersfield and Scampton. The same contract is also used across other parts of the Home Office estate in a compliant manner.

8. Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Finally, I would like to clarify a comment I made in response to a question from Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown on Official Development Assistance (ODA). I was referring to the fact ODA rules are not set by the UK Government, but are agreed by members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee by consensus. It is up to member countries (including the UK) to decide what they report within these rules. The UK reports all its eligible spend in line with these rules.



**MATTHEW RYCROFT
PERMANENT SECRETARY**