



Home Office

Home Secretary

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Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley DBE MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22 July 2025

Dear Dame Karen,

Thank you for your letter of 10 June, and for inviting me to give evidence to your committee on the Work of the Home Office.

I will respond to the questions raised in your letter, along with the questions I committed to write to the Committee on during the session.

During the session, Robbie Moore MP asked how many previously displaced care workers have been successfully rematched with new care roles.

Significant work has been ongoing across government, in collaboration with the care sector, to ensure high standards across the immigration system, and to support care workers into alternative jobs when their sponsor has had their licence removed.

More than 40,000 care workers have been impacted by sponsor license revocations. When a worker loses sponsorship in these circumstances, UKVI contact them in writing to ensure they understand where to find advice. Individuals may wish to leave the UK, switch into a different immigration route or pursue alternative sponsorship in the care sector.

DHSC continue to fund 15 Regional Partnerships across England with up to £12.5 million in 2025/26. According to self-reported data from individual regions, between 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025 of the approximately 18,545 workers who contacted a Regional Partnership seeking support, 1,135 individuals have been directly supported into new jobs by the regional partnerships. These figures do not provide a complete picture, and workers are under no obligation to report their employment outcomes back to their regional partnership.

We have been very clear about our concerns with the adult social care sector and the number of workers struggling to find new sponsored employment. We have taken steps to address this, for example changing the Immigration Rules to mandate care providers in England to prioritise recruiting displaced care workers.

Despite this, evidence shows more needs to be done which is why we have committed to ending overseas recruitment entirely. We recognise the value international workers have added to this sector, which is why we have committed to allowing individuals already here to continue to extend their visas or change employer and this includes displaced workers.

My officials will continue to work very closely with DHSC and the Regional Partnerships to ensure displaced workers who came to the UK to pursue a career in adult social care can do so and will help end the reliance on overseas recruitment as we restore order to our immigration system through our Plan for Change.

Jake Richards MP asked for a timeframe to bring forward a new framework for police forces to use facial recognition.

As you are aware, facial recognition is a valuable tool in modern policing which helps keep our communities safe. Although use of facial recognition is already governed by data protection, equality, and human rights laws I recognise the need to consider whether a bespoke legislative framework is required to ensure there is consistency, transparency, and public trust.

Officials in my department are actively developing options for such a framework. In parallel, the Policing Minister has been engaging closely with stakeholders and hosted an information session for MPs and Peers on 24th June 2025.

We intend to set out our plans for facial recognition in the coming months alongside a broader package of reforms in our forthcoming White Paper on policing, which will address strategic challenges and include proposals on the use of technology in law enforcement.

During the session I referred to an Immigration Enforcement operation, and committed to write with further details.

On Tuesday 3rd June 2025, six members of an organised crime group were arrested by Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigation Command on suspicion of their involvement in the facilitation and possible labour exploitation of Botswana nationals into the UK. All six individuals have been bailed pending an ongoing investigation.

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Has the Interministerial Group on child sexual abuse met? Who attends the group, and what are the aims of the group?

The Inter-Ministerial meeting on tackling child sexual abuse brings together Ministers from the Department for Education, Department for Health and Social Care, Ministry of Justice, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, the Attorney-General, Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and others as relevant, to ensure a truly cross-government focus on tackling child sexual abuse. It first met in November 2024 to discuss the collective Government response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and our overall commitments to tackling child sexual abuse. The Inter-Ministerial meeting was convened again on the 26th February 2025 and on the 21st July 2025 to continue these important discussions on delivery of the commitments made in response to the Baroness Casey National Audit into Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation, ongoing delivery based on our Progress Update on Tackling Child Sexual Abuse, and wider work on tackling child sexual abuse.

Police workforce

Alongside the Home Office's forecast changes to the neighbourhood policing workforce, what estimates has the Home Office made of overall changes to the policing workforce in the year to March 2026, and over the Parliament?

Alongside neighbourhood policing commitments, as part of the Police Funding Settlement for 2025/26 we have set out our expectation that officer numbers should be maintained and have provided a total of £376.8m to support this ambition. Police forces have committed to put 3,000 additional neighbourhood police and PCSOs on the streets this year as part of the Neighbourhood policing programme.

Future workforce expectations and associated funding will be confirmed later in the year as part of the police settlement.

In terms of the overall shape of the police workforce, forces are operationally independent. It is for Chief Constables and directly elected PCCs, and Mayors with PCC functions to make decisions based on their local knowledge and experience, including how best to allocate all the resources at their disposal to serve and support communities.

Plans for the development and introduction of a national workforce strategy for policing will also be included in the forthcoming Police Reform White Paper, due to be published later this year. This strategy will inform how policing can access the right skills and capabilities it needs across the whole workforce to meet current and future demand.

EU-UK youth experience scheme

What limitations will there be on any EU-UK youth experience scheme, to ensure that this scheme doesn't undermine your efforts to restrict easy access to lower skilled, non-UK workers?

The details of any scheme will be subject to negotiation. We have agreed that any scheme will be capped, time-limited, and have been clear that it will need to be in line with our existing youth mobility schemes. Any scheme will need to be in the UK's national interests.

Restoring control over the immigration system: white paper

Who will be affected by the increase to the standard qualifying period for settlement from five to ten years?

On the standard qualifying period for settlement, no decision has been taken as to who the increase will apply to. We will be consulting on the earned settlement scheme later this year and further details on the proposed scheme will be provided at that time.

How was the standard of English which visa holders will now be required to meet decided? How many current visa holders wouldn't meet these requirements?

Modelling estimates English language proposals could lead to an estimated reduction in inflows of around 3,000 main applicants and 3,000 dependants per year.¹ The revised threshold was not however decided with a view to achieving a specific reduction in numbers. It was one of the core principles of the White Paper to foster integration and cohesion and the uplift in the existing threshold was chosen on that basis.

How will the contributions that are required to entitle someone to apply for British citizenship be assessed?

We are planning to consult on the settlement and citizenship changes proposed in the White Paper later this year.

¹In the central estimate. Modelling is available at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6842da8e0392ed9b784c0112/County+Lines-technical-annex.pdf>

Changes to the citizenship system will align with changes being made in respect of settlement. Any changes to statutory requirements for citizenship will require an amendment to the British Nationality Act 1981 which will go through the usual parliamentary process.

Irregular migration

You asked what will the increased co-operation with the EU on irregular migration involve.

The Common Understanding text agreed on 19th May includes a wide ranging list of commitments to tackle irregular migration and Organised Immigration Crime as part of a whole of route approach to these issues. We have agreed to:

- Work together on practical and innovative approaches to deter irregular migration and to manage its effects. This includes work on returns, working together to prevent Channel crossings and securing our borders;
- Cooperate on migration in source and transit countries through sharing expertise, coordinating in relevant international fora and deepening cooperation across key geographies;
- Work together to crack down on visa abuse and other abuses of the legal migration system;
- Enhance our relationship with key agencies and networks, including Europol and its European Migrant Smuggling Centre, the European Union Agency for Asylum, Frontex, and the European Migration Network.

By working together with our European partners and enhancing the cooperation between our respective law enforcement and border agencies, including via more frequent exchange of information, we will arm our agencies with better shared analysis, information and expertise that will allow them to tackle irregular migration and activity by criminal gangs.

On Eurodac, you asked how significant the lack of access to Eurodac is for the UK's response to irregular migration, and when do you hope the UK will regain access to Eurodac.

The commitments agreed at the Summit covers various elements of information and expertise sharing, including through closer cooperation between our agencies. This is a significant step towards a comprehensive partnership where we previously had very little cooperation. We expect this cooperation to develop over time. For example, we will consider new opportunities and approaches as the EU reforms its own policies and systems. Meanwhile, we also continue to work closely with individual Member States and other international partners to tackle irregular migration and improve border security.

You asked what discussions are currently ongoing regarding the use of return hubs for failed asylum seekers, and what assessment has been made of the potential deterrent effect, relative to the previous government's plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda?

On 15th May, it was confirmed that the Government is exploring the use of return hubs for failed asylum seekers. You will appreciate that we are not in a position to share further details that could prejudice discussions at this stage.

Returns hubs form part of a number of innovative solutions being considered in the wider reform of the asylum system including exploring ways to fast track returns of failed asylum seekers. When taken together, we expect those reforms to contribute to a deterrent effect, making clear that those who do not have a right to be in the UK, will be removed swiftly.

The agreement that the previous government entered into with Rwanda ran for over two years and cost £700m but only sent four volunteers and was underpinned by the unworkable and undeliverable premise that all asylum claims would be outsourced to another country, regardless of the safety or refoulment risks of the country to which they were sent.

What progress has the Home Office made on addressing low return rates for particular countries - such as Iran and Bangladesh?

The Home Office, working in collaboration with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, has prioritised engagement with countries where we want to see improved returns co-operation including those countries with high rates of those with no legal basis to remain in the UK.

Some countries raise additional challenges either because they refuse to cooperate or because safe returns are difficult. We are taking a range of different approaches to different countries. In the 12 months following the election, overall returns have increased this year by 13% and we have increased failed asylum returns by 28% as a result of increased enforcement action and intelligence cooperation we are pursuing. As set out in Immigration White Paper, we are considering further measures on a country-by-country basis where co-operation is not forthcoming.

What is the Home Office's estimate of the number of people who are liable for removal but are unlikely to be removed in the immediate future, because it is not practical or safe to remove them?

There are several factors that could impact a person's return as they move through the immigration system, such as progressing through the appeals process or other litigation barriers, as well as changes in country situations but where we believe further enforcement action should be pursued. Due to this uncertainty, the Home Office does not make official estimates and has not done so for many years.

Official statistics published by the Home Office are kept under review in line with the code of practice for statistics, taking into account a number of factors including user needs, the resources required to compile the statistics, as well as quality and availability of data.

Changes to good character guidance

What consideration has the Home Office given to the long-term impacts of changes to the good character guidance that will mean a potentially large number of people who are settled in the UK will never be able to become British citizens?

Will the Home Office provide clear guidance on the circumstances in which people who entered the country as children and victims of trafficking will be denied citizenship under the good character guidance?

British citizenship is a privilege, not a right. The requirement for an individual to be of good character is a statutory one, which is considered reasonable and proportionate, when assessing whether to grant them British citizenship. Citizenship is not an automatic consequence of settlement in the UK.

The recent change reinforces our public messaging about immigration breaches, and those who enter the UK without permission, or via a dangerous journey.

An equality impact assessment was completed and is available here:
committees.parliament.uk/publications/47456/documents/246338/default/

We have always kept citizenship policy under close review and will continue to do so and will consider these issues further as part of the planned earned settlement and citizenship consultation, referred to in the Immigration White Paper.

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Will the Home Office be reviewing the remit and role of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, as recommended by the Windrush Lessons Learned Review?

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) is an important statutory role that monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of immigration, nationality, asylum and customs functions. In 2024, the High Court considered the judicial review of the then Home Secretary's decision not to proceed with recommendation 10 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review. This had recommended that the government review the remit and role of the ICIBI, to include consideration of giving the ICIBI more powers with regard to publishing reports. In June of that year, Mrs Justice Williams found that the decision to cease work was unlawful. The Department will consult with the Windrush Commissioner, and I will consider next steps which will be communicated once a decision has been reached.

Windrush Commissioner

What input will the Windrush Commissioner have to the development and implementation of immigration policy?

I was pleased to announce the appointment of Reverend Clive Foster MBE as the Windrush Commissioner on Wednesday 18th June. While Reverend Foster will set his own priorities, we expect that his initial focus is likely to be on the Windrush Compensation and Status Schemes, and engaging with Windrush communities and stakeholders to consider how the schemes could be improved.

In the medium-longer term, the Windrush Commissioner will be empowered to make recommendations to support the Home Secretary's leadership of long-term cultural change to embed the principles and the lessons from the Windrush Review into every aspect of our work within the Home Office on immigration, homeland security and public safety.

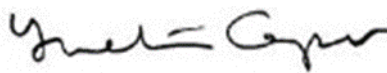
Temporary Shortage List

Lastly, I would like to make a clarification regarding the different lists of occupations for Skilled Worker visas. At the time of my appearance, before your Committee, there were two main lists under the Skilled Worker visa system. The first was a list of all (around 300) eligible occupations which were skilled to RQF level 3 (approximately A-level). The second was the Immigration Salary List, a smaller subset of 23 of those eligible occupations which qualify for a discounted salary threshold.

The raising of the skills threshold to RQF6 (graduate occupations), as set out in the Immigration White Paper and where changes came into force on 22nd July, saw the first list, of eligible occupations, reduced by around 180 occupations.

The Immigration Salary List will be abolished and will be replaced longer term with a new Temporary Shortage List (TSL), that will provide time-limited access to the immigration

system for occupations below RQF6, but only where the MAC has advised it is justified, where there is a workforce strategy in place, and where employers seeking to recruit from abroad are committed to playing their part in increasing recruitment from the domestic workforce. An interim TSL – which contain occupations advised by the Department for Business and Trade and HM Treasury as being important to the Industrial Strategy, is now in place ahead of the MAC review following their commission on 2nd July.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette Cooper', is centered on the page.

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Home Secretary