



Home Office

Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Meg Hillier MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

10 March 2021

Dear Chair

Immigration Enforcement

Thank you again for the Committee's report into Immigration Enforcement (IE) last year.

Further to my letters of 13 November and 17 December concerning recommendations 1, 3 and 6, I am now writing to you in response to recommendation 2.

This recommendation relates to how IE uses data. Specifically, you challenge us to collect, use and analyse data more effectively within IE and recommend that we develop a strategic plan for doing so.

Let me first say that I absolutely recognise the criticality of using data effectively to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. The Home Office holds some of the most significant datasets in Government, and that is why, across the Department, we have invested significantly over the past year in our data analytics capabilities, with a focus on data exploitation. We have also ensured that investment in our technological infrastructure has focused on enhancing data quality and accuracy. Transitioning our data from legacy systems onto more modern, and resilient, platforms will ensure that we can both secure and make use of our data much more effectively.

Turning now to Immigration Enforcement itself, I absolutely agree that the work it undertakes demands high quality and accurate data, to ensure that while we continue to secure the removal of those who are here unlawfully, many of whom present risk to the public, we also ensure that those individuals who are vulnerable are treated compassionately and supported appropriately.

Much work has already taken place to turn IE into a data-led organisation. In my letter of 17 December I mentioned our work on the 'Define' dataset, which – for the first time in the Department's history – brings together in a single place the details of all those individuals

within the UK of operational interest to IE. Critically, this not only gives us a detailed understanding of each individual's demographic details (age, nationality, gender, etc) but also supports an assessment of the potential harm they present to the UK, and their level of vulnerability. This information is essential to ensuring that any enforcement action taken is appropriate and proportionate.

But, of course, we have plans to go much further. My ambition is for IE to use data in a much more innovative way, using the insights gathered from every operational intervention to create organisational feedback loops that will help us refine and improve all our enforcement processes, and optimise the deployment of our staff.

In order to achieve this, we have recently initiated an ambitious, multi-year, programme of work that will focus on five key priority areas:

- **developing a new, data-led, operating model for IE** - including a refreshed approach to operational and strategic tasking and the full roll-out of data-driven 'business rules' to support decision making across all operational business areas.
- **designing and rolling out effective data architecture to underpin this operating model** – including the delivery and full integration of new underlying systems and technology.
- **ensuring effective data insight, quality and standards** – including exploring new opportunities for (proportionate) data exploitation, whilst introducing measures to improve data quality and accuracy.
- **delivering a more sophisticated Business Intelligence capability** – including the implementation of a new operational performance framework that will primarily assess outcomes, not outputs.
- **facilitating a cultural change towards use of data** – including the introduction of new training to make all IE staff more confident and competent in exploiting and analysing the data available to them.

I am confident that, through the effective implementation of this programme, immigration enforcement work in 2025 will be very different from how we approach this now, with far-reaching and sophisticated improvements made to the way the organisation collects, uses and analyses data and contributes to Ministers' ambitions for the wider immigration system. I am confident that this will enable us to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Rycroft CBE