



Home Office

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Meg Hillier MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
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15 March 2021

Dear Chair,

RECOMMENDATION 4: IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT INQUIRY

I am writing to you in response to Recommendation 4 of the Public Accounts Committee's most recent report into Immigration Enforcement, which emphasised the need for the Home Office to develop a joined-up approach across the immigration system that would enable the Department to track problems as they arose and provide timely support to customers.

As you know, the Department fully accepted this recommendation, which is very much in line with my ambitions for the future development of the Home Office. I believe that transformational change is needed if the Home Office is to deliver better for the public. We must become more open and customer-focused, more efficient and automated, more forward-looking and innovative.

To achieve this, we have undertaken to redesign the Home Office at every level, from our systems and structures to our culture and ways of working. We have learned from Wendy Williams' Review of Windrush, and we have listened to feedback from external bodies, customers and users of our services, and from our staff. This transformation journey will take time to implement fully and to embed. But we have developed a comprehensive plan that is beginning to be rolled out across the Department this year, with a formal launch this month.

Our approach is based on a consistent set of design principles that will enable us to develop common capabilities across the areas of the Home Office that manage the immigration system, and to focus on the system as a whole, considering how impacts in one area affect others. As part of these reforms, we are considering a wide range of options, including the legal advice and support that claimants are able to access at different points in their immigration journey. We will ensure cohesion of this programme through a single design authority that mandates consistency in the infrastructure and technical elements of the system.

Having a robust, end-to-end design is vital if we are to achieve our ambition to deliver a

joined-up service to the customer. We have already begun introducing digitised application processes for many student and work visas, with more to come this year. This will improve system coordination, enhance customer experience through simplified rules and remote biometric capture, and provide enhanced management information, ensuring that problems are identified and addressed early. A digital identity capability will enable customers to view and prove their status easily.

The structural part of the transformation includes creating three missions for the Home Office, one of which is Migration and the Border. This mission will have strategic oversight of the end-to-end customer journey, and will be accountable for service delivery and efficiency, for evaluation and impact assessment of our policies, and for identifying and resolving problems as they arise.

Finally, but equally importantly, we are transforming the way we work together, and for the public. We have built on the culture change initiatives that Wendy Williams recommended, and are developing a more customer-focused ethos, to enable the Home Office to become a department that is trusted by the public.

Yours sincerely,


Matthew Rycroft CBE