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BY EMAIL ONLY

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

28 April 2020

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 April regarding the competition to appoint a new Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. I welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Committee on this and my officials will be engaging with Committee staff throughout the process. You raised several questions in your response, which I reply to below.

Appointment terms and Delay

David Bolt was appointed in May 2015 for an initial term of two years, which was subsequently extended to 30 April 2020 by previous Ministers.

Whilst I appreciate it has taken some time to announce the competition, given the importance of the role, it was important to fully consider and plan how it was to be filled ahead of announcing this competition. In order to ensure continuity and independent scrutiny throughout the recruitment process, I have further extended David Bolt's tenure until 30 October 2020 under the same terms and conditions, in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments (Code).

The appointment terms for the successor for the Chief Inspector role are set out in the job description. In line with the Code, it is for Ministers to determine the length of tenure, and I consider a three-year term is of sufficient length for the appointee to discharge their functions effectively and independently. There is an option to re-appoint once the three-year term ends, subject to a satisfactory appraisal and mutual agreement, but there are no guarantees of a re-appointment happening.

Windrush Lessons Learned Review

As I said in parliament on 19 March when the Windrush Lessons Learned Review was published, we must give all the recommendations the careful consideration they deserve. This includes recommendation ten on reviewing the role, remit and powers of the ICIBI, including publication of reports.

The job description outlines that the responsibilities of the Chief Inspector may be revised from time to time during the appointment term, subject to my agreement as Home Secretary. As Wendy Williams noted, it is important that we take time to reflect on the detail and important messages in her review and engage widely to identify what should change. At this time, I am not able to provide an indication of whether legislative changes will form part of the proposed response to this recommendation. I have committed to publishing the department's response to the report within six months of publication (by the end of September), representing a new chapter for the Home Office.

I hope this addresses your questions and I look forward to working with you on the appointment process.

With our good wishes
Pp

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP