

Letter from James Brokenshire MP, Minister for Security and Immigration, to the Chair of the Committee, 2 September 2014

When I appeared before the Committee on 22 July, alongside Sarah Rapson and Mandie Campbell, I undertook to write to you with further information on two issues.

The Committee requested information concerning the current immigration IT systems, the Immigration Platform Technologies (IPT) and Immigration Casework (ICW) programmes; and also guidance for applicants affected by the judgement in the case of MM and Others (2014) EWCA Civ 985.

I believe that you wrote to Sarah Rapson on 23 July requesting this further information. Please accept this letter as a reply to those enquires.

In response to the Committee's enquiries concerning immigration IT systems, the technology systems in use today by UKVI in-country immigration operations are:

- CID, first developed 2000-2003, the main caseworking and operational database.
- Biometric Residence Permits, supports biometric data collection and the ordering of BRP cards.
- Points Based System, supports educational and employment sponsors.
- ASYS, supports Asylum Support payments
- ICW caseworking system for student cases and the search capability (programme cancelled 2013 but capability delivered by the programme is still in use).

The current annual cost of running all of these systems is £23 million, including standard maintenance costs to keep the systems safe and up-to-date, but excluding any development and changes to the systems to ensure that they reflect any changes to policy or legislation.

CID remains the core operational system in use since its delivery (2000–2003). As outlined in the NAO report, the CID system had a history of freezing and outages. Much work has been done on the legacy systems since 2012 to stabilise performance and make them more resilient, to reduce both the number and severity of IT incidents that affect immigration operations.

The ICW programme was initiated in 2007 with the aim of developing a paperless digital case work system to simplify casework processes and replace a number of legacy IT systems with a single integrated system. ICW was due to replace the legacy Casework Information Database (CID) and other immigration systems by combining all of the casework data.

Certain aspects of the ICW programme have been successfully delivered, for example, we have delivered an end-to-end paperless caseworking capability for in-country student cases which has resulted in a productivity improvement. This is the first implementation of a fully digital business process for the Home Office, and an important step on our journey to be digital by default. ICW also delivered an Immigration Search function which allows caseworkers across the world to view information from across 14 current systems, which greatly aids accurate decision making.

On 22 July the Committee heard that the cashable benefits associated with the ICW programme were expected to be £95 million per annum. I can now confirm that the cashable benefits are expected to be circa £95 million in total. Whilst the ICW programme has delivered improvements, overall it fell short of the original intention and the programme was closed in August 2013 having cost £347 million. The Permanent Secretary notified the Public Accounts Committee of the closure of the ICW programme in his letter dated 31 October 2013.

The Immigration Platform Technologies (IPT) programme was established to deliver the required modernised in-country immigration systems and is estimated to cost £209 million over four years. We are building systems incrementally, but within a cohesive design, optimised to be flexible and shared across the Home Office. We are delivering small components of capability that staff and customers will be able to benefit from more quickly, moving on to add additional capability once those components have been delivered and continually improving it in the light of customer and business feedback. Working in this way will mean we can check earlier that what is built is fit for purpose, providing better value for money. To date the IPT programme has delivered an online service for Tier 2 priority and Chinese Visit Visa applications. The replacement of immigration technology, whilst continuing to support day-to-day operations, is a complex task that will be delivered in increments over the next two to three years.

UKVI's International operations (visa operations located overseas) are supported by different, but linked, systems that are delivered via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) network at the UK's embassy locations across the globe. These systems include:

- Proviso;
- CRS (Case Reference System);
- BES (Biometric Enrolment System); and
- Visa4UK.

In response to the committee's enquiry concerning the effect on applicants of the judgement of MM and Others (2014) EWCA Civ 985; for cases placed on hold where

there has been a change in a person's circumstances since the date of application, a fresh application will be required.

James Brokenshire MP, Minister for Security and Immigration
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