

Consular Strategy 2010-2013



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Foreword

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's consular operation provides assistance to thousands of British nationals around the world every year.

This is a vital public service. We in the FCO are proud to provide this support to British nationals, wherever they may be in the world. We're also proud of the greater professionalism, quality, consistency and efficiency we've achieved through our 2007-10 Consular Strategy. But there will always be new challenges to overcome, and things that we can improve. The 2010-13 Strategy is about how we plan to do just that over the next three years.

In shaping the Strategy, we consulted widely with customers, the travel industry, the voluntary sector, and staff. We commissioned research to improve our understanding of our customers, their requirements and how best to provide services to them. The research has helped us identify the key factors shaping travel, emigration, demand for overseas assistance and the impact of the global recession on travel trends and consular services.

Our customers will continue to travel and live overseas in increasing numbers. Three times as many British nationals travel today than in the 1980s - 70 million overseas trips a year. There are approximately 13.6 million people living abroad who are eligible for a British passport. At any one time there are around 1.8

million Britons travelling overseas as tourists or business people. Overseas resident populations, often largely elderly, have grown significantly. And we have become much more aware of the particular consular needs of our British minority ethnic communities.

After more than 20 years of running separate passport services, the FCO and the Home Office have agreed that from April 2011 the Identity and Passport Service will take over responsibility for issuing passports to British nationals overseas as well as at home. In preparation, we have changed, and will continue to change, the way that we currently produce passports overseas. As the cost and security around passports continue to increase, these changes will allow us still to offer a passport service to British nationals living abroad. Importantly, we will retain the capacity to issue a travel document for emergency travel. Throughout, we are seeking to keep customers informed of the changes and maintain and ultimately improve the service they receive.

The FCO's Consular Service, like all public services, faces an exceptionally difficult economic climate. For the foreseeable future, downward pressure on our finances will be strong. And demand for our services will continue to grow.

Our response to these challenges and opportunities is set out in this Strategy. We will focus on four

priorities: Our Customers. Our People. Our Network. Our Finances. Building on the progress already made, our goal is clear – to deliver better consular services more cost-effectively.

By 2013, our Consular Service will be different – and better. More responsive to the needs of the people we help. Smaller, and cheaper, following the handover of the overseas passport operation to the Home Office. And more efficient thanks to greater clarity and control over our costs and income.

But some things won't change. The FCO's consular services will continue to be delivered by a highly professional and committed global team. And consular staff around the world will continue to strive to provide the best possible help and support – putting people first.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Braithwaite". The script is fluid and cursive.

Julian Braithwaite
Director Consular Services

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to provide high quality support to British nationals abroad, in normal times and in crises.

We have four major areas of activity:

- > We help British nationals who are in difficulty abroad. We offer **support and help** in a range of cases: victims of crime, hospitalisations, child abductions, forced marriages, death of relatives overseas, detentions, missing people and kidnapping.
- > We respond to **major crises** affecting British nationals abroad, such as terrorist attacks, natural disasters or situations requiring us to evacuate British nationals from a country or region.
- > We issue **Emergency Travel Documents** and provide other documentary services to British nationals, through our overseas posts and our legalisation offices in the UK.
- > We carry out **public communications** campaigns and give travel advice, to help people avoid trouble and stay safe overseas.

In 2009/10, we received over 1.9 million consular enquiries. We dealt with almost 20,000 serious consular assistance cases, including approximately 6,000 deaths, 3,600 hospitalisations, 6,000 detentions of British nationals, 443 cases of child abduction and 377 cases of forced marriage. And we have helped British nationals affected by crises around the world, from the Mumbai bombings in 2008 to volcanic ash in 2010.



Our Vision

This Strategy sets out our vision for how we will deliver high quality support to British nationals overseas.

We will deliver better consular services more cost-effectively.

We will achieve this by building on the success of our achievements over the last three years, which have improved the professionalism of our global team and raised the quality of our services, consistently and efficiently across the world.

Over the course of this Strategy, we will:

1. Improve the quality of service to our **customers** by using their feedback
2. Invest in our **people** to sustain professionalism and encourage those who work on the frontline to take decisions
3. Strengthen our global **network** by using different types of consular representation, new technology and partnerships and by using resources flexibly
4. Achieve clarity and control over our global **finances**

What will this mean for the people we help?

Our approach is based on what British nationals, both travellers and residents, have told us about our services. By focusing on what only we can provide – assistance and crisis support to British nationals overseas – we will be able to continue to provide high quality consular assistance when and where people need it.

- > We will answer to our customers for meeting public service standards.
- > We will keep pace with the changing needs of our customers by better understanding their views of our services. We will also use that information to identify where we can make the biggest difference, particularly for the most vulnerable.
- > We will work to provide more efficient and effective support to British nationals who live overseas.
- > We will develop a global approach to communicating with the public that gives our customers the information they need in the way they want it.



Our Context

Building on success

Delivering Change Together: The Consular Strategy 2007 – 2010 gave us the framework for making important changes during that period. We introduced significant improvements to the way we provide high quality support and services to British nationals overseas. These included:

- > Greater professionalism of our staff by improving the level and quality of our training, giving staff the relevant skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities to the highest possible standards
- > An improved ability to assess our performance objectively and transparently through Management Information
- > A Global Response Centre which provides consistent and high quality support 24/7 to British nationals all over the world
- > A network of Consular Regional Directors, managing our resources better and increasing each region's ability to respond at times of crisis or high demand
- > A web-based crisis tool, LOCATE, that allows members of the public to register their travel plans or, if they live outside the UK, their contact details so that we can contact them in the event of a crisis wherever they are
- > One of the world's most sophisticated emergency travel documents to help our nationals return home if their passport is lost or stolen.

We delivered these improvements for customers and staff through a strong commitment to programme and project management. We commissioned an Office of Government Commerce Gateway Review™ in 2007, a Gateway Health Check in 2008 and a Gateway Review in 2010 to provide an external and objective assessment of our progress. The final review reported that the 2007-2010 Strategy, and its supporting Change Programme, had realised a host of organisational and efficiency related benefits, transforming the Consular Service for staff and customers beyond expectations.

Why we need to continue to improve

Customers

Despite the recent slight drop in numbers travelling, the economic downturn has led to increased demand for our services. The loss in value of sterling has had an effect on those, particularly older British nationals resident overseas and receiving UK benefits such as the State Pension. An increasing number of British pensioners are living abroad – 9.2% in 2008, up from 7.6% in 2000.

We have seen an increase in British nationals moving to new places overseas with a lower cost of living; a rise in the number of victims and perpetrators of petty crime; and a growth in the number of serious assistance cases involving British nationals travelling to cheaper but less familiar destinations. We expect this trend to continue upwards over the next three years.

We have seen an expansion in different types of travel and tourism, for example, “exotic” mass tourism (to Dubai, Thailand, Egypt for example), sports and adventure trips, short breaks to long-haul destinations, and visiting friends and family.

In an increasingly interconnected world, people demand high quality and quantity services, using the wide range of communication tools available. Traditional methods, such as using the media, Parliament and non- governmental organisations, have been added to with new digital channels – from satellite news to the internet, Twitter and Facebook.

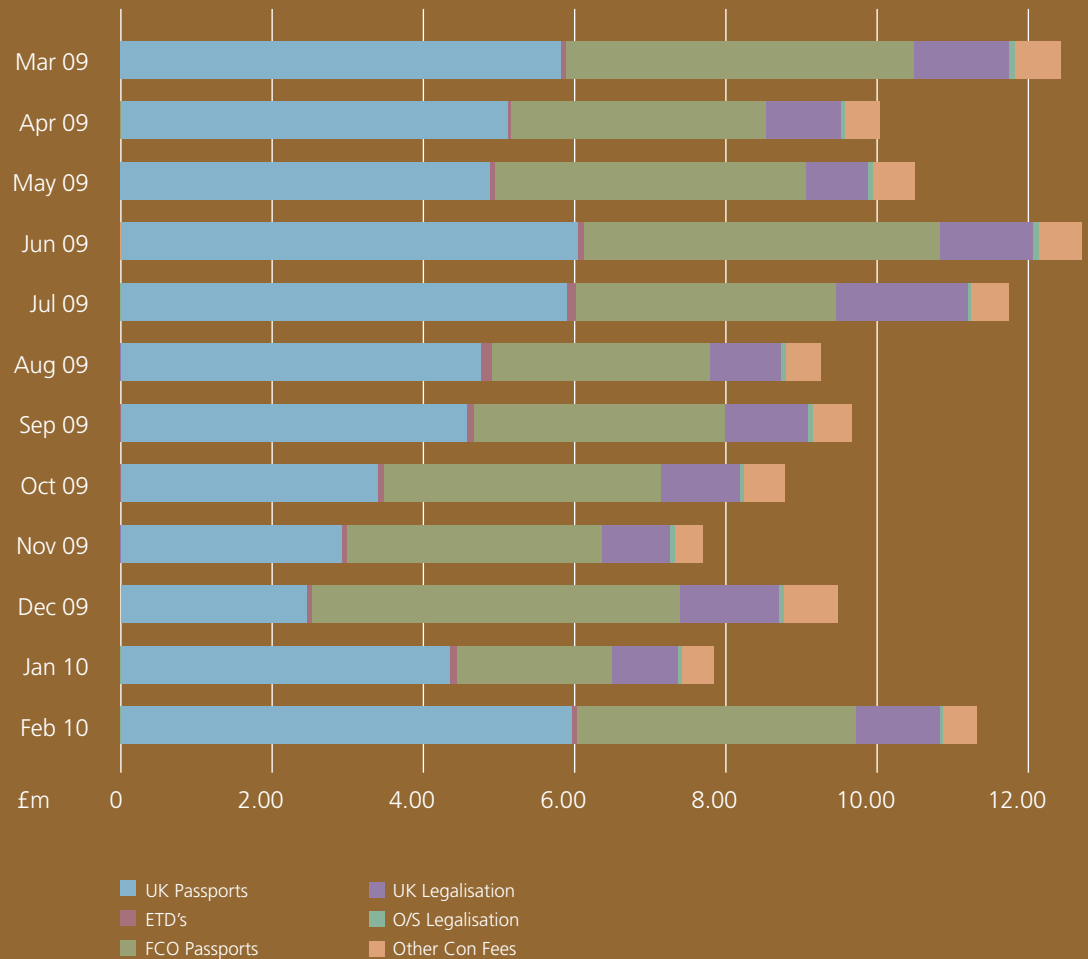
Responding effectively to people who need our help, either in individual assistance cases or those caught up in a crisis, will mean new challenges for us. The effect of those challenges will vary around the world, increasing the need for a more flexible and responsive global consular network throughout the world.

Finances

The Consular Service is paid for from fees not general tax. Our assistance work is paid for by the Consular Premium included in the price of every passport. Our documentary services are paid for using money from the legalisation offices in the UK and notarial services we provide overseas. Our passport work is funded by the fees we charge for issuing passports overseas.

As with other public services which are paid for through fees, the Treasury says we must balance our spending on consular services with the income from

Income March 2009 - February 2010



fees we receive from customers for providing these services.

Due to the loss in value of sterling in 2009 and 2010 (many of our costs are charged in foreign currencies) and the unpredictability of our income, we are now running at a loss. We have already taken action to reduce this by cutting the costs of providing passports overseas and making other savings around the network and in London.

At the moment, we only have direct control over budgets set and spent through London (about 25% of our total spending - financial responsibility for the other 75% of funding is divided among FCO non-consular budget holders in London and at Post). The lack of clarity and control over the rest of our costs restricts our ability to balance the books during the lifetime of this Strategy.

In the near future, we expect downward financial pressure to continue. But, equally, demand for our services will grow. To maintain and improve the standards of those services, we will need better clarity and control over our resources so we can find more efficient ways to help British nationals. We must prioritise our resources in response to those who most need our help.

Passports

In 2006, the National Audit Office (NAO) recommended that both the FCO and Identity and Passports Service (IPS) “maximise the benefits of partnership to reduce costs and increase security”. On 29 April 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed that committed Consular Directorate and the IPS to work together to transfer ownership of the overseas passport operation from the FCO to IPS by 1 April 2011

Creating one passport operation run by the Home Office will help:

- > Secure UK borders and tackle illegal immigration
- > Prevent identity theft and passport fraud
- > Become a key defence in the fight against terrorism
- > Improve checks to protect the vulnerable
- > Reduce costs by not having to duplicate systems for overseas customers

Creating one passport operation will not affect the consular premium from passport sales that pays for the help we provide.

To successfully make this change by 1 April 2011, we have reduced the number of passport issuing posts worldwide and moved passport production to regional Passport Processing Centres. There will be seven Passport Processing Centres in place by October 2010

in Washington, Paris, Madrid, Dusseldorf, Hong Kong, Pretoria and Wellington. They are helping us to be as efficient as possible, reduce costs and prepare the way for full integration.

For British nationals living abroad, the way they obtain a passport and where they need to apply, will change. From 2011, most customers will receive their new passport direct from the UK, but some will need to collect it from their nearest Embassy, High Commission, Consulate or courier depot.

Delivering successful integration with the Home Office will mean further changes to the overseas network. We will manage this by being fair and transparent with our staff, at the same time as protecting service standards and communicating effectively to passport customers overseas.

The Consular Strategy 2010-2013

We will deliver a better Consular Service more cost-effectively.

CUSTOMERS

We will develop and use customer feedback as an essential tool for managing and improving our services.

- > Targets for delivering our services that are both measureable and meaningful for customers
- > Using what our customers tell us about our services to measure our performance and identify where we can improve
- > Understanding our customers better so we know where we can make the biggest difference, particularly for the most vulnerable British nationals
- > Public information that gives our customers the information they need in the way they want it

PEOPLE

We will invest in our consular staff to sustain professionalism and encourage those who work on the frontline to take decisions.

- > Regional targeted training to give staff the relevant skills and knowledge they need
- > External public service qualifications
- > Recognition schemes that reward new ideas
- > Removal of barriers which prevent our staff from working together as a global team
- > Managing our staff in a high quality and consistent way

NETWORK

We will strengthen our network by using different types of representation, new technology and partnerships, and by using resources flexibly.

- > An integrated consular network of FCO staff, Honorary Consuls, Wardens, and partners
- > Trained mobile teams supporting fixed consular posts in response to crises, complex cases and seasonal tourism patterns
- > Accessible and responsive services exploiting improved IT and online delivery options
- > New and creative ways to deliver our services that move away from the traditional counter and waiting room model

FINANCES

We will achieve clarity and control over consular resources

- > Clear and predictable costs
- > Financial information that helps us manage our resources efficiently and make effective decisions
- > Methods in place to manage overseas resources more directly
- > Resources moved to countries and services in line with our priorities, cutting back on lower priority work where appropriate

Our Customers

We will develop and use customer feedback as an essential tool for managing and improving our services.

Improving the quality of service to our customers¹:

- > We will set targets for delivering our services that are both measureable and meaningful for customers
 - > We will use what our customers tell us about our services to measure our performance and to identify where we can improve
 - > We will understand our customers better so we know where we can make the biggest difference, particularly for the most vulnerable British nationals
 - > We will provide public information that gives our customers the information they need in the way they want it
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We have shaped our plans for the next three years based on what British nationals have told us about our services ². They told us to focus on what only we can provide. We will continue to get better at what the public and Ministers trust us to do – to provide high quality assistance and crisis support to British nationals in difficulty overseas.

We will set targets for delivering our services that are both measureable and meaningful for customers

As a public service, we are committed to providing high-quality consular services and support. Where we can, we set measurable targets for the services we provide. We will answer to the public for meeting our commitments, and will continue to measure our performance against clear and challenging targets.

The Consular Guide sets out what we can and cannot provide. We will produce a web-based version to make sure the Guide is easily accessible to British Nationals travelling or planning to travel overseas.

¹ "Customer" for the purpose of consular service and support means any British national (or other eligible person) who receives consular services or support from British consular staff.

² See Appendix A for more information.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We are committed to ensuring that at least:

- > 90% of customers are satisfied with our service or assistance
- > 99% of hospitalised British Nationals are contacted within 24 hours of notification
- > 98% of British Nationals detained or arrested are contacted within 24 hours of notification
- > 98% of notarial acts are completed within one working day
- > 98% of correspondence is responded to within 20 working days
- > 98% of Travel Advice notices are reviewed and revised every three months

We publish an annual consular review that sets out how we have performed against these and other commitments, and what we have achieved during the year.

>> Consular resources would be best directed towards those in genuine need, and in emergency situations.<<

Customer Forum, 2009



>> In the next three years we must maintain high standards of service, invest in preventative communications, manage customer expectations, and provide accessible services. <<

Staff Forum, 2009

FORCED MARRIAGE

In 2009, we were involved in 337 forced marriage cases. In one case, a 16-year old British girl was asked by her parents to visit Bangladesh to care for an elderly relative. On arrival, she was informed she would marry someone she'd never met and threatened with death if she refused. She ran away and contacted the British High Commission, who arranged safe accommodation for her through a local NGO. The High Commission and the Forced Marriage Unit in Consular Directorate then ensured her safe return to the UK. She has since built a new life for herself with the help of a women's refuge and her friends.

CHILD ABDUCTION

In 2009, a mother contacted the Child Abduction Section in Consular Directorate as her former husband (a dual UK and Egyptian national) had abducted their son. Staff contacted the British Embassy in Cairo who confirmed the son had entered the country. Embassy staff then gave advice on accommodation and English-speaking lawyers and introduced her to a local NGO. The mother is taking legal proceedings with support from the NGO and the Embassy.

We will use what our customers tell us about our services to measure our performance and to identify where we can improve

As our customers keep changing, we need to keep pace with their differing needs. We also need to be informed by others who work with us, such as the travel industry and NGO partners. By better understanding all of those we help, whether they be backpackers, overseas residents, people in prison, pensioners, minority groups, those with disabilities, or the families of those we directly help, we will be able to identify where we can make the biggest difference. This is particularly important for the most vulnerable British nationals who find themselves in difficulty overseas.

We will put in place a package of actions to improve our support for the most vulnerable British nationals. By working in partnership with other government departments, agencies and our NGO partners, we will seek to:

- > Develop a more joined-up approach to helping those facing mental health issues, improving repatriation procedures, including through better partnerships with government departments and agencies
- > Continue to develop our response to forced marriages and female genital mutilation cases

- > Further strengthen our response to allegations of mistreatment by British nationals who are in prison or police custody overseas
- > Provide better support to victims of crime overseas, and for families of victims of crime who travel overseas as witnesses
- > Review our policy on providing assistance to people who have dual nationality in the country of their nationality, and the circumstances in which we provide assistance for humanitarian reasons, including in crises
- > Share lessons to be learned whenever a British national dies in custody overseas, along with Prisoners Abroad if they have been involved in the case
- > Improve the assistance we provide to families in the case of deaths abroad, in particular those under suspicious or unnatural circumstances
- > Review and improve guidance on supporting people under 18
- > Develop our policies on the support and signposting we can offer in situations involving domestic violence
- > Develop guidance on the needs of vulnerable groups in a crisis

Key priorities for British Nationals residents overseas:

1. Help in emergencies and disasters
2. Advice on where to get information and briefing updates
3. Quick and efficient passport and documentary services

Forum Research Poll, June 2009

>> The FCO has already taken significant steps to modernise and improve mainstream consular services, and it is taking the right approach in trying to support emigrants to be well prepared for life overseas and to avoid obvious situations where they could put themselves in trouble or danger.<<

IPPR Report, 2010

Key IPPR recommendations

- > The FCO should look at updating and extending the role of voluntary community wardens. Consulates and Embassies should form stronger links with civil society organisations and migrant integration services in countries which have significant British populations.
- > The FCO should further develop strategies that it has already pursued in countries like Spain to 'embed' officials from other government departments and from relevant NGOs so that emigrants can find advice at 'one stop shops'.
- > Consulates should step up their active marketing of the LOCATE registration process, building on the success they have already achieved.
- > Consulates should extend excellent programmes of information to emigrants about the local laws, regulations and customs.

>> I think customers expect Consular Services to be efficient, modern, making the best use of technology and communication. <<

Staff Forum, 2009

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

Working with Prisoners Abroad, Consular Communications Team launched a publicity campaign in February 2010 highlighting the numbers of British nationals detained overseas for drugs offences. The campaign warned of the dangers of getting involved in drugs abroad:

>> *We can't get people out of jail in other countries, so if you don't want to waste your life away in a tough foreign jail, be sensible and keep clean.* <<

The 'My jam won't set' story was released to the press in August 2009. The serious message was that handling questions about advice on buying shoes and making jam takes staff away from dealing with serious assistance cases.

LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Posts worldwide run local publicity campaigns, targeting public safety messages of their specific customers. For example, in 2010 in France, Greece, Turkey and Dubai, consular staff organised high profile and high impact campaigns about the dangers of skiing, excessive alcohol and ignoring local laws and customs.

In response to feedback and research, we will recognise British nationals living overseas as a separate customer group with needs beyond the help we normally provide. Britain has an increasing number of flourishing expat communities around the world. British nationals living overseas are becoming an increasingly important part of our work. We will work to use the existing resources we have around the world to support British residents overseas more effectively and efficiently. Our partnerships with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, Age Concern, the Royal British Legion in Spain and others have already significantly expanded our combined support to this group.

We will provide public information that gives our customers the information they need in the way they want it

We will improve public **awareness and preparedness**. Our Travel Advice helps British nationals to take informed decisions about their safety abroad. In 2009, there were over 5.5 million hits on the Travel Advice website and the Travel Advice call centre received over 120,000 calls. We will continue to improve the quality of our advice and to develop new ways of delivering information that take advantage of mobile and digital technology.

Our public communications will also focus on

managing expectations of what we can and cannot provide. And we will use new communications campaigns to target our message where it can make the biggest difference in terms of influencing behaviour. We know from our Management Information that just over half of our time is spent supporting British nationals arrested and detained overseas. Research shows that the public often have unrealistic expectations of what we can do for them.¹ One fifth of British nationals think a British Embassy or High Commission can get them out of prison if needed and more than two-thirds believe we can provide legal advice.

Our communications strategy focuses resources on targeted campaigns aimed at traveller groups who cause disproportionate numbers of cases as identified by our Management Information. The campaigns are delivered in appropriate media at each stage of the customer journey through almost 400 commercial and NGO partners.

Each campaign is researched before its launch and evaluated on completion. All Consular Communications are independently evaluated every 6 months and judged against return on investment, audience reach and media coverage. We also run yearly qualitative research with the target groups.

Technology is evolving fast and is changing the way

¹ Over 2000 British nationals surveyed by ICM research, January 2010



>> Improve understanding of customers and their needs and wants in order to improve forecasting, prevention and service design and delivery.<<

COI Research Recommendation, 2009

TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

The Consulate in Sydney created www.twitter.com/ukinaustralia to increase engagement with customers and stakeholders. Staff tweet regularly on various consular issues such as details of out-of-hours emergency assistance, passport advice, moving abroad, LOCATE and travel advice. Within 4 months they had over 1,000 followers.

FCO Travel Advice started a Facebook page in 2010 which has proved to be a popular source of information. The page is updated every day with the travel advice available at www.fco.gov.uk/travel. And individual updates are then made on specific countries on an ad-hoc basis.

During the volcanic ash crisis in 2010, several posts used Facebook to keep stranded British nationals updated and informed

people work, communicate and socialise. These advances will have an effect on the way we interact with our customers as well as the nature of the services we provide. New technology has opened up opportunities for delivering services in different ways – making our services more accessible and cheaper to provide.

Consumers expect more – increased transparency, feedback, conversation and collaboration. In a more interconnected world, we are expected to communicate more effectively and efficiently with a wide range of British nationals around the world. The British public increasingly expect to access information in a format they choose – at a time convenient to them. Where we can use technology to deliver messages and provide services, it will free up time for staff to spend on our most valued service - face-to-face assistance for those in genuine need.

But technological advances also bring challenges. People are bombarded with information and want to be able to quickly identify and choose the information that is relevant and ignore the rest.

We will understand our customers better so we know where we can make the biggest difference, particularly for the most vulnerable British nationals

One of our major challenges is to understand more about what our customers think about our services. Customer feedback will be at the heart of how we manage our performance and help us make decisions about how we can deliver our services as effectively as possible. We will improve how we gather and use feedback so it becomes an essential tool for managing and improving our services. Knowing what our customers think will also help us to better respond to demands for services that we cannot provide by better signposting and communications.

We will introduce a **Customer Knowledge Management** system that collects the information we need from a range of customers to allow us to analyse, in a meaningful way, what our customers tell us about our services. We will use the information to spot trends in demand, local and regional preferences and performance, and to tackle areas for improvement – as well as highlighting areas of good practice and strong performance of staff. This improved customer insight will help us to identify priorities and where we should use our resources – to those areas that make the biggest difference to our customers, particularly the most vulnerable. We will be able to demonstrate that we

listen to the views of customers and take action on their feedback

We will:

- > **Involve staff** in London and the network to bring together their knowledge, information on customer satisfaction and feedback to improve our understanding of important customer groups, and how we can adapt our services to different needs and differing circumstances around the world
- > Develop a **worldwide system** to capture feedback from a representative cross-section of all our customers, including those we help in a crisis and serious assistance cases

Over the next three years, we will aim to achieve the **Customer Service Excellence** hallmark – showing the quality of the consular services we provide to British nationals. This Cabinet Office standard is a practical tool for driving and measuring improvements in public services. It will test in depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers - with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. It will also test how far we understand our customers and whether we have effective measures in place for service satisfaction. From April 2010, we will put in place a roadmap to achieve accreditation for the Consular Service.

Complaints are powerful things

“Complaints are a valuable source of feedback for the public body; they provide an audit trail and can be an early warning of failures in service delivery. When handled well, complaints provide an opportunity for public bodies to improve their service and reputation.” (Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, November 2009)

The policy and practice of handling complaints is part of the service we provide to customers. We will improve our current system by including the Six Principles of Good Complaint Handling by Public Bodies:

1. Getting it right
2. Being customer focused
3. Being open and accountable
4. Acting fairly and proportionately
5. Putting things right
6. Seeking continuous improvement

These policies and procedures will allow staff the flexibility to resolve complaints promptly and in the most appropriate way while still learning from them. We will develop a culture that values and welcomes complaints as a way of putting things right and improving service. We will use reporting on our performance in handling complaints to motivate staff, promote achievement, encourage improvements in delivering services and boost public confidence in our services.

Our People

We will invest in our consular staff to sustain professionalism and encourage those who work on the frontline to take decisions

Combining our traditional values with ambition, creativity and confidence:

- > We will carry out regional targeted training to give staff the relevant skills and knowledge they need
 - > We will promote external public service qualifications
 - > We will develop recognition schemes that reward new ideas
 - > We will remove any barriers which prevent our staff from working together as a global team
 - > We will always manage our staff in a high quality and consistent way
-

We want to be a Consular Service that people are happy and proud to work for. One that encourages staff to make the most of their talents, contribute their ideas, and enjoy the responsibility and challenges of their work. We are committed to the health and welfare, safety and security, development and mobility of our individuals - vital for a dedicated, committed and motivated global team.

We will carry out regional targeted training to give staff the relevant skills and knowledge they need

We will continue to train all our people who provide consular services to British nationals and

their family and friends in the UK. The training will focus on staff developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to provide high quality, consistent, professional and efficient consular services.

We will continue to rely on our skilled, knowledgeable local staff around the world. They are the backbone of our work, and their local knowledge is invaluable in dealing with complex consular problems.

We already train Honorary Consuls, and we will extend our training to cover, as appropriate, Wardens, other volunteers and partners.

We train staff in how to deliver consular services as well as what we can and cannot do. Our training in London is open to all consular staff who provide consular services. Pass/fail examinations encourage professionalism and consistency. We deliver tailored and targeted training through the overseas workshops programme.

We are developing a new set of crisis training modules and exercises to give all FCO staff the skills to manage the complete range of crises. Using e-learning, live training and exercises, the crisis modules will support

FROM 2007-2010:

- > We trained 92% of consular staff
- > 85% of Honorary Consuls received professional consular training
- > 91% of Heads of Mission went on the Crisis Leadership Course
- > Consular Training Team won 5 awards, including a Foreign Secretary's Innovation Award 2009

>> In South Asia, we are firmly focussed on making the consular region even more effective and efficient. We will carry out in-depth performance reviews every quarter - both of the region as a whole and of every individual section. This will allow us to rapidly reward great performance and remedy problems. We're also putting in place strengthened HR structures – line management, recruitment and resource reviews – which will ensure our network is professionally managed. <<



>> I was delighted to participate in the Consular Directorate sponsored 'Certificate in Delivering Public Services'. Topics covered in the online course included customer care, managing change and time – all directly relevant to my job. It was hard work but what I gained far outweighed giving up some free time. I'd recommend the course to anyone who wishes to deliver public services more effectively. <<

Nicola James, Vice-Consul, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

and target staff not previously captured by crisis training, such as Honorary Consuls, Wardens and non-consular staff. It will also build on existing training for standard consular crisis teams with modules available for each role. Alongside this, we will deliver a training package to make sure staff can provide rapid surge capacity for all types of crises worldwide.

We will record and measure the success and effect of training by using feedback, evaluation and testing. The Consular Balanced Scorecard will keep track of progress against our training targets.

We will promote external public service qualifications

In 2009, Consular Training Team piloted an Open University qualification available to all consular staff at home and overseas – the "Undergraduate Certificate in Delivering Public Services". 19 consular staff successfully completed the course. We will continue to offer up to 20 places each year on this course and look to expand our relationship with the Open University and other higher education centres. The Customer Service Excellence hallmark (see Our Customers section) will also provide external validation of individual and team skills in the area of customer focus and engagement.

We will develop recognition schemes that reward new ideas

To be successful over the next three years, we need to find new and better ways to deliver our services. This means harnessing frontline expertise to develop creative ideas to tackle our biggest challenges. Working with their Consular Regional Directors, we will encourage staff to find local and regional solutions that work for them and for their customers.

We will reward and recognise staff if their ideas help realise our ambitions under the four main objectives – Customers, People, Network and Finances. We will evaluate new ideas using customer feedback, Management Information, savings in terms of time and resources, improved service standards and improved relationships with partners. And we will encourage staff to get involved in schemes which recognise and celebrate new ways of working.

Building on existing networks, we will support global and regional sharing of good ideas and better ways of doing things. We will hold Best Practice Workshops and develop Consular Change Agent networks. We will pool knowledge through greater interaction at all levels, for example regular conferences, Webex and teleconferencing. We will carry out job swaps, shadowing, secondments, buddying and mentoring. The Internal Communications Team in Consular Directorate

will use our communication channels to share and showcase the best examples of innovative work.

The achievements of our staff are already acknowledged and celebrated at the highest level. We will look for opportunities to increase this recognition and for staff to be rewarded for outstanding contributions.

We will remove any barriers which prevent our staff from working together as a global team

We will always need both UK based and local staff to form the backbone of the Consular Service. We will continue to look for ways to maximise the capabilities and contributions of local staff. This includes opportunities for greater career and geographical mobility.

The FCO takes its responsibilities to protect both staff and information very seriously, and the security and safety of our staff is always our main concern. FCO security procedures are designed to minimise the risks to our staff and assets at home or overseas. We will develop an approach to security-related tasks that meets those responsibilities, at the same time as reducing obstacles to working together as a global team.

CONSULAR CHANGE AGENTS

Change Agents played a vital role in implementing the last Strategy and in developing this Strategy. They will continue to be crucial through their creative and ambitious approach to change. Change Agents role model the kind of behaviours we need in the Consular Service to achieve our vision for 2013.

"Change Agents share front-line best practice around the global network on a wide variety of issues - consular assistance, outreach, credit card payments, waiting room layout, LOCATE promotion. We encourage and embed change at our posts. We're moving from a conservative way of working to innovation and change."

Barbara Lamillar, Pro Consul and Change Agent, Havana

>> I was very pleased that six consular nominations were shortlisted out of a total shortlist of 18 across all categories in the 2010 Foreign Secretary Award scheme, particularly as Consular initiatives accounted for all three shortlisted nominees in the public service category. This reflects the professionalism, innovation and dedication of our consular teams. The nominations show that change is increasingly something we do, not something done to us and are visible examples of the excellent work that goes on every day across our consular network. <<

Julian Braithwaite, Director Consular Services

changeconsular@fco.gov.uk

We will listen to you. And we will act on what you tell us. We have launched a dedicated channel for staff ideas and feedback.

Increasing the flexibility and mobility of consular staff is essential if we are to achieve the aim of strengthening our network. We already have a number of successful examples, such as Regional Deployment Teams and Regional Resilience Networks (see the Network section). But deployment across country borders has ramifications for local staff, for example accreditation, immunities and duty of care. We will develop policies that protect staff, but do not stifle opportunities for individuals and reduce operational effectiveness.

We will always manage our staff in a high quality and consistent way

Under the last Strategy, we put in place a network of Consular Regional Directors with responsibility for managing regional performance; giving consular staff professional leadership; and using resources effectively across their regions.

As part of the Clarity and Control initiative (see the Finances section), we will start to put in place a new system for managing all consular staff and for robust regional performance management. In doing this, we will provide greater specialist support for staff and drive improvements in line with our strategic aims. We will do this without undermining the coherence of Posts or the authority of Heads of Mission.

These regional line-management arrangements will provide greater consistency and responsibility, while making sure that wider interests are protected. The new structures will take account of the fact that we will continue to rely on the support of Heads of Mission in high-profile and politically sensitive assistance cases, enabling Posts to reinforce and support in a consular emergency. Consular staff will continue to serve under the authority of the Head of Mission, with an agreed mechanism whereby Heads of Mission can take control of all resources at Post when necessary.

All Consular Regional Directors will be line-managed from Consular Directorate, counter-signed by a Head of Mission or Deputy in their region. The Consular Management Board will carry out performance reviews with the Consular Regional Directors.

The Consular Service has talented staff across the board. In line with FCO HR policy, we aim to be a good employer, providing a healthy and safe workplace where everyone plays an equal part and every member of staff can realise their potential. Building on our positive track record, Consular Directorate will continue to champion flexible working that balances individual and organisational needs. We

will be guided by HR and Health & Welfare policies that support all staff in the UK and overseas. We will measure our results by improvements in survey results on levels of staff engagement; fewer staff believing they have been affected by unacceptable behaviour; enforcing the FCO's zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment; and providing a professional and timely service to disabled staff, with appropriate reasonable adjustment rapidly implemented.

Investing in Our People

- > Consular Regional Directors will carry out skills audits in each region to identify specific training and development needs.
- > Consular Training Team (CTT) will provide at least two training visits to each CRD region per year, and design and deliver regional workshops to reflect feedback from staff, customers and partners.
- > CTT will launch a pilot project with the South East Asia and Australasia region to explore ways of passing some training responsibility to regions.
- > We will develop an e-learning package for consular work starting with training for our IT systems (BRIDGE, COMPASS and LOCATE) and crisis management.
- > Crisis Group will host live crisis exercises across the network as well as crisis workshops in London.

Our Commitment to Staff

We have a duty of care to all our staff, including voluntary and part-time staff. We will not send staff into a situation where we judge that their safety could be seriously at risk. We ask our customers to treat our staff with fairness and respect. Our staff have the right to refuse to help people who are physically or verbally abusive.

This duty of care is a major commitment for us. Consular staff do difficult and sometimes stressful jobs, often helping people at the worst times of their lives. All of us who manage staff have a responsibility to make sure that our teams can deal with the pressures this work creates, and to offer appropriate support when needed.

Our Network

We will strengthen our network by using different types of representation, new technology and partnerships, and by using resources flexibly.

Being where the customer needs us:

- > We will deliver through an integrated consular network of FCO staff, Honorary Consuls, Wardens, and partners
 - > Trained mobile teams will support fixed consular posts in response to crises, complex cases and seasonal tourism patterns
 - > We will provide accessible and responsive services, exploiting improved IT and online delivery options
 - > We will find new and creative ways to deliver our services that move away from the traditional counter and waiting room model
-

The demand for some services in some places is growing at a very fast rate. We have seen an increase in resource-intensive cases, for example, prisoners, child issues, mental health cases and forced marriages.

Living up to customer expectations of high standards is increasingly demanding. Communicating with customers, especially with prevention messages, is becoming more complicated. We are seeing large variations in demand, seasonal fluctuations and the uneven impact of influences like the economy and threats of terrorism or natural disaster.

To meet these challenges, we need a strong network combining different forms of consular representation with online services and digital communications – so we can be where the customer needs us.

We will deliver through an integrated consular network of FCO staff, Honorary Consuls, Wardens and partners

When we think about our network, it is not only about how we provide our services or from where. It is also about who provides consular and other services to our customers. We need different forms of representation, because our staff cannot always be

on the scene immediately – or perhaps at all. Building on progress already made, we will continue to rely on Honorary Consuls to provide a professional consular service. And we will look to benefit more from other partners, such as Wardens and other volunteers. We will review our policies on working with these partners to ensure our approach is fully relevant to the modern demands and challenges.

Because we cannot always provide the services that customers may want or need, we will develop further our approach to working with partner organisations. Not only overseas, but in the UK where closer links with other Government Departments and Agencies would give us a more joined-up repatriation service. We already work closely with a wide range of partners. We use partnerships to prevent and help tackle complex and specialist cases. And we work with the travel industry to tackle issues of mutual concern, share information and spot trends. We have an arrangement with the Red Cross and International SOS to send their staff with our Rapid Deployment Teams to a crisis.

We will aim to broaden and deepen our partnerships to benefit customers and manage the increasing demand for consular services while making the best use of our



>> We must be flexible enough to recognise not just the diversity of customers and their needs, but also the different ways in which we can deliver our services. Resources and requirements will vary from region to region. <<

Staff Forum, 2009

>> It's not the FCO's responsibility to baby-sit us, but our own responsibility to gain as much knowledge of the countries we're travelling to/living in. Sometimes we just need to know where to find the information or help <<

Customer Forum, 2009

PARTNERSHIPS IN SPAIN

"After losing her husband, an elderly British lady was left alone in Spain without a word of Spanish and not understanding the Spanish welfare system. She contacted the British consulate in Malaga in a very distressed state. Working together, the British Consulate, the Department for Work and Pensions and Age Concern España advised her on how to access Spanish services. She's now able to enjoy her retirement in Spain."

Sarah Rogers, Casework Manager, Age Concern España

HONORARY CONSULS

The invaluable role that an Honorary Consul can play in a crisis was highlighted after the devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Chile in 2010. With no Embassy in Haiti our Honorary Consul reported on the situation and provided consular assistance before a Rapid Deployment Team arrived. In Chile, with the transport system devastated, our Honorary Consul passed on information about the situation near the epicentre and searched for British nationals from the outset, before additional support arrived.

resources. In London, we will work with existing and new partners to tap into the widest base of ideas, expertise and resources. We will develop new solutions and build the relationships needed to deliver high quality and effective services to British nationals overseas. In the network, we encourage Consular Regional Directors and consular staff to find national and local partners who can help deliver other services and to build relationships with appropriate organisations. An important part of this will be making sure we understand our partners, their goals, strengths and weaknesses, where they can do more than us, and their limitations. We will also look at how we work together so we can jointly develop and offer better support to those we help.

Using our communications tools, we will find more effective ways of directing people to information and services beyond what we can normally do. We will also use local information networks like social networking sites to pass on information and signpost services to different types of customer (see the Customer section).

[Trained mobile teams will support fixed consular posts in response to crises, complex cases and seasonal tourism patterns](#)

To match the demand for our services and make the best possible use of our resources, we need to work more flexibly both at regional and worldwide level. Building on approaches already in place, we will develop even greater flexibility and responsiveness through both

centralisation and regionalisation. CRDs worldwide are leading initiatives to rationalise their regional networks, for example in Central and Eastern Europe and Central and North East Asia. And a number of recent crises have reconfirmed the importance of our Rapid Deployment Teams. The mobilisation of a global consular response to volcanic ash in 2010 would not have been possible without our regional resilience networks.

We will provide accessible and responsive services, exploiting improved IT and online delivery options

We will identify what kind of representation is needed in what places to provide an accessible and responsive service. By monitoring travel trends, using our Management Information to track case load, and analysing customer feedback, we can start to predict future demand. This approach will allow us to prioritise and allocate our resources - flexibly and efficiently. We will make best use of the FCO's investment in new mobile IT systems to support our mobile, rapid response teams, and regional resilience networks.

We will find new and creative ways to deliver our services that move away from the traditional counter and waiting room model

Some regions are also developing new and creative ways to deliver our services that move away from the traditional counter and waiting room model. In some cases, operating from an Embassy or Consulate is not the best or most efficient way to give our customers

CRISIS RESPONSE

We are developing an integrated crisis operation, delivering policy and practice in London and overseas. A flexible regionalised structure will allow us to develop this response in line with changing customers and needs.

We will develop a broader crisis community by providing improved communication and partnerships within the FCO and across other Government Departments.

We will make technology, equipment, resources and skills available to deliver a consistent response to crises worldwide. This will include developing a crisis portal as a way of sharing information, and creating regional crisis advisors.

We will create an online planning tool and develop a "one stop shop" for crisis management.

And in London, we will make sure our facilities support a co-ordinated and professional crisis response

CENTRALISATION

In April 2009, we launched our Global Out of Hours service to improve the consistency and quality of our emergency out of hours service to British nationals. Over 180 posts now use the new system, whereby out of hours calls to posts overseas are routed back to a 24/7 Global Response Centre in the FCO and handled by a team of consular trained staff. In emergencies, callers are guaranteed immediate access to professional advice and support. During its first year, the Centre handled over 23,000 consular cases. On average, over 95% of cases were handled by the Centre without having to refer back to post. We're now able to build up a global picture of out of hours work and we have received many customer bouquets.

REGIONALISATION

In Central America, our new working model will involve a mobile regional team of five staff to oversee consular work in 10 countries. The team will provide guidance, support and cover where and when it is needed in the network. This system will allow greater flexibility and consistency. We'll also pilot new self-service options for customers when offices are closed. For example, 'Consular Corners' will have 'drop boxes' where customers can leave questions/application forms for us to answer the following day.

A safe World Cup for travelling British football fans was a major priority for 2010. Planning involved a team of Consular staff from London and across posts in Africa and close liaison with the Football Association, UK police, the Home Office and South African authorities, with a focus on raising awareness amongst fans before they travelled and providing timely and professional consular services to those who needed them on the ground in South Africa.

E-DELIVERY

The e-delivery strategy will make best use of online and mobile technology to deliver our services.

Mobile Delivery

80% of customers say that SMS texting is the preferred form of communication when travelling. Social media and mobile phone technology create opportunities for us to deliver information to reach different types of customers. Using LOCATE, we will send SMS texts to registrants in a crisis. We will deliver an iPhone application so customers can access travel advice and Consulate contact details on the move. There is ongoing work with mobile network operators to develop ways of reaching +44 mobile phones in an emergency.

Improved Web Presence

The travel and living abroad pages on the FCO website are the most frequently visited pages. We will further improve these pages to make sure that visitors can easily find information they want and access the services they need.

Handling Enquiries

We handle over 2 million telephone enquiries each year across our consular network. Through measures such as an improved presence on the web and mobile messaging we hope to reduce this figure. We will also look at ways of improving our telephone services using new voice and data systems such as call handling technology.

what they need.

Improved IT systems will allow us to change the way we provide some of our services. New technology has opened up opportunities to deliver in different ways – making our services more accessible and cheaper to provide. As well as delivering in a way that is most appropriate to customers' needs, using technology provides consular coverage where we may not have an immediate physical presence. So we can tell our customers - "We'll be where you are one way or another."

Although there continues to be a rapid growth in use of mobile phones, coverage around the world varies greatly. In remote areas and for some customers, we cannot rely on technology or media to pass on messages – there will always be some who rely on face to face contact. So we will keep many different channels open so that we can reach a range of customers. In some places, the Consular "counter" may stay the most accessible point of service.



>> Because of new laptops and advanced phone systems, we can now work more flexibly as a network. Many of our posts participate in a “Work Out Wednesday (WOW)” initiative which means that staff can be in the field undertaking frontline assistance work or at home catching up on administration. This system is advertised in advance to customers who know that in emergencies, staff can be contacted to respond to crises quickly and effectively. <<

Dean Churm, Consul, US/Canada Network

Our Finances

We will achieve clarity and control over consular resources

Delivering a world-leading public service as part of the FCO:

- > We will make sure all costs are clear and predictable
 - > We will provide financial information that helps us manage our resources efficiently and make effective decisions
 - > We will have methods in place to manage overseas resources more directly
 - > We will move our resources to countries and services in line with our priorities, cutting back on lower priority work when appropriate
-

The consular operation is and will remain part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, it is funded from fees not general tax. As with other fee-funded public services, the Treasury says that we must balance our spending on our services with the fee income we receive from customers for providing them. We manage our own profit and loss account, called a Memorandum Trading Account (MTA), to demonstrate our financial position at the end of the year, and whether we have successfully balanced our income against spending.

Due to the loss in value of sterling in 2009-2010 and unpredictability of income, we are working at a loss. We have a plan to eliminate this deficit sustainably over the next two years, while minimising the effect on the public and protecting the integration of the overseas passport operation with the Identity and Passports Service.

We will:

- > By April 2011, eliminate the deficit in the passport operation (when we hand it over to IPS) by further network rationalisation
- > Drive efficiencies and savings in the rest of our work by reducing the number of staff in London


and continuing to find new ways of delivering our services overseas, including cutting back on lower priority work where appropriate

At the moment, we only have direct control over budgets set and spent through London (about 25% of our total spending - financial responsibility for the other 75% of funding is divided among FCO non-consular budget holders in London and at Post). The lack of **clarity and control** over our costs restricts our ability to balance our books.

We need predictability on costs and consistency in forecasting income. This will allow us to plan and gain more control over our resources (both income and costs).

We will make sure all costs are clear and predictable

We will explore how to gain control of all direct spending – both from our own budget and the costs in the overseas network that are currently held centrally. We will seek more information about the approximately 50% of our total costs that are allocated to us by the centre – the ‘platform costs’. We will provide input into all decisions that affect the indirect costs charged to us.



The **Clarity and Control** pilot in Iberia aims to achieve greater clarity over consular costs and greater control over consular resources. We aim to have a breakdown of all costs from our 11 Consulates, include accurate charging for our partners, and are looking to have more influence in procurement policy affecting consular activity. We're also putting in place structures to ensure accurate activity recording for non-consular staff carrying out consular work. To know what our operation costs and to have greater influence over how it is resourced, is key to the success of our business.

Consular Fees

We will:

- > Introduce a streamlined Table of Fees that customers can easily understand
- > Reduce the number of fees where possible
- > Review fees at least every year
- > Look at setting fees in local currency

NB The Identity and Passport Service will set passport fees from April 2011

Cost of Consular Services

We will:

- > Carry out a review of each chargeable service we provide to make sure we are providing value for money
- > Review the costs of providing our help by category of work and by post to understand what affects our costs

We will provide financial information that helps us manage our resources efficiently and make effective decisions

We will improve our systems for managing financial information. This will help us be more efficient in our overseas network and identify opportunities for further savings in London.

This will involve reviewing the way we forecast income. Consular Regional Directors will be involved in this by providing accurate Management Information from each region. This will allow us to cross-check that we are taking fees correctly, recording volumes accurately, and not charging for the same thing more than once.

We will have methods in place to manage overseas resources more directly

To deliver our aims as cost-effectively as possible we need a way of controlling our resources worldwide. At the moment, direct responsibility for managing our overseas resources rests not with Consular Regional Directors but with FCO managers at Post. We will develop management systems that give CRDs the oversight, control and responsibility they need for resources in their regions.

We will move our resources to countries and services in line with our priorities, cutting back on lower priority work where appropriate

Our priority is to get rid of our deficit, while continuing to provide our services to a high standard. We plan to be clear about our priorities, and to fund them. We will do this by being equally clear about those activities and services that we will reduce. And we will actively look for new ways to provide services at lower cost.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The Management Information Team lead on management information policy for Consular Directorate. We collect statistical information from a variety of sources so we know how much work Consular staff perform, how long it takes, whether we are achieving our business targets and how much it costs. We also use this information to respond to queries about our services from Parliament, the media, and to brief new staff and other countries' consular services looking to learn from our model.

Appendices



Appendix A

Our Approach to Strategic Planning

The previous Consular Strategy was designed around the 2005/6 NAO and PAC Reports, and geared to deliver improvements in response to their recommendations. For the 2010-13 Strategy, we deliberately adopted an “outside in” approach. For twelve months, we ran an orchestrated campaign of engagement – with staff, customers and partners - in order to define the challenges and priorities for the next three years. We used a range of activities and events, for example Stakeholder Panels, Consular Change Agent Conferences, online Staff Forums, Customer Focus Groups

The Capability Review programme, part of the wider Civil Service reform agenda, aims to lead to a Civil Service which is better at delivering public services. This means improving our capability to deliver on our objectives, as well as be ready for the challenges of tomorrow. In the consular context, understanding our future customers is integral to our ability to deliver a high quality service.

To help us do this, we commissioned two significant pieces of research from the Central Office for Information (COI) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). This research has improved our understanding of our customers, their requirements and the most appropriate ways of providing services. We did this by asking our customers, both British residents and British travellers, about their current

perceptions of consular services, and looked at how our customers’ needs and expectations would change in the future, and how best to provide services. The research methodology involved online forums, in depth interviews, workshops with three of our core customer traveller groups, a quantitative survey amongst UK citizens, and face to face interviews in five countries with significant British resident communities.

Summary of research findings

Britravellers

- > Most travellers had little knowledge about what we do, leading to misconceptions (often based on films). Those most likely to take risks when travelling felt most out of touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- > However, when we gave them more information (using the website and basic facts), there was often surprise and interest in what is available, with emergency response the most motivating factor for contact with us.
- > New ideas for services and communications could shift people’s views of us towards a more relevant, modern, friendly and easy-to-access service.
- > By promoting and delivering services we need to consider people who plan in advance and those who don’t as well as those people familiar with technology, and those without online or mobile access.
- > For specialist needs, such as psychiatric and forced marriage cases, we need to adapt policies and partnerships to each particular country.

British residents overseas

- > British nationals abroad have many different reasons for moving. They also have differing needs for information and help overseas. Where they are based particularly affects those needs.
- > For most British nationals abroad, the only contact they have with us involves renewing passports and other document services. They know little else of what we offer.
- > Once we provide more information, particularly about the Consular premium, British nationals are clear on the areas they want us to focus on: help in emergencies and disasters; quick and efficient passport and document services; and signposting of information and updates.
- > LOCATE is positively received, but needs to be adapted for those who live abroad permanently as well as travellers.

What our customers told us they wanted

When customers know what we do, they want our services to focus on our main emergency services and give them information on other non-essential services.

- > Against the background of tight budgets, customers want us to focus on our main services which cannot be provided through other means - dealing with emergencies and offering efficient passport and documentary services.
- > British nationals would prefer us just to give them information on where to find lifestyle services rather than having us deliver them.
- > To realistically and effectively deliver our main services, we need to have regular contact with travellers and British nationals overseas.

Key IPPR recommendations

- > We should look at updating and extending the role of voluntary community wardens. Consulates and Embassies should form stronger links with civil society organisations and migrant integration services in countries which have significant British populations.
- > The FCO should further develop strategies that it has already pursued in countries like Spain to 'embed' officials from other government departments and from relevant NGOs so that emigrants can find advice at 'one stop shops'.
- > Consulates should step up their active marketing of the LOCATE registration process, building on the success they have already achieved.
- > Consulates should extend the excellent programmes of information to emigrants about the local laws, regulations and customs.
- > Learning from initiatives such as Global Scot and the New Zealand Kea network, the Government should look to build a strong worldwide 'Global British' network, to support Britons abroad, but with the added benefit of promoting the UK.
- > A priority of the Government should be to take simple and practical steps to encourage and support newly arrived emigrants in local communities.
- > Embassies and Consulates should be transformed into accessible places for a much wider range of activities and a wider range of groups.

The main recommendations from the COI research

- 1 We need to agree a strategy that will allow us to meet customers' needs over the long term.
- 2 We need to improve understanding of customers and their needs and wants so we can better forecast and prevent problems and design and deliver our service.
- 3 We need to promote flexible tools and services that clearly explain what we do to travellers and British nationals living overseas.
- 4 We should work with other Government departments, national and local partners and British people living overseas to help anticipate and meet customer needs.
- 5 We should identify and share good practice and encourage new ways of working – especially at local and regional level.

Appendix B

Our Approach to Delivering Change

“Delivering Change Together: The Consular Strategy 2007-2010” gave us the framework for delivering improved services during that period. We made the improvements through the Consular Strategy Programme for 2007-2010 - a programme of business change aimed at improving the quality, consistency, professionalism and efficiency of our services. The Programme was made up of 10 projects.

Consular Strategy 2007-2010 A Success Story

| | |
|---|--|
| > Management Information | > We now have a Balanced Scorecard and Consular Activity Recording. The Balanced Scorecard gives us up to date statistical information on how we are doing against our objectives. Consular Activity Recording provides an overall picture of the time we spend on Consular work. |
| > Consular Training | > We're trained in <u>how</u> to deliver consular services as well as what we can and cannot do. Core training is modular and open to all staff who provide consular services. Testing achieves high standards and consistency. Targeted training is delivered through the overseas workshops programme. Staff trained in the last 4 years rose to 92% by the end of 2009. |
| > Consular Regional Directors | > Consular Regional Directors around the globe ensuring consistency of service, high quality delivery and professionalism and increasing regional resilience. |
| > Global Out of Hours | > We give consistent, high quality support 24/7 to British Nationals all over the world. > Over 95% of calls are dealt with by the Global Response Centre, with no need for escalation to Posts. GRC has almost global coverage. |
| > Credit Cards | > British Nationals can now pay by credit card in over 70 locations, reducing cash handling costs and security risks, and workload. |
| > Consular Service Delivery Improvements | > We have new ways of delivering services making them more accessible to customers e.g. using SMS, Twitter and Facebook to send out messages and improving Post web pages. > 50 locations now have standalone computers for public use. |
| > Strategic Network Design | > We have an accurate picture of the resources we have in the network, what they are doing and how much they cost, to help to ensure we have the right people in the right places, delivering the right services. |
| > Consistency and Best Practice | > We have a culture of fair delivery of fair standards. We make decisions based on clear criteria and have a robust platform from which to defend decisions. And we can spend more time on core areas of work and relationship building. |
| > Information Systems Strategy | > Consular Information Systems Unit is a single point of contact for all consular IT, dealing with suppliers more consistently and evaluating customer needs across our services. We aim to improve current systems and deliver new ones, exploiting new technology to improve online delivery, using mobile services and social media. |
| > LOCATE | > We have one registration system for the whole network giving us up-to-the-minute information about registrants and affected persons in a crisis. > 57000 people had registered by September 2009. |

Using Programme and Project Management

We delivered the improvements through a strong commitment to Programme and Project Management techniques. We commissioned an Office of Government Commerce Gateway Review™ in 2007, a Gateway Health Check in 2008 and a Gateway Review in 2010 as an external way of assessing our approach to delivering the changes we set out in the 2007 – 2010 Consular Strategy. The Gateway team in 2010 awarded the Programme a rare green rating. Their review summary stated:

>> The FCO Consular team and in particular the consular strategy programme team have done an outstanding job in bringing this programme to a successful conclusion. The result is not only realisation of almost all of the benefits on time and to budget, but also a host of wider organisational and efficiency related benefits, particularly in the field. We have seen considerable evidence of the programme achieving transformational outcomes far beyond the original expectations, particularly in respect of staff engagement, Management Information and the Global Out of Hours project.<<

Lessons Learned

As the 2010 Gateway Review identified, we used continuous evaluation to learn lessons and fine tune how we delivered the Programme. We learned from our mistakes. Being flexible and adaptable has allowed us to take managed risks and stay on track. In the process of closing the 2007-2010 Programme, we conducted a lessons-learned exercise, consulting project managers and Consular Change Agents:

Process

- > Get it right from the start – be clear about aims, benefits, resources, the impact on business, and risk management
- > Having the right structure governing the projects appropriately is crucial to success
- > Use OGC Gateway™ processes to bring about change and improvements

People

- > Draw on the wealth of knowledge and experience of staff and the wider FCO
- > Listen to feedback and act on it in a visible and positive way
- > Make roles and decision making responsibilities clear
- > Recognise and bring in expertise where needed for specialist tasks

Partners

- > Involvement from those with an interest from the beginning is critical to success
- > Hold regular discussions with these people, share best practice and keep change at the heart of the wider organisational agenda
- > Regularly review the involvement of those with an interest
- > Continuous outreach to customers is essential

Communications

- > Listen – messages need to be heard and understood
- > Avoid jargon – keep language simple and user-friendly
- > Use a variety of communications tools and tailor these to the needs of the audience
- > Be robust and confident about what we do – we have a good story to tell

Consular Strategy Programme 2010-2013

The Consular Strategy Programme 2010-2013 will drive forward delivery of the Strategy, helping to bring about change in how we deliver our services. It will draw on the recommendations of the OGC review and the lessons learned. The projects which make up the Programme are as follows:

Consular Strategy 2010-2013 Projects

| | |
|--|--|
| > Passport Rationalisation | > Creating 7 Regional Passport Processing Centres (RPPCs) in Dusseldorf, Hong Kong, Madrid, Paris, Pretoria, Washington, Wellington, to issue all overseas passports |
| > Passport Integration & Repatriation | > Driving forward the transfer of the overseas passports operation to the Identity & Passports Service (IPS) by April 2011 |
| > Customer Knowledge Management | > Developing a global and integrated customer knowledge management system to capture feedback from a representative cross-section of our customers; and to use that information to measure and improve our performance |
| > Clarity and Control | > Securing greater clarity over our spending and income; and gaining more control over consular resources |
| > E-Delivery | > Making best use of online and mobile technology to deliver better services more cost effectively |
| > Network | > Putting in place a more flexible and resilient network |
| > People | > Delivering targeted training packages, and creating better reward and recognition schemes |
| > Partnerships | > Increasing the value of partnerships through more engagement and joined up service delivery |
| > Management Information | > Supporting efficient management of resources; effective decision-making; and performance measurement |

Consular staff can find further information on all these projects on FCOnet.

Appendix C

Consular Annual Statistics 2009-10

Consular Enquiries

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Persons at Counter | 538,108 |
| Written Enquiries | 373,403 |
| Telephone Enquiries (office hours) | 984,687 |
| Telephone Enquiries (non-office hours) | 50,964 |
| Total | 1,947,162 |

New Assistance Cases

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Arrest / Detention | 6,439 |
| Child Access/Abduction/Custody | 532 |
| Death | 5,930 |
| Forced Marriage | 205 |
| Hospitalisation | 3,689 |
| Rape | 131 |
| Sexual Assault | 141 |
| Other Assistance | 2,772 |
| Total | 19,839 |

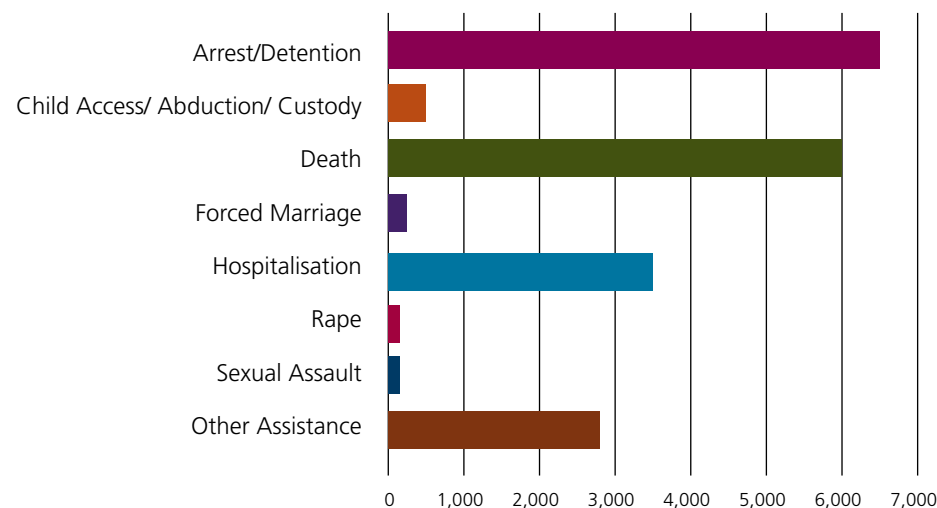
Other Statistics

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Total full passports | 376,157 |
| Emergency Passports | 10,173 |
| Temporary passports | 1,533 |
| ETDs | 1,278 |
| Number of births | 8,741 |
| Number of deaths | 524 |

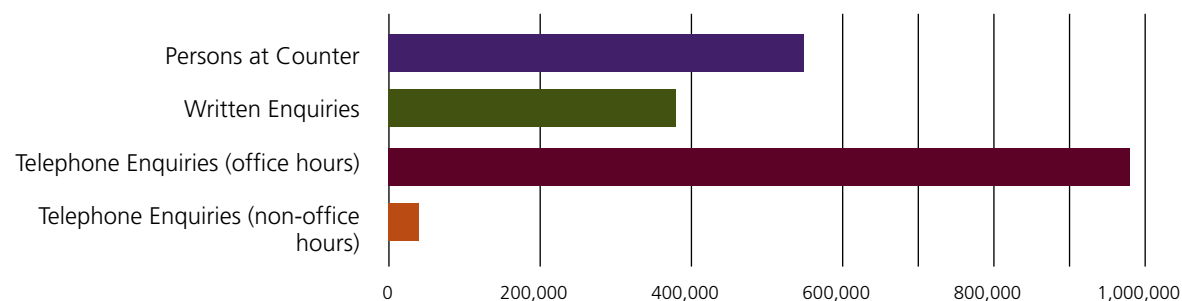
Figures are from the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Other Assistance is made up of the following cases: abduction, assault, missing persons, psychiatric/mental health, repatriation, welfare and whereabouts.

Number of Assistance Cases 2009-10



Number of Consular Enquiries 2009-10



Glossary of Terms

AR

Activity Recording

BRIDGE

Computer system used for passport work

COMPASS

Computer system used for case handling

Consular Balanced Scorecard

Management tool to evaluate the performance of the network

Consular Change Agents

Group of staff who promote and provide feedback on change initiatives

Consular Guide

Public document that sets out what services can and cannot provide

Consular Management Board

Monthly meeting of senior managers in London

Consular Premium

The part of the cost of a passport which is charged by the FCO to provide consular assistance to British nationals overseas

Consular Regional Directors (CRDs)

Senior staff who run consular regional networks to make sure we have consistency of service, high quality delivery and professionalism

Customer Knowledge Management

Project under the new Strategy Programme seeking to improve the way we gather, process and act on customer feedback

Customer Service Excellence Hallmark

Cabinet Office standard showing the quality of our services

DBN

Distressed British National

DH

Department of Health

DWP

Department for Work and Pensions

E-delivery

Electronic delivery of consular services

ETD

Emergency Travel Document

Global Response Centre (GRC)

Team of London based consular staff who provide a 24/7 service to British nationals all over the world

Head of Mission

Head of a UK diplomatic mission

Head of Post

Head of a UK diplomatic mission

HMT

Her Majesty's Treasury

Honorary Consuls

Specially appointed individuals who can deliver some consular services where no diplomatic mission exists

Identity and Passport Service (IPS)

Home Office department responsible for issuing passports in the UK (and overseas from April 2011)

Locally engaged (LE)

Staff employed by individual UK diplomatic missions

LOCATE

A database for members of the public to register their travel or residence overseas to enable quick communication and assistance in a crisis.

Management Information (MI)

Collection and analysis of information to measure the network's performance

Memorandum Trading Account (MTA)

Joint trading account for the FCO and IPS for the new passport business

National Audit Office (NAO)

UK Government department

NGO

Non Governmental Organisation

Notarial services

Registration and validation of documents overseas (e.g. for births, marriages and deaths)

Office of Government Commerce (OGC)

Independent office of HMT tasked with helping government deliver best value from spending

OGC Gateway

Independent review carried out by the Office of Government Commerce of a change programme

OU

Open University

Partners

External organisations which the FCO works with

Passport Processing Centres (PPCs)

Regional centres where passport applications are processed

Programme and Project Management

Method through which change programmes are delivered

Rapid Deployment Teams

Staff deployed overseas to assist in a crisis

Regional Resilience

Building of regional networks to help respond in crises

Repatriation

Returning British nationals to the UK

UK-based staff

Diplomatic staff working in missions overseas

Wardens

Volunteers in a British community overseas who help distribute messages from Embassy

Webex

Non confidential video conferencing system

Whole Mission

All members of a UK diplomatic mission