



Home Office

The Home Office response to the Independent Chief Inspector's report:

An inspection of the Home Office's Reporting and Offender Management processes

December 2016 – March 2017

The Home Office thanks the Independent Chief Inspector (ICI) for his report.

Immigration Enforcement is grateful to the ICI for highlighting potential areas for improvement, including recommendations to improve handoffs between Reporting and Offender Management staff and casework teams and improving analysis of cases that are removable. Work is underway to take forward recommendations in this report.

The Home Office accepts all six of the ICI's recommendations.

The Home Office response to the recommendations:

1. Define the responsibilities of Reporting and Offender Management (ROM) staff and relevant case working staff for progressing the cases of individuals subject to reporting restrictions to a conclusion, with comprehensive guidance, including service level agreements between ROMs and caseworking units to ensure that 'signposted' cases and commissions are actioned within agreed timescales.

Accepted

1.1 A case triage tool has been developed to assess the removability and level of harm posed by offenders, automate the identification and prioritisation of cases, and to provide information on the length of time a barrier to removal has been in place. This tool will ensure the process of prioritising cases is consistent between Reporting Centres and Casework units. The tool was initially rolled-out to reporting centres in London and to the Returns Preparation directorate. Work is taking place to use this tool to ensure outstanding issues are escalated so that they can be resolved. On the back of this experience, we will update guidance on the respective roles of staff. On the 3 July 2017, the triage tool was rolled out nationally to all Reporting Centres.

1.2. As we deploy the tool more widely and learn from it, it may be that we wish to supplement the standardisation it brings with service level agreements between reporting centres and casework units. We will decide, on the basis of further experience, whether that additional step is necessary because there is a risk that the establishment of SLAs reinforces a continuing divide which we are trying to bridge.

2. Determine the most effective way(s) to identify changes in the circumstances of individuals subject to reporting restrictions and develop processes and guidance to ensure this is done early and consistently, and that any changes are accurately recorded.

Accepted

2.1. We are introducing a first-time reporting event interview which will form part of our new operating model, which will be rolled-out across 2018/19. During this interview, officers will be required to ask questions seeking information to assist in assessing a person's safeguarding or medical requirements, and their potential vulnerability. This will allow us to take a case-by-case approach as to how often we need to conduct change of circumstance interviews with each individual, prioritising them by their needs and progressing cases toward removal. Automation via the case triage tool will allow us to complete early and regular change in circumstances interviews whilst minimising the chance of absconding through identification and prioritisation of those reporting. These will fluctuate depending on an individual's reporting frequency and removability. This has now been rolled-out to all ROM teams and Returns Preparation directorate. We have also recently worked with policy colleagues to update our reporting event guidance for staff so that it will reflect the introduction of our new operating model and

automated reporting. This is due to be finalised in February 2018 to coincide with the roll out of automated reporting.

3. Ensure that Reporting and Offender Management (ROM) staff receive the necessary safeguarding training and support to identify where individuals subject to reporting restrictions are at risk.

Accepted

3.1. All staff have completed mandatory safeguarding training. However, EO graded-staff have recently attended a four-day residential course where vulnerability, safeguarding and adults at risk were covered in detail, with a deeper focus on adults at risk for the purposes of detention. This face-to-face training is to be rolled out to all staff by April 2018.

3.2. This training teaches staff to identify indicators that would suggest a potential safeguarding issue; these may manifest themselves in the appearance or behaviour of an offender during a reporting event. If these safeguarding indicators are observed, appropriate action must be taken. This may involve the offender being referred to another agency (for example social services), or information being recorded on Home Office systems where it can be taken into account in future interactions with the individual.

3.3. Offenders are also interviewed prior to any decision to detain, which involves a full assessment of any vulnerability issues, including any medical or mental health issues.

4. Improve data about the reporting population, and through regular analysis identify and agree (between Reporting and Offender Management (ROM) and case working units) which individuals are removable, which should be prioritised for a reporting event, the precise purpose of that event, and how to reduce the detentions to removals 'attrition rate'.

Accepted

4.1. The function envisaged is precisely the function of the new case triage tool. This case triage tool has been developed to assess the removability and level of harm posed by offenders, and automate the identification and prioritisation of cases. This has now been rolled-out to ROMs nationally and to the Returns Preparation directorate.

4.2 Analysis of the reasons for attrition is a constant process. Activities aimed at reducing attrition are being taken forward by a cross-IE working group. We envisage this function will need to continue on a permanent basis.

5. Based on improved data collection and analysis of the reporting population, develop a strategy to target promotion of voluntary return options more effectively, including to individuals reporting at police stations by publicising and promoting voluntary return schemes at these locations.

Accepted

5.1. Using marketing techniques and analysis Immigration Enforcement's Voluntary Return Service (VRS) is building an improved understanding of migrants' behaviours. This analysis will be used by ROMs to focus voluntary departure activity on those cases where it is most likely to be effective.

6. Conduct a fundamental review of the failure to report and absconder processes and confirm that:

- **aims and objectives are clearly defined, along with relevant success criteria**
- **the priorities of relevant Home Office teams and other agencies (e.g. the police) are aligned**
- **assurance measures are in place to monitor the processes and to measure effectiveness.**

Accepted

6.1. We recognise the inspectors' observations of inconsistencies in our operation and are taking action to address this issue. We are conducting a fundamental review of how we establish and maintain contact with those who have not complied with restrictions placed on their stay in the UK as part of the Exit Checks initiative, due to be completed by April 2018. This electronic recording of cross border movements will provide us with information on migrant behaviour and help us to determine whether individuals who appear to have overstayed are in contact with the Home Office, for example via data matching across HO databases. Our future operating model will be informed by the outcome of this review, and will include the process to be followed when an individual absconds or fails to report.