



Home Office

HOME OFFICE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

1. The overall purpose of the Department's Continuous Improvement Strategy is to ensure the Home Office delivers better for less, securing maximum value for money for the public, and professionalising the Civil Service approach to operational delivery. With the very sharp cuts in funding that public services face driving this forward with pace and impact is now particularly important.
2. Continuous Improvement (CI) is the outcome-focused reform of processes, performance measures, and management. It is characterised by:
 - Working out what whole systems look like, understanding what drives performance and cost and what the expectation of the customer is and challenging whether work can be done differently;
 - Being rigorous in using data and challenging how things have always been done;
 - Focus on practical delivery and staff having confidence that they are capable of achieving significant change through their own efforts;
3. The vision for Continuous Improvement in the Home Office is **a significant improvement in productivity across the breadth of our operations, yielding both performance and cash, through embedding CI in the way we plan and drive delivery.** We will also see organisational benefits that include: a sense of delivery systems being under control, understood and managed from end-to-end, increasing employee engagement and a culture of improvement, working practice as foundations for major IT systems, and numbers to underpin strategic resource allocation, i.e. to inform consolidating functions or for outsourcing.
4. The Home Office and the Police Service have a proven track record of success in delivering Continuous Improvement: since 2009 the Department has made savings of £150m through transformational and CI-related activity. We have established how to do this work, and the sorts of benefits it brings; the challenge now is to drive it through our business.
5. This refreshed strategy will build on progress and, aligned to Civil Service Reform, deliver against four key strands:
 - (i) **Robust implementation plans** for transforming the most material parts of our business, reflected in Business Plans throughout the organisation;
 - (ii) **Making support and expertise available** directly in the business through small, focused CI teams bringing skills rapidly to areas of risk or materiality;
 - (iii) **Structured capability programme**, to give members of the SCS and their teams the thinking, analysis, planning and execution skills they need to bring about and sustain change themselves; and
 - (iv) **Organisational and system incentives and accountabilities**, so that CI are aligned with what people perceive the organisation wants or values.

(i) Robust implementation plans

6. Each of the main business areas of the Home Office will set out their CI plans as part of their Business Plan. These plans will show how each area will drive change through their business focussing on materiality, sustainability and pace. The Home Office VfM Assurance programme that follows NAO Structured Cost Reduction principles will track and measure the benefits of improvement. The Supervisory Board and Executive Management Board will oversee the impact of CI work through its scrutiny of Departmental performance. The re-fresh of the Home Office Capability Review will be used to check for the improvement that we are expecting to see (e.g. staff engagement).

(ii) Harnessing our expertise

7. We have developed CI capability within the Department and its agencies. In Home Office HQ, the UK Border Agency and Border Force, CI capability is particularly rooted in those units that drive business performance. This is supplemented by small specialist CI teams who initiate, embed and sustain capability through knowledge and skills transfer. Beyond the Department we share our expertise across Whitehall.

(iii) Structured capability programme

8. The best and most efficient outcomes are achieved through effective implementation of CI by groups of staff and their leaders. The Senior Civil Service will be provided with a programme of coaching, mentoring and masterclasses to give them insight into the leadership challenge of CI and to help them role model the behaviours necessary for change. Key operational managers are part of a growing cohort (now 100) that are trained and then mentored in the core skills of problem solving, process improvement and change management. This group of staff form the network of local catalysts for reform. In addition to this focused development, work is targeted at building behaviours and skills for the future. A programme of six month sandwich training for years 3 & 4 Fast-streamers has been running for a year, to give future leaders the analytical, change management and staff management experience they will need.

(iv) Organisational and system incentives and accountabilities

9. We will continue to put in place or shape the incentives for a CI culture in the Department. Key to this will be achieving a level of maturity where leaders and staff perceive CI instinctively as part of their job.
10. The Department's implementation plans will include further specific detail to the following themes:
 - Building successful CI behaviours into the Core Competency Framework and objectives of all staff, including the Senior Civil Service;
 - Reflecting planning assumptions in performance measures at system, team and individual level;
 - Using the NAO Process Management framework to benchmark and hold to account;
 - Aligning CI with the Home Office We Want to Be programme of reform and Departmental values, for instance equality of opportunity; and
 - Ensuring that reward and recognition schemes, such as Home Office Team of the Month, reflect successful CI work and provide an avenue for putting forward good ideas that enable staff to lead change.

NEXT STEPS

11. The Department has already made strong progress in implementing the four key strands of the strategy. Our focus now is embedding these strands into the 2013/14 business plans across the breadth of the department and in preparation for the next Spending Review.



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