



Home Office

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

An Inspection of the Intelligence Functions of Border Force and Immigration Enforcement

(November 2015-May 2016)

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

We are grateful to the Independent Chief Inspector for recognising our progress in implementing key components of the National Intelligence Model and becoming an intelligence led organisation. We are particularly grateful for the Chief Inspector identifying areas where improvements can be made around use of Information Technology (IT), and improved guidance for both intelligence and other operational staff.

As the Independent Chief Inspector recognises, we have continued our focus on improving our IT, professionalising intelligence through the Intelligence Professionalisation Programme (IPP) and strengthening and improving guidance and processes.

The report from the Independent Chief Inspector identifies a number of areas where we can make further improvements.

The Home Office accepts six and partially accepts one of the seven recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that the Intelligence Management System (IMS) is being used to its full potential, specifically that Border Force (BF) uses IMS to record all allegations it receives not just those received via the online reporting form, and desists from using local spreadsheets.

Partially accepted

We will continue to develop IMS and this will be closely linked with the development of the Single Intelligence Platform (SIP). The vision of the digital transformation programme is that the two systems will between them deliver an integrated intelligence IT capability.

Border Force accepts the need to improve the way it records intelligence and is currently working with IT suppliers to explore suitable technical solutions. As part of this work we will examine whether IMS and the SIP can meet Border Force's requirements (see response to recommendation 6). These options will be evaluated alongside other possible solutions to identify an option that offers the best value for money and delivers the best outcome for the business as a whole.

Recommendation 2: Pending the development and implementation of full Single Intelligence Platform (SIP) functionality, review Immigration Enforcement and Border Force user access to IT systems that support key intelligence functions, in particular the receipt, evaluation and checking of information for links to what is already known, and where necessary reallocate or extend licences and system availability.

Accepted

SIP has now been implemented. It is an agile project and therefore will be subject to ongoing development to meet our changing needs. Along with other systems such as the Intelligence Document Search facility provided through the Home Office Data Analytics Capability (HODAC), users are able to check for links to existing information at the receipt and evaluation stage.

All users currently have appropriate access to key systems and we do not have any licence restrictions on key intelligence systems such as IMS, SIP, HODAC or CIDRE. Other licences are kept under review and reallocated as appropriate.

Border Force has already reviewed current access to the HMRC owned CENTAUR system and is satisfied that it meets business needs. Discussions are ongoing with HMRC about future plans.

In addition, the Border Force Director of Intelligence has commissioned a Model Office project to assess and evaluate access to IT systems, with the aim of addressing any additional technology needs that the business has.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the Professional Practice Manual (PPM) when produced is readily accessible and searchable via the Home Office intranet, and that future amendments to it identify what has changed (and why) and are clearly marked with the operative date. In the meantime, cleanse the Home Office intranet of intelligence-related material that is no longer valid, and collect extant operational instructions in one place for ease of reference.

Accepted

We accept the need to ensure that the new guidance (IE PPM for Immigration Enforcement and the Border Force Intelligence Manual (BF IM)) is readily accessible and searchable via the Home Office intranet and we have already taken steps to ensure this, subject to the constraints of the system.

We will ensure that all guidance is clearly marked with an operative date and that any guidance is removed once out of date. We will carry out a review to ensure we have cleansed the Home Office Intranet of any material that is no longer valid and introduce a regular review to ensure any old guidance is weeded out or updated.

It is accepted that changes need to be clearly communicated and this includes details about what has changed and potentially why changes have been made. However including this detail in changed guidance itself may be confusing, so it will be included as part of the communication that accompanies changed guidance. We will also remind staff that guidance is a live document and should be treated accordingly. We will consider how best the IE PPM and BF IM are integrated with extant operational instructions for ease of reference.

Recommendation 4: Conduct a stock-take in relation to the implementation by IE and BF of their 'visions' for intelligence set out in response to the 2014 Deloitte review, and identify and prioritise those elements that require further work.

Accepted

For Immigration Enforcement, the Deloitte review was commissioned shortly after the split of the UK Borders Agency (UKBA) at a time when Immigration Enforcement was considering its strategic intent and operating model. Many of the recommendations have therefore already been implemented or have been included as part of the Strategy or Transformation Programme. These include a new, clearer tasking process, more collaborative tasking and improved management information. We continue to work towards a culture, whereby all staff recognise the value of intelligence and their role in improving the quality and volume of it.

Similarly, for Border Force, many of the elements identified as part of the review are being taken forward under the Border Force Intelligence Transformation Programme which has, for example, rationalised all intelligence functions under one Directorate, improved the quality of targets, reduced duplication to make processes more streamlined, and introduced critical systems to assist in delivering for the business.

Border Force and Immigration Enforcement will carry out a review to ensure that where necessary work is being taken forward under the Transformation programmes.

Recommendation 5: Set and enforce (through clear guidance and quality assurance) appropriate standards for the receipt, initial evaluation and distribution, including for record

keeping, giving consideration to whether the Intelligence Handling Model (IHM) used by IE could be adapted for BF use.

Accepted

As part of the reorganisation of Immigration Intelligence (II), Immigration Enforcement introduced dedicated *Receipt, Evaluation and Development (RED)* teams and reviewed the work of the Immigration Intelligence Centre to enable II to work on a 24/7 basis. One of the key drivers behind this reorganisation was to improve consistency in managing intelligence at the front end of the process. The teams were only established in late 2015 and, following an initial period of consolidation, are now working on agreeing a standardised approach. Once this has been agreed it will be turned into standards and guidance for receipt and evaluation of intelligence.

Border Force is developing the Border Force Intelligence Manual (BF IM) which will set out the correct process for receiving, evaluating and distributing intelligence. Border Force is also reviewing first line assurance requirements set out in its assurance schemes of control to ensure they are effective. Border Force has already considered whether it should adopt the IHM and concluded that the model, which is person centric, added processes that were not conducive to handling time critical intelligence. The IHM is, however, informing continuous improvement activity on internal processes.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that all 'front-line' staff in IE, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and BF is fully aware of their obligations with regard to referring and reporting information, intelligence and feedback to intelligence colleagues, and that the processes and mechanism for doing this are clearly set out.

Accepted

Border Force and Immigration Enforcement are working with front-line staff to raise awareness and improve the flow of intelligence throughout the Borders and Immigration System. Internal communications are used in particular to highlight the role intelligence plays in successful major operations, both raising awareness of the referral process and the role of intelligence in general.

The IMS system is designed to facilitate the flow of information from the front line into intelligence. Immigration Enforcement are working with various business areas, producing guidance and training to help front line staff refer information. Management information from IMS will help us identify those teams or areas of the business who are not using IMS to refer intelligence. This will enable us to be more targeted with interventions in order to drive up referrals. As part of this work we will also analyse the quality of referrals received with a view to improving the overall quality of intelligence produced.

IMS was initially developed for use by Immigration Intelligence. Border Force is currently unable to use IMS in the same way for managing wider customs related intelligence. Border Force accepts that improvements need to be made to the way that intelligence and referrals are recorded and a technical solution is currently being explored which includes the reconfiguration of the IMS system for full Border Force use (see response to recommendation 1). In the meantime Border Force has started to rollout a series of workshops across its locations to raise awareness of existing referral processes within the Border Force front line operating model.

Recommendation 7: Review the responsibilities and workloads of Field Intelligence Officers (FIO) with a view to reducing their time spent on office-based administrative duties and enabling them to get 'into the field' to collect feedback and new intelligence from front-line staff.

Accepted

The main objective of the FIO role is to be out working with partners and gathering intelligence. We fully accept their workloads should allow them to carry out this aspect of their roles as effectively as possible.

With the advent of the 24/7 coverage by the Immigration Intelligence Centre to support the Receipt Evaluation and Development teams, Immigration Enforcement is already freeing up FIOs from that function. Whilst we accept there is a need for FIOs to be involved with collecting new intelligence from front line staff, particularly following up and developing referrals made by front-line staff, it is the responsibility of staff to refer intelligence themselves using the referral process.

Border Force, through continuous improvement initiatives, has reduced much of the unnecessary and duplicated administrative work from the FIO role. As a result, they are spending increasing time in the field forming relationships and gathering intelligence from key partners and we will continue to work to increase the time spent in the field to improve the overall intelligence picture.