



UK Border

**Independent Chief
Inspector of Borders
and Immigration**

and Independent Monitor
for Entry Clearance Refusals
without the Right of Appeal
Annual Report for 2011-12

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Annual Report 2011 – 2012

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and Independent Monitor for Entry Clearance Refusals without the Right of Appeal, Annual Report for the period November 2011 – October 2012

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Our Purpose

We provide independent scrutiny of the UK Border Agency and Border Force to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Our Vision

To drive improvement within the UK Border Agency and Border Force, to ensure they deliver fair, consistent and respectful services.

Foreword from John Vine CBE QPM

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration



It gives me great pleasure to present my fourth annual report as the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration – a new title reflecting the significant changes that have taken place this year, in part as a result of the work of the Inspectorate. I am also reporting

in my capacity as the Independent Monitor for Entry Clearance Refusals without the Right of Appeal.

My role is to provide assurance and confidence to Ministers, Parliament and the public about the work of both the UK Border Agency and the recently formed Border Force. I have the remit to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the UK Border Agency and Border Force, including: how consistent they are in their decision-making; how they exercise enforcement powers; the steps they take to safeguard individuals; and how they implement policies and manage risk.

This year I have carried out inspections using revised criteria designed to enable accurate, evidence-based assessment of the Agency and Border Force and to maintain consistency in the style and content of my reports.

I have also continued to use short-notice inspections, because I believe that this approach is necessary in certain circumstances to increase public confidence that a true picture is being revealed, as well as to reduce the bureaucratic burden of inspection.

Consistency at the Border

The last year has been exceptionally busy, with the publication of a number of in-depth reports across a broad spectrum of UK Border Agency and Border Force activity. Inspections of ports and border security have been a key focus for this year's work.

In November 2011 I received my first commission by a Home Secretary under Section 50 of the Border Act 2007, following the start of my Inspection of

Heathrow Terminal 3. I was asked to investigate and report on the level of checks operating at ports of entry to the UK. This was a significant undertaking that required the establishment of an investigation team and the re-scheduling of work in my published inspection plan for the year. I inspected 17 airports and seaports covering 22 terminals across the UK, as well as examining correspondence between the Agency and Ministers, the roll out of the 'risk-based' pilot and also when – and under what circumstances – border checks had been suspended.

I found an inconsistent approach being taken by immigration officers at passport control, with staff interpreting their duties in different ways in relation to the risk-based pilots and Secure ID.

Risks should not be taken with border security but there may be circumstances in which checks might have to be suspended

A tremendous amount of effort goes into capturing biometrics overseas in order to ensure that the person presenting themselves to immigration staff is the same person who applied for entry clearance. I was surprised to find that there was no operating policy or associated guidance for staff at ports governing Secure ID. This led to different assumptions being made about the circumstances under which this check could be suspended.

I also found that frequent suspensions of Warning Index checks (WI), primarily at the juxtaposed controls, were higher than either the Agency or Ministers anticipated when the policy was introduced.

These issues were compounded by poor communication between the Agency and Ministers, and between senior managers and operational staff. The absence of shared understanding about when border security checks should and could be suspended meant that there was little consistent application of the 'risk-based' approach that had been approved by Ministers.

In response to my recommendation that a new framework of border security checks must be established and adequately resourced in order to ensure that a consistent and stable regime of border checks becomes the norm, Border Force issued an Operating Mandate in July 2012. Risks should not be taken with border security but there may be circumstances in which checks might have to be suspended. These circumstances need to be specifically set out, with absolute clarity being provided about the level of authorisation that is required for any suspension of border security checks to take place.

Better Line Management

I was concerned to find instances of poor management oversight at both Heathrow and Gatwick. At both airports I would like to see more robust supervision of border force staff by line managers: in particular, some oversight of newly trained staff and their interaction with passengers, as well as ensuring that interviews are conducted properly and case files submitted in a timely fashion. While there is growing awareness of the need to properly record complaints, more work needs to be done by line managers to ensure greater compliance in this area.

Front line supervisors were pre-occupied by the need to manage queuing times and were not spending enough time ensuring that the basics of good management were being undertaken.

I examined queuing in all three of my reports on ports and recommended in my Heathrow report that the Agency work with BAA to agree a single measurement tool for queue management, to accurately reflect queuing times. Queuing times should be reduced to an acceptable level while at the same time ensuring that thorough and appropriate checks are made of those wishing to enter the country. Deploying more staff at the right times of day is necessary in order to ensure that a consistent, efficient and thorough border checking regime is maintained.

In my recent short-notice report on Heathrow, I carried out a pre-Olympic check and was able to report more consistency in border checks as well as some progress against my recommendations. I shall expect to report a much improved regime in place in the future. I shall also expect to see evidence of co-operation between Border Force and the UK Border Agency, where it is necessary to deliver an efficient

and effective service to the public.

Treating Individuals Fairly and Appropriately within the Law

I have an important responsibility to inspect the way in which individuals are treated by the UK Border Agency and Border Force, recognising that they can be some of the more vulnerable members of society.

I found that decisions to refuse entry to the UK were generally soundly based. However, I was concerned that Border Agency staff were conducting too many searches in a disproportionate way and that some were being conducted without proper authorisation. I was surprised to find that staff at Gatwick, for example, demonstrated a poor understanding of the law and the extent of their powers under it. I found similar concerns at Heathrow. An examination of search of person

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records showed that in two thirds of cases examined, the search was neither justified nor proportionate.

Such poor practice has clear implications for Border Force and must be addressed urgently. Making full use of powers to enforce the law was a theme of my report to Parliament last year; however, it is imperative that where powers of search and detention – similar to those of the police – are exercised, that staff know, and work within, the law and any operational guidance issued to them. Border Force must ensure that guidance is up to date and that their staff have been properly trained.

Furthermore, the Agency had no way of systematically recording and analysing data on ethnicity in order to know whether passengers from one ethnic group were being targeted over another. I was unable to conclude, therefore, that the Agency was fulfilling its obligations under the Equalities Act. Border Force must put in place mechanisms to ensure that these obligations are satisfied and that evidence of discriminatory practice is thoroughly investigated. I shall be looking again at secondary detection practice and procedure as part of my 2013/14 Inspection programme.

Proper Process

It is a fundamental principle of good administration that an organisation should be able to show why it does something and how it does it.

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One of the most important functions of the UK Border Agency is to make decisions on asylum applications made in the UK. This year I examined the way that the Detained Fast Track (DFT) process was operating. DFT has been a significant feature of the way the UK Border Agency manages applications for asylum for some years. It was designed as a case management system for applications which have been identified as ones where a decision to grant or refuse asylum can be made quickly. I found that the system was not working as quickly as intended and had insufficient safeguards built into it to prevent some victims of torture and other vulnerable applicants being assigned to it. I also found that applications were taking 13 days on average to be decided, as opposed to the Agency's own target of three days.

I was surprised that there had been no significant evaluation of how DFT was working since its inception. I was pleased to see that the Agency accepted my recommendation to increase public assurance about DFT by regularly publishing information on how asylum-seekers are allocated to the process, as well as information on decisions and removals. In my view this is a good example where transparency of process would help the Agency to allay some of the concerns that asylum and refugee organisations have about the process. I believe that the Agency should be able to produce the evidence to support its use of the approach and, if necessary, show this publicly.

My inspection of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Immigration Team (LIT) found that it was generally effective in managing asylum casework and identifying and removing immigration offenders from the UK. The LIT was exceeding its target for removals, in particular for those most likely to cause harm – this was a good performance. Asylum decisions were also generally made within the 30

day target and performance in this respect was well above the national average.

It was disappointing to find, however, that there was no effective process to locate and remove absconders from the UK. I found that there were 150,000 plus cases sitting within a 'migration refusal pool'. I could not find any clear strategy for dealing with these cases, either in determining the proportion of this growing number of people who were still in the UK illegally and who should be removed, or in setting out clear performance targets to manage and reduce these cases in an organised manner.

Improvements in the Quality of Decision-Making

This year I have seen a measure of improvement in the quality of decision-making carried out by Agency staff posted overseas who grant or refuse entry clearance to the UK. At the beginning of the year I conducted a global review of entry clearance decision-making, involving 1,500 entry clearance refusal decisions where there was no right of appeal. The overall quality of decision-making left considerable room for improvement, but in subsequent visa post inspections this year I have seen progress being made to improve both the consistency and quality of decision-making generally.

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In July 2012 I published my report on the re-inspection of the visa section in Abu Dhabi and Islamabad. This was my first formal re-inspection of an area of business, following concerns I expressed about the treatment of applicants in 2010.

Both in this re-inspection and in my report on New York, I was pleased to report considerable improvement following re-inspection, particularly in the quality and consistency of decision-making. In addition, customer service and administrative review targets were largely being met.

During my inspection of the Madrid visa section, I found good decision-making quality, clear and complete refusal notices and proper use of Immigration Rules. I was pleased to note that the UK Border Agency had made improvements as a direct result of previous recommendations I had

made. I found very good retention of documents in case files and detailed notes on the IT case working systems, which ensured a clear audit trail in respect of why decisions had been made.

There is still an issue that concerns me, however, and that is in relation to refusals where applicants have failed to provide information which they could not have been aware of the need to provide at the time of application. I raised this issue originally in my global file sample and it was also a feature emerging from the analysis of files in my comparative report on four African visa posts.

In cases where an entry clearance officer requires additional evidence in order to reach a decision and be fair to an applicant, I have come across some excellent examples where additional checks have been made to support their decision. I do not think this can be done in every case and I accept that there is an onus on the applicant to satisfy the Agency that they should be granted a visa. I have been pleased to see that the Agency has revised its guidance and that the quality of refusal notices has visibly improved.

Data Integrity

If the Agency is to move forward to greater use of electronic document management systems, it must improve the ways in which it captures and uses data. Once again this year I have encountered examples across the spectrum of inspection work where data integrity could be improved.

In my investigation into Border Control checks, I made important comments about poor record-keeping, specifically the number of times checks were suspended and the reasons why. Significant discrepancy between records maintained centrally and locally also made it difficult for the Agency or Border Force to analyse performance and manage effectively.

There are many instances of this. The lack of any system to capture data on the ethnicity of passengers stopped and searched at ports and queue management are but two.

This requires a change in culture and mindset, but it can be done. I have seen improvement in the ability of the Agency, particularly its capacity to retrieve the case files we require in both our visa post inspections and our country immigration work.

Conclusion

I believe that my reports over the last year have further highlighted the important role the Inspectorate plays in helping to drive improvement across the UK Border Agency and Border Force.

I look forward to continuing proactive and positive engagement with Rob Whiteman, the Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency, as well as the interim Director General of Border Force, Tony Smith, and whoever is appointed to take the role in the longer term.

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We have a number of important areas to inspect and report on over the next 12 months. In the short term, our reports on asylum legacy casework and Tier 4 of the Points Based System will look at some high profile areas for the UK Border Agency. Equally valuable will be further inspections of issues at ports, such as e-borders, juxtaposed controls and freight.

Our inspectorate adopts a rigorous, evidence-based and impartial approach when carrying out inspections and I intend to maintain this in future inspections.

I am currently developing a full programme of inspections for 2013-14 which will continue my aim of driving improvement across the UK Border Agency and Border Force.



John Vine
Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

“Our inspectorate adopts a rigorous, evidence-based and impartial approach when carrying out inspections and I intend to maintain this in future inspections.”

UK Border



Role and Remit

The role of the Independent Chief Inspector for Borders and Immigration was established by the UK Borders Act 2007 to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the UK Border Agency.

The initial remit was to consider immigration, asylum and nationality issues. This was subsequently widened when the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 gave the Chief Inspector additional powers to look at border customs functions and contractors employed by the Agency.

The Chief Inspector is an independent public servant, appointed by and responsible to the Home Secretary. The Chief Inspector can also be called to give evidence to the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee.

The Legislative Framework

Sections 48-56 of the UK Borders Act 2007 set out the legislative framework for the inspection of the UK Border Agency. In short, the Act:

- requires the Secretary of State to appoint a Chief Inspector to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the UK Border Agency in dealing with asylum, immigration and nationality matters;
- extends the Chief Inspector's remit to cover all UK Border Agency staff, both in the UK and overseas;
- requires the Chief Inspector to publish an annual report which the Secretary of State places before Parliament;
- does not permit the Chief Inspector to investigate individual cases, but allows him to use such cases as evidence for wider inspections;
- provides for the Secretary of State to request the Chief Inspector to carry out an investigation into any matter regarding asylum, immigration, customs and nationality matters; and

- requires the Chief Inspector to consult the Secretary of State regarding his inspection plans, but this does not prevent him working outside the plans where he regards this as appropriate.

Change in Title

On 20 February 2012, the Home Secretary announced that Border Force would split from the Agency from 1 March 2012, to become a separate operational command within the Home Office.

The Home Secretary confirmed that this change would not affect the Chief Inspector's statutory responsibilities and that he would continue to be responsible for inspecting the operations of both the Agency and the new Border Force.

On 22 March 2012, the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency's title changed to become the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. His statutory responsibilities remain the same.

Our Inspection Findings

The UK Programme

The UK Programme has maintained its focus on the work of the UK Border Agency, and subsequently Border Force, across their regional operations. This year I conducted two full port inspections within the South East region, the first at Gatwick North Terminal and the second at Heathrow Terminal 3. Both of these inspections identified issues of concern, in particular my finding that some security checks at Heathrow may have been suspended without the approval of Ministers. This led to the Home Secretary requesting that I investigate and report on the levels of security checks being operated at ports of entry across the UK. I followed up this commissioned investigation with a short-notice inspection at Heathrow Terminals 3 and 4. I also undertook an inspection of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Immigration Team.

The inspection at Gatwick North found that generally decisions to refuse entry to the UK were soundly based and in accordance with the Immigration Rules. I also noted that stakeholders were largely positive about the joint working arrangements with the Agency. However, I was concerned about the use of powers to search passengers within the secondary detection area, as they were neither proportionate or justified in a significant number of the cases that I examined. I also identified discriminatory practice in the conduct of detection activity, with officers demonstrating poor understanding of appropriate selection criteria. I concluded that Border Force had much to do to ensure that staff understood and complied with the Equalities Act 2010.

In my full inspection of Heathrow Terminal 3, I found that Immigration Officers were generally courteous and professional when dealing with passengers. There was also a good awareness amongst staff about the need to safeguard children. However, my inspection found significant room for improvement in a number of areas. These included ensuring that all arrests and searches of persons within the secondary detection areas were justified, proportionate and conducted in accordance with the

law, and improving the recording of these incidents to fulfill obligations under the Equalities Act 2010.

Given that these recommendations were similar to my findings at Gatwick, they indicate wider problems in this area across the Border Force, which I believe it needs to address as a priority. I was also concerned that the amount of organisational change taking place at Heathrow, during the busiest time of the year, was simply too much and had undermined the Agency's ability to effectively manage a critical operation, particularly in the period leading up to the Olympic Games.

I found that Immigration Officers were generally courteous and professional when dealing with passengers

The subsequent investigation into border security checks, commissioned by the Home Secretary, took three months to complete. It saw 22 port locations being visited, with a further 14 being contacted remotely. 349 port staff were interviewed, as were Ministers and senior managers. Detailed evidence was requested and examined to meet the requirements of the terms of reference set by the Home Secretary. This included examining the Level 2 pilot,¹ Secure ID and any other relaxation of checks that may have taken place. My report led to 12 recommendations for improvement, all of which were accepted by the Home Secretary. Subsequently, the Home Secretary decided to split Border Force from the UK Border Agency and made it a separate Director General command within the Home Office.

Following the commissioned investigation, my short-notice inspection at Heathrow found that all border security checks were being completed and that senior Border Force managers at Heathrow were acting on the recommendations I had made. I found that Border Force must work to ensure that its staff

1 A pilot scheme which allowed Immigration Officers to routinely cease opening the chip within EEA passports and checking all EEA nationals under 18 years against the Warnings Index where they are travelling in clear family units or as part of a school party. Level 2 did not include the suspension of Secure ID.

are appropriately trained to carry out the functions required of them at the Primary Control Point. It also needs to ensure that the new framework of border security checks, set out in its Operating Mandate, is resourced appropriately to deliver an efficient and effective service.

Local Immigration Teams (LIT) are an initiative to deliver immigration functions locally and to foster partnership working with other agencies, such as the police. I found that the team in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was generally well managed, and was exceeding its target for removals, particularly for those most likely to cause harm. Asylum decisions were also generally made within the 30 day target, with performance well above the national average.

I identified that the Agency needs to be much more proactive in locating and removing absconders from the UK. My greatest concern related to the 150,000 plus cases nationally that were sitting within a 'migration refusal pool'. There was no clear strategy for dealing with these cases, either in determining the proportion of this growing number of people who were still in the UK illegally and who should be removed, or in setting out clear performance targets to manage and reduce these cases in an organised manner.

The Thematic Programme

My thematic inspections look at particular issues rather than the specific functions of the UK Border Agency and Border Force. My focus in the early part of the year was on Border Security checks and this necessitated my reprioritising the rest of the inspection programme. I did, however, publish a thematic report on the handling of asylum claims with the Detained Fast Track (DFT). This was a process introduced by the UK Border Agency in 2003 for the consideration of cases that it believes can be decided quickly. This inspection resulted in eight recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Agency.

My report found that the majority of those whose asylum claims were refused were removed from the UK and that 93% of refusal decisions made within the DFT were upheld on appeal by the independent Tribunal. However, I also concluded that initial decisions on asylum claims were taking on average ten days longer than the Agency's published aim and that in cases where the individual was removed this took more than three months in 40% of cases.

I was also concerned that significant numbers of individuals were allocated incorrectly to the DFT process, with 30% being removed from it at some stage. I recommended that the Agency improve its screening process to encourage disclosure of sensitive information at the earliest possible stage, in order to minimise the risk that individuals are placed within the DFT when their claims should instead be

I believe there is merit in looking at issues that cut across the work of the UK Border Agency and Border Force and will continue to undertake thematic inspections

considered within the mainstream asylum process.

I believe there is merit in looking at issues that cut across the work of the UK Border Agency and Border Force and will continue to undertake thematic inspections. I plan to publish three thematic reports over the next few months. The first is a joint inspection with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, which will examine the effectiveness and impact of immigration detention casework. I will also be publishing a report on the Agency's processes for deciding marriage and civil partnership applications. This will examine decisions on entry clearance applications made at four overseas posts, as well as the further leave to remain and settlement applications that are considered in the UK. Finally, I will be publishing a report examining the handling of suspected immigration and customs offences. This will compare the performance at three ports – Heathrow, Manchester and Dover – as well as looking at the consistency of decision-making, and what happens to individuals whose cases are not taken forward for criminal investigation.

The International Programme

My International Programme has continued to inspect the UK Border Agency's entry clearance operation, particularly in relation to decision quality and treatment of visa applicants. The work of entry clearance staff is crucial to helping the UK Border Agency to address its purpose of securing the border and controlling migration for the benefit of the country.

I have carried out five inspections in the last 12 months. These included a global review of entry clearance decisions, an inspection of the visa section in New York, and a comparative inspection of the four visa sections that process applications

submitted in Africa: Nairobi, Abuja, Pretoria and the UK Visa Section. In addition, I carried out my first formal re-inspection when I revisited the visa sections in Islamabad and Abu Dhabi. I also conducted a short-notice inspection of the Madrid visa section. These resulted in 31 recommendations, with the overwhelming majority accepted by the Agency.

As in past years, my inspections have generally produced mixed findings. Although the Agency has made improvements, it still needs to do more to continue to improve the quality of its decision-making, ensuring that entry clearance decisions are made accurately, consistently, and fairly.

My global review of entry clearance decision-making involved an examination of almost 1500 case files drawn from every visa post. While I was encouraged to note that customer service targets were met in the majority of cases, the overall quality of decision-making left considerable room for improvement. For example, I found errors in the way evidence was assessed by entry clearance staff, and I consider that in 9% of the cases I examined, those errors potentially undermined the decision to refuse entry clearance.

In my New York inspection, I found that decision-making was generally fair and of a higher quality than in some posts that I previously inspected. However, I still had some concerns over the quality and consistency of decisions made. I was impressed with the strong customer service ethos and commitment to providing high levels of customer care shown by managers and staff. I also found that some good progress had been made in New York in implementing some of my recommendations made in previous reports.

In my comparative inspection of four visa sections processing applications submitted in Africa, generally I found better performance in Nairobi and Pretoria than in Abuja and the UK Visa Section. While some local variation is inevitable, I firmly believe the Agency must strive for greater consistency across all four posts, and indeed across all visa posts.

My re-inspection of the Islamabad and Abu Dhabi visa sections focused particularly on progress made in implementing recommendations made in my previous inspection. Overall I noted that considerable improvements had been made since

my last visit. I was pleased to find significant progress in implementing my recommendations, with a resultant improvement in both visa sections, especially regarding quality and consistency in decision-making, as well as in meeting customer service targets.

I identified several common threads running through each of these inspections to a greater or lesser degree, which concerned me. These included the Agency's failure to maintain an adequate audit trail in respect of why decisions had been made, either by retaining supporting documents on file, or entering sufficient notes onto the Agency's IT caseworking system.

In addition, I found significant numbers of cases where applicants were refused entry clearance for failing to provide information, when they could not have been aware when submitting their application that this information would be needed. I do not consider that the Agency is treating applicants fairly if it does not allow them an opportunity to subsequently provide this information.

I also identified opportunities for the Agency to improve the robustness of its quality assurance mechanisms. There is a strong correlation between how well the system assures quality and the quality of the decisions it makes. I found significant variation between posts in how successfully decisions were quality assured. For example, in my African inspection this was working reasonably well in Nairobi and Pretoria but there was a clear need for improvement in Abuja and the UK Visa Section.

In my most recent inspection – carried out at short-notice in the Madrid visa section, I found good quality decision-making, clear audit trails being maintained, and good progress in implementing my previous recommendations. I observed the potential benefits of using the Integrity system to process visa applications. The Agency will, however, only be able to realise these once current problems with the system are resolved as these are clearly having an impact upon customer service.

Overall, across the last 12 months, I was pleased to note some significant improvements in processing visa applications and in implementing my previous recommendations. The Agency still, however, has to make improvements to ensure that decision-making is accurate, consistent and fair across each of its visa posts.

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

A continuing success story, the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) has gone from strength to strength during the year, and is increasingly being recognised internationally as a model of good practice for monitoring the quality of Country of Origin Information (COI). Specifically, the IAGCI advises me about the content and quality of material produced by the UK Border Agency's Country of Origin Information Service (COIS) as well as making recommendations of a more general nature.

The group has always had a constructive and professional inspection relationship with COIS, although staffing changes at UKBA have made this relationship a little more fragmented this year. Despite this, IAGCI have delivered a full programme of work, and, in their last meeting of the year agreed to include a consideration of Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs) as standard, alongside country reports. This is in response to my report last year on the Border Agency's use of Country of Origin information.

The IAGCI has held two meetings in this reporting period (February and May 2012) and has considered the following:

- **February 2012** – Country reviews of China, Nigeria and Uganda, as well as a detailed discussion around how IAGCI might review OGNs.
- **May 2012** – Country reviews of Libya, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Operational Guidance Notes on Libya, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Reports from both these meetings are published on my website.

Membership

Current membership runs until 30 April 2013. I continue to be grateful to the members who give up their time for the IAGCI with no financial recompense. The group is made up of academics and organisations operating in the country information and / or refugee fields.

Independent members

Dr Khalid Koser (Chair) (Geneva Centre for Security Policy, London University) – reappointed in May 2011

Dr Laura Hammond (School of Oriental and African Studies) – reappointed in May 2011

Dr Christopher McDowell (City University, London) – reappointed in May 2011

Dr Ceri Oeppen (University of Exeter) – appointed in May 2011

Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford) – appointed in May 2011

Dr Mike Collyer (University of Sussex) – appointed in May 2011

Organisational representatives

Mr Andrew Jordan (First Tier Tribunal – Immigration and Asylum Chamber) – reappointed in May 2011

Ms Blanche Tax (UNHCR, Geneva) – appointed in September 2011

Meetings are also attended by representatives of the COIS at the UK Border Agency, and independent experts at the discretion of the IAGCI Chair.

Further details, terms of reference, minutes and reports from the IAGCI can be found on my website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

Working in Partnership

A key part of my work involves engaging and consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, who have an interest in UK Border Agency and Border Force activities. I conduct a number of regular and bespoke stakeholder activities throughout the year to ensure that I have a full spectrum of views to feed into the work of the Inspectorate.

Stakeholder Forums

I currently host three regular stakeholder forums. Members of these forums are able to discuss my inspection reports, bring key issues to my attention and suggest proposals for my inspection plan and priorities.

- **Refugee and Asylum Forum** This forum provides regular opportunities for refugee and asylum stakeholders to discuss their views with me. This is the longest-running forum, which was established in 2009 and meets three times a year.
- **Aviation Stakeholder Forum** This forum brings together key aviation stakeholders, including airlines and airport operators. The forum was established in October 2011 and meets twice a year.
- **Seaports Stakeholder Forum** This is another recently established forum, along with the Aviation forum, which was established in October 2011. I created both these forums to ensure that I was considering important views on border control, which was a key feature of my reports this year. The forum meets twice a year.

Inspectorate Reference Group

In October 2010, I established the Inspectorate Reference Group to act in an independent advisory capacity, reacting to challenges and suggesting ways forward as the Inspectorate develops. The Inspectorate Reference Group meets three times a year and I appoint its members for a period of two years. Issues of interest include:

- our organisational structure;
- our ways of working;
- how we relate to other organisations;
- how we respond to financial challenges; and
- internal training requirements.

Stakeholder Outreach

I carry out a number of speaking engagements in my capacity as Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. I find these opportunities useful to share and increase understanding of the work of the Inspectorate with interested stakeholders. Over the last 12 months, I have given presentations to Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB), the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA), to name a few.

These consultation exercises have proven to be both valuable and constructive and I intend to conduct more similar stakeholder consultations in the future.

Ongoing Consultation

Aside from the established forums and speaking engagements I carry out ongoing consultations with stakeholders to help define the scope of inspections.

I invited refugee, asylum and human rights stakeholders to provide information about unaccompanied children for our upcoming unaccompanied children inspection. Similarly, I consulted members of the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and English UK to provide information about Tier 4 of the Points-based System to help define the scope of our Tier 4 inspection, which will be published later this year.

I have also consulted MPs and Members of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association about my inspection of asylum legacy cases, which is due to report in November 2012.

These consultation exercises have proven to be both valuable and constructive and I intend to conduct more similar stakeholder consultations in the future.

People and Resources

Diversity

Many of the staff who joined the Inspectorate when it was first established have moved on during the last year. As a result, more than 40% of the posts within the Inspectorate are now filled by new members of staff. This turnover of staff, while maintaining a good breadth of corporate memory, has ensured that the Inspectorate continues to benefit from the range of skills, experience, knowledge and fresh ideas that our diverse staff bring us.

Last year also saw staff go on secondments to the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). Conversely, we also had secondees join the Inspectorate from HM Revenue and Customs, HMIC and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. These secondment opportunities are an excellent way to develop staff skills and share best practice between organisations.

At the end of September 2012, the Inspectorate was:

- 34% female, 66% male
- 25% from an ethnic minority group;
- 28% aged under 35; 12.5% aged 50 and over; and
- 6% worked flexible or reduced hours.

Training and Development

Our work requires staff to be appropriately trained in order to carry out their duties in an effective and credible way. In the first half of the year, Inspectorate staff received training in a variety of inspection skills through a bespoke course we designed in conjunction with Westminster Explained. We are currently evaluating this training with a view to running it again for our new starters.

The Home Office has changed its training provider to Civil Service Learning, and inspectorate staff are taking advantage of the courses provided by this new supplier and the internally provided e-training courses.

Next year we will also be utilising the extensive knowledge and experience of our longer serving staff, to develop and train the new starters.

Resources

The budget for 2011/12 was just under £3 million – a fall of 15% against the previous year's figure. However, the majority of the planned inspection programme and an additional investigation, requested by the Home Secretary, were delivered under budget.

The Inspectorate actively supported the austerity measures implemented by the Home Office and was able to make considerable savings against the original forecast budget for 2011/12. The total spend for the year was £ 2.7 million.

As in previous years, the Inspectorate has ensured that the majority of its resources are focussed on the frontline inspection operations with a minimal but very efficient back office structure.

The period from November 2011 to the end of October 2012 saw us publish 11 reports, including the investigation into border security checks.

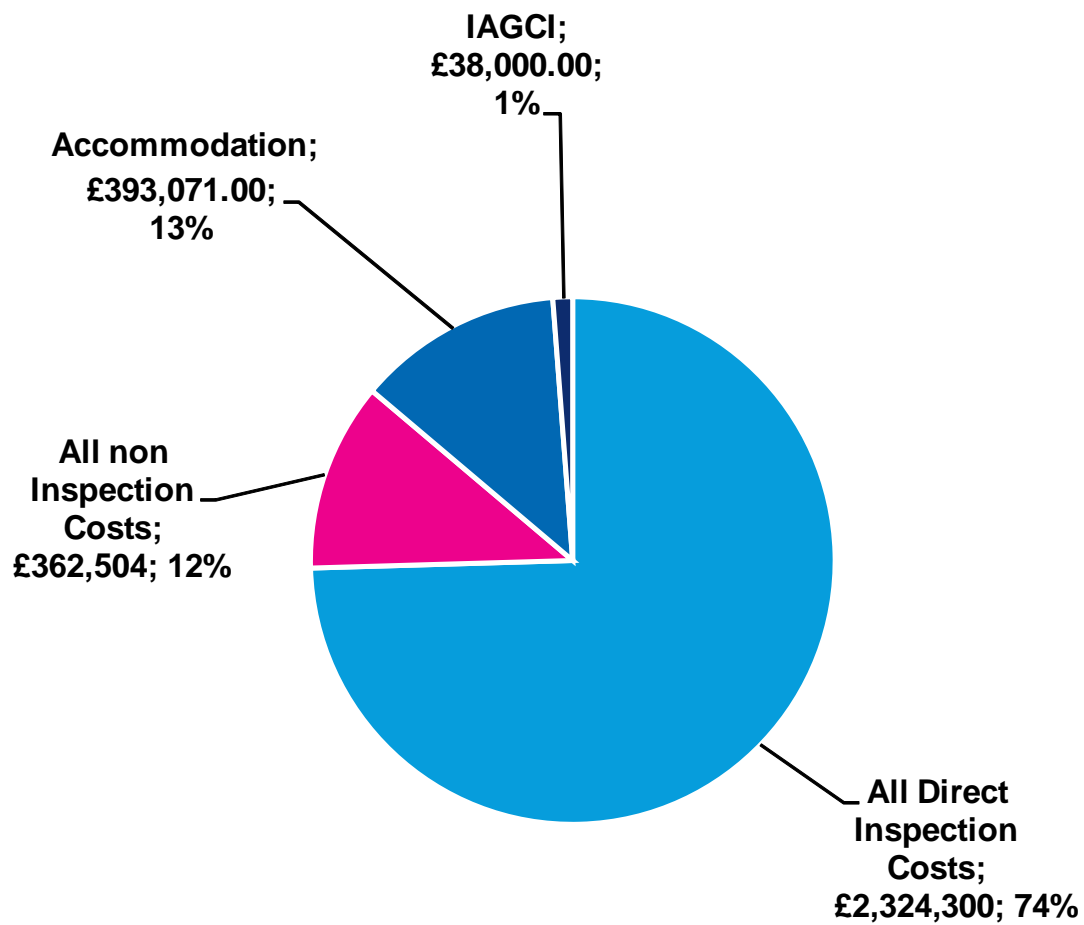
“...the Inspectorate
continues to benefit
from the range of skills,
experience, knowledge
and fresh ideas that our
diverse staff bring us.”

UK Border



Appendix 1

Expenditure for the 2011-12 financial year



Appendix 2

Reports published between November 2011 - October 2012

Inspection Reports

- Entry clearance decision-making: A global review (December 2011)
- An inspection of the UK Border Agency Visa Section in New York (December 2011)
- An investigation into border security checks (February 2012)
- Asylum: A thematic inspection of Detained Fast Track (February 2012)
- Inspection of Gatwick Airport North Terminal (May 2012)
- Inspection of Border Control Operations at Terminal 3 Heathrow Airport (May 2012)
- A comparative inspection of the UK Border Agency visa sections that process applications submitted in Africa: Nairobi, Abuja, Pretoria and the UK Visa Section (June 2012)
- A re-inspection of the UK Border Agency visa section in Abu Dhabi and Islamabad (July 2012)
- An inspection of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Immigration Team (July 2012)
- A short-notice inspection of border security checks at Heathrow Airport, Terminals 3 and 4 (July 2012)
- A short-notice inspection of decision-making quality in the Madrid visa section (September 2012)

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information reports

- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Burma (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Gambia (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on India (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on OPT (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Women's Issues (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Zimbabwe (October 2011)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on China (March 2012)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Nigeria (March 2012)
- Evaluation of the Country of Origin Report on Uganda (March 2012)

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Copies of all inspection reports are available on the Independent Chief Inspector for Borders and Immigration website:

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