



Home Office

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

**'A Short Inspection of the Home  
Office's application of the good  
character requirement in the case of  
young persons who apply for  
registration as British citizens'**

**February – April 2017**

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

UKVI is pleased that the report on the application of the good character requirement in the case of young persons who apply for registration as British citizens recognises that caseworkers both understood and applied the guidance.

UKVI is grateful to the ICI for highlighting potential areas for improvement, including the recommendations that it should review current guidance to ensure that it accurately reflects the Home Secretary's policy intention and that it makes explicit the scope for caseworkers to exercise discretion and to ensure compliance with the Home Office's statutory responsibility with regard to safeguarding and to making the best interests of the child a primary consideration.

UKVI take its responsibilities to children and young people very seriously, including focusing on safeguarding, promoting the welfare of children and ensuring that the best interest of the child remains a primary consideration.

The Home Office accepts in full both of the ICI's recommendations.

## The Home Office response to the recommendations:

1. **Review current guidance in relation to applications for registration as British citizens from young persons (those aged 10 to 17 years) and ensure that it accurately reflects the Home Secretary's policy intention, in particular in not differentiating between young persons and adults when assessing criminal convictions and immigration offences and breaches of controls in relation to the good character requirement.**
  - 1.1 **Accepted**
  - 1.2 The Home Office accepts the Independent Chief Inspector's recommendation. The Home Office is reviewing and updating guidance to ensure it accurately reflects the application of the good character requirement to persons aged 10 to 17 applying for registration as a British citizen. Ministerial agreement will be sought on the approach to be taken including in respect of any differentiation between young persons and adults when assessing the requirement to be of good character. Updated guidance will be published by the end of December.
2. **Produce guidance about the good character requirement in the case of young persons (those aged 10 to 17 years) applying for registration as British citizens that makes explicit the scope for caseworkers to exercise discretion, and ensures compliance with the Home Office's statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and to making the best interests of the child a primary consideration.**
  - 2.1 **Accepted**
  - 2.2 The Home Office accepts the Independent Chief Inspector's recommendation. The Home Office will update guidance relating to the registration of children to ensure it sets out the circumstances when it is appropriate to exercise discretion in the application of the good character requirement.
  - 2.3 We will also at the same time ensure that updated guidance reflects the duty under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. Updated guidance will be published by the end of December.