Inspection framework

- This Inspection framework will be applied to all ICIBI inspections of border and immigration functions. It replaces the ICIBI Expectations.

- The framework is based on the concept that a successful business area will be working effectively on six key levels, in ways that the levels support and are coherent with each other. The framework lists a series of statements covering the essential topics for each level.

- Inspectors will exercise flexibility and discretion in applying the framework depending on the scope and subject of the inspection. Inspectors do not expect complete achievement of all statements, rather they will assess the level of attainment towards achieving the ideal and how that might be enhanced or accelerated.

- Inspections will assess:
    a. The degree of attainment at each level, and
    b. The degree of alignment between the levels, i.e. whether the business processes at Level 5 are coherent with the values at Level 3, and vice versa.

- Inspection recommendations will focus both on what improvements may be required at a particular level, and how levels can be better aligned with one another.

- The 'Evidence and documentation required' sections at each level are a guide and not a definitive list of what must be provided prior to an inspection. They are, in many cases, deliberately non-specific to allow the organisation to choose what to submit. If there are other documents that cover the topics better than those listed, business areas are encouraged to provide them instead, in addition to any other information that they think is relevant to the inspection.

Level 1: Overall aim

This level explores what the overall aim of the function is, how it links with broader Home Office strategy and ministerial priorities, how success will be measured, and how commitment to the aim is ensured throughout the business area.

Articulation of business aim:

- The overall aim of the function is clearly defined and linked to specific ministerial priorities, government policies or Home Office strategic aims.
- The aim, whether articulated in a Vision or Statement of Purpose, includes what is to be achieved, how, in general terms, it will be accomplished, why it is important, and who will benefit from it.

Clear measurement of success:

- Critical success factors are established that clearly define the evidence that will show that the aim is being or has been achieved.
- There is a process in place for assessing progress towards achieving the overall aim and identifying risks and issues that threaten its achievement.

Ownership and dissemination across the business area:

- The overall aim is clearly communicated, owned, and understood at all levels within the business area.
- The aim is regularly reinforced and embraced throughout the entire workforce, ensuring alignment with individual and team objectives.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Strategy documents, including policy documents outlining the overall aims and vision of the business area.
- Any ministerial documentation (such as ministerial authorisations) relating to the business area being inspected.
- Critical success factors identified, with evidence of regular monitoring of progress.
- Details of communications and briefings explaining the overall aim for all staff and ensuring individual understanding of their role in the delivery of the overall aim.
- Key risks that threaten the achievement of the aim and mitigating actions.

Level 2: Roles and identity

This level explores how the overall role of the business area is defined, and the structure and governance arrangements, answering the question, "Who is doing what?"

Organisational identity:

- There is a definition of the business area's overall purpose and role within the wider migration and borders system, set out in a mission statement or equivalent that answers the question of "Who we are" and "What we do". This contrasts with the overall aim which answers "What we are aiming to achieve?".

Organisational structure, governance, and decision-making:

- There is a clear organisational structure showing how the various parts of the business area are linked and work together to achieve the aim(s).
- The structure identifies the key purpose of each individual part of the business area, to whom it is accountable, and what it is responsible for delivering.
- The structure identifies decision-making responsibilities and provides clarity on who is authorised to make which decisions.

Value-adding layers of accountability:

- The design of the business area has the minimum number of levels between front line operations and the leader with overall responsibility for the business area, with each layer having a clear role in adding value.

Transparency and understanding:

- The design and structure of the business area is available to the entire workforce and to key stakeholders with an interest in how the business area is designed, structured, and operates.
- There is an understanding throughout the business area of the overall design and who is responsible for what, and especially of where decisions are made.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Statements relating to the identity, role, and mission of the business area that address the questions of "who we are" and "what we do."
- Organisational charts or organograms with summary descriptions of roles and responsibilities (including decision-making) for each.
- Governance structure and board membership.
- Nominated senior responsible owners for each operational process within the business area.
- Details of tasking structures and escalation pathways – who approves, who assures, who oversees, and who holds final decision-making powers.
- Details of engagement sessions to communicate the governance structure and decision-making responsibilities throughout the business area, with evidence of its understanding through staff surveys and any other forms of feedback.

Level 3: Values and priorities

This level explores what is important to the business area and how this has been defined and embedded with staff.

Core values and behaviours:

- The business area has developed a set of values that define the culture it needs to support its delivery of the overall aim.
- These values reflect the unique role the business area has within any wider structure and how it will be aligned with the values of the wider organisation and/or the Home Office.
- The values are reflected in a set of defined organisational behaviours that, when practised, support the delivery of the overall aim.

Prioritisation framework:

- A framework of operational priorities is established enabling staff to navigate challenging situations, balancing potential competing interests such as the quantity and quality of decisions, and to guide decision making.
- The importance of making the right decision first time, ethical decision-making and good customer service are included within the framework.
- Priorities are clear to staff, can be referred to as necessary, and consistently guide their work.
- The framework provides clarity on the relative importance of potentially competing priorities.

Commitment to values and priorities:

- Staff have been engaged in developing the values and organisational behaviours.
- There are processes for regularly re-iterating the values and priorities.
- The leadership constantly evaluates the relevance of the values and priorities to the changing landscape and is ready to adjust priorities and explain changes to staff.

Accountability and monitoring:

- Adherence to the values, organisational behaviours and business priorities are built into the line management arrangements for the entire workforce. Objectives for all staff align with the business area priorities.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Documentation outlining the set of values and associated behaviours underpinning the business area with evidence of how staff have been engaged in their development and review.
- A set of operational priorities that is readily available and provides a framework for staff when making decisions.
- Evidence demonstrating how incorporating the values and priorities are built into performance management practices.

- Evidence of processes whereby constructive challenge and suggestions for improvements are actively considered, and staff of all grades can raise concerns.

Level 4: Resources

This level explores what resources are in place to ensure delivery of the overall aim, with the right number of people with the right skills in the right place.

Financial resources:

- There is a statement of the financial resources available to support the business area and an assessment of the appropriateness or otherwise of the resources available in the short and longer term.

Workforce planning:

- There is a workforce plan identifying the numbers of people required with the associated skill levels needed to deliver the aim, both for the present and the future, taking account of any technological developments such as Artificial Intelligence, and efficiency and productivity requirements.
- Where there is a mismatch between numbers and financial resources available, there is a plan to bring the two into alignment. This could include both up- and downsizing of the workforce.

Skills, training, and development:

- A skills audit exists that identifies the skills gaps within the business both now and in the future, taking account of technologies such as AI, and how these are to be addressed.
- Training and development plans exist and are implemented to ensure the workforce has the necessary skills on an ongoing basis.
- Recruitment plans are focussed on ensuring both numbers and relevant skills and experience are acquired.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Documentation outlining the financial resources available to support the business in the current and future years, with an assessment of the adequacy of those resources.
- Workforce strategy and planning documentation outlining the current and future levels of staffing required to deliver the overall aim, including underlying assumptions and methodology.
- Details of current staffing levels, by headcount (FTE), location, role, grade, and home organisation, with turnover rates and details of any current vacancies.
- Skills audit or assessment outlining the skills and expertise required now and, in the future, and where gaps exist within the current workforce.
- Strategies for addressing changes in staff numbers (whether up or down) and the skills required.
- Skills or training strategy or equivalent outlining how staff skills are assured post recruitment, maintained, and developed, including evaluation of the effectiveness of training.
- Details of risks and issues associated with financial and human resources.

Level 5: Operating processes

This level focuses on the day-to-day business activities that deliver the outputs that, when aggregated, deliver the overall aim. It explores the efficiency, effectiveness, and consistency of current processes.

Daily operations and output delivery:

- Daily activities and processes have clearly defined aims and objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.
- Staff have been involved in developing objectives and are committed to achieving them.
- Line management is conducted in accordance with best practice and actively supports staff in the delivery of their outputs.
- Standard operating processes (SOPs), guidance, and procedures that set out what needs to happen, how, and by whom are current, clear, well-documented, easily accessible, and followed consistently across the business area.
- Decision-making processes are aligned with business priorities and Home Office values.
- Quality management and assurance processes are embedded and practised in ways that are proportionate to the scale, significance, and state of the business.
- The business area demonstrates sustained delivery of its aims and objectives.

Risks and issues:

- Oversight, assurance, and control mechanisms are embedded and used to identify and address issues and risks, and mitigating actions are recorded and tracked.

Efficiency and productivity enhancements:

- There is a constant focus on enhancing efficiency, productivity and effectiveness, with processes encouraging staff to make suggestions and improvements.
- Automation and digitisation are being actively pursued, with appropriate controls.
- Staff are fully engaged in developing and implementing revised processes and are provided with the requisite training.

Feedback loops:

- Feedback loops are established and functioning between teams within the business area and with other relevant teams, ensuring consistent sharing of information, and the escalation of issues where required.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Details of the objectives for front line staff that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

- Evidence of line management practices that conform with best practice to support staff in the delivery of outputs.
- Copies of SOPs, desk aids, or similar guidance documents used by the business area, including any templates used in the decision-making process.
- Details of the quality assurance (QA) framework, and any QA tools, in use by the business area.
- Copies of any QA outcomes or reports including second or third-line assurance, with details of how QA results are used for continuous improvement and ensuring consistency.
- Risk register(s) and Issues log(s) relating to strategic risks, and operational performance.
- Details of any feedback loops between teams within the business area and with other relevant teams.

Level 6: External environment

This level explores factors external to the business that may impact on its delivery of outputs and the overall aim. These can be very wide-ranging but would typically include:

- **Stakeholder views and activities**
- **Data and current IT systems, availability, and capabilities**
- **Workplace accommodation and facilities**
- **Other transformation initiatives outside the actual business area**

Stakeholders:

- A comprehensive appreciation and analysis of stakeholders and their ability to impact on the business exists and is regularly updated, with efforts to improve engagement and its effectiveness. This analysis is informed by the business area's productive engagement with stakeholders.

Data:

- The data requirements of the business area are well understood and documented, with a defined data flow between the business area and other bodies and sources, or built into the business processes to ensure appropriate, accurate and reliable capture.

IT infrastructure:

- The IT infrastructure supports the business processes, enabling efficient and effective working, with a proven ability to collect, store and report accurate and reliable data to enable all staff to make informed decisions.
- Processes are in place to address and mitigate any shortfalls in the infrastructure.

Workplace accommodation and facilities:

- Accommodation and facilities enable a functional working environment and, when applicable, offer suitable provision for service users.

Transformation activities:

- The potential impact of wider transformation activities across the migration and borders system is understood, with appropriate actions taken to mitigate any threat to the delivery of the overall aim.
- Where the business is itself undergoing transformation, there are appropriate measures in place to ensure the ongoing delivery of outputs during transformation and the realisation of business benefits.

Evidence and documentation required:

- Any documentation, risk assessments, or staff feedback or surveys that reference how the physical working environment impacts staff capability, operational delivery, or

decision making, and how that information has been used to address any issues identified.

- Stakeholder engagement plans or strategies with details of outcomes (e.g. heat maps) and actions required to ensure appropriate stakeholder responses.
- Details of any IT systems used by the business area, including system purpose, any known limitations, or risks that affect operational delivery.
- Documentation demonstrating an understanding of the data required by the business to achieve the overall aim, and strategies to ensure its availability and appropriate handling within the business area to ensure integrity and reliability.
- Copies of management information reports demonstrating how data is used to monitor performance and support decision-making.
- Evidence of how the business area assures the integrity and accuracy of its data and any measures in place to mitigate against data reliability issues.
- Risk registers and issue logs relating to operational performance.
- Transformation plans and benefits realisation plans.