

Improving the effectiveness of the Home Office

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Introduction

1. I was asked by the Home Secretary on 30 November 2022 to conduct a short review into the effectiveness of the Home Office and to make recommendations on how to make sure the department is set up to deliver its objectives. I should make clear that my remit did not include making policy recommendations or providing political advice.
2. I held meetings with ministers, officials, advisers and others from outside the Home Office between 12 December and 3 March. I would like to express my gratitude to all concerned for their patience, candour and transparency. And in particular I would like to thank the Permanent Secretary for the constructive spirit with which he has engaged with this review.
3. The Home Office is a great office of state. Its responsibilities – to control immigration, fight crime, and protect the public from terrorism and threats from hostile states – are among the most serious in government. The powers granted to the organisations accountable to Home Office ministers are among the most sensitive and, because they can be invasive, controversial.
4. Given such controversy, and the difficulties the department has experienced at different points over the past few decades, morale is sometimes lower than it should be. In the course of my review, I met many excellent public servants determined to give all for their country. Set up in the right way, the Home Office should let them do so with confidence.
5. It is in the nature of a report such as this that I dwell on those things that need to be improved. It is important to remember that in recent years there have been many quiet operational successes, from the introduction of the post-Brexit immigration system to the continued delivery of the CONTEST strategy. Specific functions in the department, such as its communications team, were praised by many of those I interviewed. Nonetheless, performance in the department is uneven, and in some important ways the Home Office is not set up to succeed.
6. Some argue that the Home Office is too large and unwieldy to work, and ought to be broken up. The most popular suggestion is the creation of a separate department for immigration and border security, with responsibility for sentencing, prisons and probation returned to the Home Office from the Ministry of Justice.
7. Such a change would allow an end-to-end systems approach for both criminal justice and immigration, since it would address problems caused by the creation of the Ministry of Justice in 2007, while allowing coherence in policy and delivery across the immigration system. Such a change would, however, cause significant administrative disruption and at a time when the Home Office faces many urgent challenges it would represent an unnecessary distraction from the delivery of core business.
8. The idea that the Home Office is too big to succeed has anyway been disproved by past periods of success. If synergies between policing, immigration and national security are not sufficiently exploited by the department at present, that is reason to make sure

they are exploited in future through better structures and systems, not to give up on those synergies altogether. Besides, many of the challenges faced by the Home Office – in particular the confluence of problems in the immigration system – would remain under other departmental configurations.

9. Equally the performance of the immigration operational commands will not be improved – as some suggested to me – by creating greater distance between ministers and the leaders of those commands. This would create a democratic deficit and risk a lack of accountability for organisations charged with vital duties and granted sensitive powers. Instead, the task must be to make the Home Office perform to the best of its abilities.

Cross-cutting issues

10. The complexity of the challenge in the Home Office lies in the fusion of its policy and operational responsibilities, the legal frameworks that govern those operational responsibilities, the sensitivity of the powers it vests in its operational commands, and the direct and intense political scrutiny of its work. Officials sometimes draw comparisons with operational work in other departments – farm payment processing, the benefits system and train operating company franchises are three examples often given – but none compares accurately or instructively.
11. The political risk for ministers lies mostly in the operational performance of the department. Past generations of ministers have found themselves accountable – and sometimes sacked – for operational decision-making over which they had little direct control. Yet the Home Office still struggles to strike the right balance in the way it approaches its policy and operational work. There is insufficient operational experience among policy officials, including among the senior ranks. Officials on the operational side complain of a lack of understanding of reality on the ground from policy officials. And the operational side of Home Office business is under-valued and neglected. A Border Force Grade 6, for example, is responsible for all passenger operations at Heathrow Airport. In Marsham Street a policy official of the same grade might lead a small team working on policy that is neither a ministerial priority nor subject to significant change.
12. There should be a review of the deployment of resources, and the balance of grades across the policy and operational roles of the department. And work should be commissioned, as I recommend below, to explore how to allow more officials to rise through the ranks and bring more operational experience into policy and senior roles.
13. If there is a common thread to the challenges to successful delivery in the Home Office it is a lack of systems thinking. With the responsibilities for the Homeland Security Group, for example, the distinction between domestic, foreign and online threats has all-but dissolved, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The Public Safety Group is responsible for crime and policing, but fraud and cyber-crime (approximately half of all crime) is the responsibility of the Homeland Security Group, and the rest of the criminal justice system sits in another department. The Migration and Borders Group has no one

official in charge of the system overall, and while visas and passports are run efficiently, there is no systems approach to the asylum system or tackling illegal immigration, and there are confused lines of accountability.

14. Equally there are challenges in exploiting the synergies between the three groups. Under the “Blueprint” model the Migration and Borders Group is perceived by officials to be better integrated with the rest of the department than before. But the model has also caused difficulties for leadership, accountability and delivery in the immigration system (see below) and there is still too little thematic working across the commands.
15. There is a similar problem in working beyond the department, and officials were open in their reflection that the Home Office tends to be inward-looking. In all its work the department needs to cooperate and collaborate with other government departments, the devolved governments, local authorities, public bodies, businesses, the population at large, and of course foreign governments and their agencies. Yet the habit in the department is often to work on proposals internally and present them to others as a *fait accompli*. As one senior official put it, “our habit is to seek to do things to others, rather than include them and agree how to do things together, which I feel would be more productive.”
16. The appointment of a second permanent secretary sitting across the Home Office and DLUHC, with responsibility for the response to Ukraine, and his subsequent appointment to oversee the accommodation challenge in the asylum system, is a good example of how more can be done to create time-limited, task-and-die project teams. This could be done more often within the department, working across commands, and beyond, working across departments. But for this to become routine in Whitehall, there will need to be capacity to create and close down teams quickly, and to staff them appropriately with officials transferred in full-time.
17. There is a tendency among some senior officials to think of themselves as “leaders” and not “managers”, rather than the necessary blend between the two. Leadership is vital, providing clear and bold direction to a department. But management is also vital, and at times there has been a reluctance among some officials to “get their hands dirty” and accept clear responsibility for the delivery of important policies. In some instances, the Prime Minister and Home Secretary have felt falsely reassured, and accepted commitments that were made without sufficient appreciation of the operational reality.
18. The relationships between ministers and senior officials can skew the department in a damaging way. Particularly in the immigration system, senior officials often know too little about the operational reality to adequately inform and advise ministers. A hierarchical culture means ministers are too infrequently exposed to those who do know enough. In turn ministers find it difficult to trust the system to do the things it says it will; officials then over-compensate by not wishing to tell difficult truths or by providing advice that is overly optimistic, compounding the problem with trust. The feedback loops can be poor and they make success far less likely.
19. While there are many brilliant officials at work in the Home Office, the corporate culture is insufficiently focused on the delivery of the department’s mission. Office

attendance is poor – causing some officials to observe that there is now a diminished sense of team working – and Marsham Street is barely populated on Fridays in particular. Even teams working on the hottest of Home Office crises have continued to work from home, causing frustration among ministers. The department policy – that everybody employed by the Home Office should attend their workplace at least forty per cent of the time – is unambitious. My requests to see data comparing attendance rates and trends in productivity were not met.

20. Too much time is wasted on what one official called the fashion of “bringing your whole self to work”. There are “listening circles”, in which civil servants meet to discuss their feelings about social and political issues, including even the implementation of government policies for which they are responsible such as the Rwanda scheme. The number of staff representative bodies based on various sexual, racial or religious identities, the hours of staff time given to such work, and examples of training sessions about subjects such as “genderqueer” identities, also indicate a lack of focus. I was given examples of how some members of staff have sought to police and dictate the actions of senior officials, for example by complaining about a failure to mark certain moments, news stories, or commemorative events. This culture is counter-productive, contrary to the spirit of impartiality in the civil service, and divisive for those officials who feel unable to challenge the opinions of more strident colleagues. It risks undermining the authority of senior officials and distracts from the vital mission of the department. It should end.
21. Difficulty with the management of information is a common problem across the department. When officials are asked to retrieve or examine older documents and submissions, they often rely on memory, or searching email inboxes and personal and shared folders. The department should invest in a professional, off-the-shelf, document management system of the kind common in law firms and management consultancy companies.
22. An absence of strategic and conceptual clarity is a problem in more than one part of the department. There are, for example, tensions and even contradictions in what different parts of the immigration system believe their purpose and objectives to be. Equally, there is no conceptual framework for *how* the department believes it should intervene in policing matters. While organised crime is the root cause of most illegal immigration and countless individual crimes across the country, too few officials are assigned to the problem, and no one senior official is responsible for organised crime alone.
23. The department faces difficulties in recruiting and retaining the best talent. Some senior officials have left the civil service because their pensions “maxed out” and it was no longer financially worthwhile to carry on working. This is a problem repeated elsewhere in the public sector, including among senior officers in the police. The Home Office should engage the Treasury to see if there can be greater flexibility in pay and conditions to retain experienced staff.
24. The Principal Private Secretary position has been vacant for more than a year after three attempts to fill it. Elsewhere officials are open about the lack of interest among civil servants in taking positions in the immigration system. For some the problem is

ethical, because they disagree with either the principle of immigration control or the policies needed to achieve it. For others the problem is about reputation and risk: they see the Migration and Borders Group as a dangerous place in which to work with lots that goes wrong and plenty of scrutiny. There should be an attempt to create a better pipeline of future leaders, especially in the immigration system, by providing more leadership training and mentoring for officials across all the relevant organisations. There should be better succession planning for senior positions. And the department should seek the support of the Cabinet Secretary in making sure the best officials from across Whitehall are willing to work in the Home Office.

A stronger centre

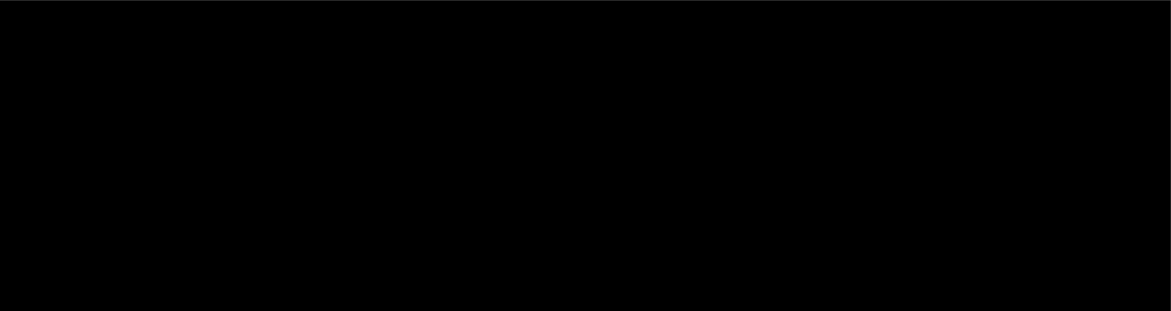
25. The Home Secretary needs greater capacity to reach into the department. In addition to the obvious functions of the private offices and Parliamentary team, a strong centre should set overall political and policy strategy; check against the delivery of that strategy; hold the department accountable for its performance; horizon-scan and assess risk; support and supplement teams at moments of difficulty and in anticipation of them; and provide a coordinated rapid response in times of crisis.
26. The centre of the department is well-resourced but too weak. The former Director General of the Delivery Group was not replaced. The Strategy Director is covering the vacant Principal Private Secretary position. The private office is unbalanced and too large. The role of the strategy and delivery teams is conceptually confused. There is insufficient ready access to management information, insufficient expertise in data analytics, and insufficient institutional stature to give the Home Secretary and ministers the knowledge and clout they need to lead the department.
27. The Home Secretary's private office needs to be streamlined, with one private secretary clearly responsible for one group. It is reasonable to have other private secretaries working in support, but officials from across the department report confusion about who is responsible for what. This needs to change.
28. Officials reported that there had in the past been problems in understanding who was responsible for what among the special advisers. This seems no longer to be a problem, but the absence of a dedicated crime and policing adviser has caused a gap in capabilities.
29. A single strategy and delivery team should, working closely with ministers, special advisers and the wider department set strategic objectives. It should assess the flow of management information and data to keep ministers briefed on performance. It should horizon-scan and assess risk. It should work with the department to check against the delivery of strategies. And it should aid the department and coordinate a rapid response to crises. The support of the Permanent Secretary is vital, because his authority should enhance and protect the institutional stature of the centre and bring rigour in holding the wider department to account.
30. Alongside the strategy and delivery team should sit a small policy unit, consisting of bright and creative thinkers capable of challenging orthodoxy and working with

officials to produce new ideas that reflect ministers' priorities. The unit should comprise officials and those appointed from outside the civil service.

31. Sitting at the centre of the department, but separate to the responsibilities of the Strategy Director, is the Science, Technology, Analysis and Research (STAR) command. With 878 FTE staff and a budget of £76 million, STAR exists to act as "the guiding mind" of the Home Office, helping it to understand the problems it confronts, pulling together evidence of what works, and providing capabilities to assess and support delivery. Yet ministers report that it feels remote, its work is insufficiently connected to their priorities, and it should be better aligned with the strategic direction of the department.
32. Similarly, another central function, the Home Office Legal Advisers Branch (HOLAB), is insufficiently integrated with the work of the department and not always aligned with strategic priorities. Culturally, HOLAB and policy officials can be too defensive in their analysis of legal risk. Assessments of likely legal challenge, and even the possibility of defeat, can be used as a reason not to do something.
33. I recommend the establishment of a stronger centre, with a clear strategic purpose and conceptual clarity about its functions. A slimmer version, without STAR and HOLAB, might be led by the Director of Strategy, but a fuller version – a new structure comprising the strategy and delivery functions, policy unit, private office and Parliamentary team, as well as STAR and HOLAB – should be led by a Director General for Strategy and Delivery. There are opportunities and risks in both approaches. Without clear leadership, incorporating STAR and HOLAB might slow down the centre rather than empower it, for example. But a well-led centre could certainly exploit the opportunities made possible by commissioning and directing research and legal advice earlier in the process. I judge the fuller version to be the better option.
34. In the strategy and delivery functions in particular, the quality of officials should matter more than their quantity, and success will rely on the attributes of the team. And different parts of the centre should operate in different ways. A rapid response team, for example, should look and behave differently to business-as-usual functions such as STAR, HOLAB and the Parliamentary team. The strategy and delivery team will lose its edge the more it gets pulled into business-as-usual work or overseeing long-term, large-scale programmes or functions.
35. Ministers should be free to obtain the best advice wherever they find it. At present they are entitled, subject to collective responsibility and the protection of restricted information, to have conversations with whomsoever they choose. They may also appoint special advisers and work with non-executive directors. But it should be made easier – subject to necessary checks, safeguards and sign-off from Number Ten – to bring external advisers into the department. Ministers should be free to appoint their own advisory boards, consisting of experts on particular subjects, which would allow members, as appropriate, to be given clearance to see and comment on government papers and participate in internal meetings.
36. The role of ministers of state and parliamentary under-secretaries is an undefined mix of adviser and decider, and some secretaries of state give their ministerial teams

more freedom than others. With two ministers attending Cabinet in addition to the Home Secretary, this Home Office ministerial team is unusual, and the Home Secretary is willing to delegate some decisions. This presents the private offices with a challenge, as the Home Secretary and special advisers still need to be kept informed of ministers' decisions, and she still needs to act as the department's controlling mind, capable of seeing and managing tensions or preventing contradictions in decisions. The private office has taken steps to close the feedback loop, but this should be kept under review.

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38. Box submissions can certainly be improved. The papers themselves should be written in shorter, crisper fashion, saving ministerial time. The covering notes – necessary to allow comments from other ministers, special advisers and private secretaries – too often duplicate the content of the papers. The timing of submissions can be a problem: if a paper takes weeks to prepare but requires an immediate decision due to circumstances beyond the control of the department, or prevents ministers from taking the time to consider alternative assessments or options, the balance is clearly wrong. There is too little consequence when submissions are poor in quality.
39. The Strategy Director and PPS should conduct an exercise assessing the use of the Home Secretary's time. Broadly, her time with officials should be divided between deciding ways forward, directing the department to undertake work and holding it to account. There also needs to be time to think, read, hold meetings with other ministers and MPs, and visit and talk to outside experts, those working on the frontline and the general public. It is doubtful that the existing balance between these priorities is the right one.
40. In particular, the nature, scope and frequency of accountability meetings requires consideration. In common with other departments, the board is not effective as a forum for accountability. It is too big and covers issues that are too broad too fleetingly. The Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) are not given the depth of information they need to hold the department accountable through board meetings as they would on a company board. The Home Office should engage with the Cabinet Secretary about reforming department boards so ministers can get more out of them.
41. This does not mean the members of the board cannot or do not contribute, however. It is wise to appoint NEDs to particular portfolios, so they can bring their experience to bear in support of senior officials and ministers. There should be a smaller performance and delivery board, held monthly, with permanent members who assess operational performance. Each meeting should perform a deep dive into a particular priority area, with additional ministers, officials and NEDs invited accordingly. But attendance should be policed strictly, with no more than ten people present. And the

priority areas need to be limited in number so the board can return to the subject regularly enough.

42. Additionally, there should be programme boards overseeing the delivery of the most important policies and changes and more *ad hoc* stocktakes chaired by the Home Secretary and ministers. Of course there should be similar structures, with a similar rhythm of meetings, held as a matter of routine by the department and chaired by senior officials.
43. The Home Secretary should receive a pack of consistent management information and data every month. Recently the packs she receives have got better, but they are dense and the data provided is not as clear as it might be. The data the Home Secretary receives should come in exactly the same form as that used across the department: for briefings for other ministers, for officials, and in related briefings and submissions for the Home Secretary. Too often data is pulled out of systems in an *ad hoc* manner for particular meetings. It is vital that management information and data is not massaged, but presents an accurate picture of real performance. The team at the centre should assess such data as appropriate to ensure that this is the case, and the Permanent Secretary and senior officials should ensure its quality and accuracy. I recommend that the lead NED reviews both the rhythm of accountability meetings and the flow of management information and data.
44. There are complaints from the Treasury and Number Ten about the department's ability to forecast and make financial plans. Severe variations in forecasts – with sharp increases in spending forecasts made month to month – and dramatic underspends in certain programmes are cited as evidence. Last year, for example, the Afghanistan resettlement forecast moved from an initial request for £777 million in December, to an eventual spend of £420 million. This included a £250 million drop between January and February alone. This year the asylum forecast has been “very jumpy”. It includes a £120 million rise in a single month in part due to the use of hotels from the peak of the Manston crisis. As explained below, Manston planning assumed worst-case scenarios for inflows into the facility, but failed to do so for outflows and the need for accommodation. By 2024/25, Home Office resource spending is forecast to be £3.3 billion above what was agreed in the spending review – creating more pressure on the reserve than the Department of Health and Social Care.
45. Both the Treasury and Number Ten are sceptical that financial management and the need for accurate forecasting are sufficiently incorporated into the governance of the department, or that there is the right governance for transformation programmes such as the Future Borders and Immigration System. A programme should begin – with input and oversight from the non-executive members of the board – to turn around the financial management of the department. Changes in governance of the kind suggested above should help, but governance reforms should aim explicitly to improve forecasting and financial planning.

Public Safety Group

46. The Public Safety Group is responsible for the police, crime reduction, serious and organised crime, and fire and rescue services. Responsibility for fraud and cyber

crime, however, which constitutes approximately half of overall crime, sits with the Homeland Security Group.

47. The policing landscape is reasonably stable. Local chief constables have operational independence, and are held to account by elected police and crime commissioners. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of individual forces and conducts inquiries into thematic issues. The College of Policing exists to set standards, provide training and share good practice. Regional Organised Crime Units provide specialist capabilities.

The Metropolitan Police owns the Specialist Operations commands, including national responsibility for counter-terrorism policing.

48. In recent years there has been a policy shift towards greater interventionism in policing from the Home Office. A National Policing Board, chaired by the Home Secretary, brings together chief constables and senior officials four times every year. Forces are working to meet the Police Uplift Programme target to recruit 20,000 extra police officers by March this year. Since January 2020 there have been internal targets to reduce homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime by twenty per cent.

49. The tendency towards interventionism raises several questions. What is the right kind of intervention? Are the structures of policing set up in a way to allow for successful intervention? Does the Home Office have the information and data it needs to facilitate successful intervention?

50. In answering these questions we must first accept the truth that policing is in crisis. The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer was the worst among a long list of incidents has exposed a rotten culture that must be fixed. The failure of the police to deal with disruptive protests, and ill-judged attempts to police thought and opinion, have led to a loss of confidence in the police in general – and the Metropolitan Police in particular – among politicians and the public. Overall crime continues to fall, but offences recorded by the police show that knife crime, for example, is up compared to a decade ago.

51. It would clearly not be appropriate to intervene in a way that micromanages forces from Marsham Street. And while operational independence is too often used as a defensive shield to protect police leaders from accountability and scrutiny, of course the independence of police forces to investigate crimes without fear or favour must be preserved. But it remains a legitimate policy choice for ministers to choose to influence the way the police operate more directly. This interventionism – making sure the police are more focused on crime-fighting and less distracted by political issues and social missions, and ensure forces reduce specific crimes through national targets – is the stated policy of the Home Secretary.

52. There are in fact more levers available to ministers than is generally recognised. Most obvious is funding, for the Home Office is able to allocate the police grant with conditions. Hitherto the department has been timid in setting such conditions, but there is no reason in principle why it should not. The police grant for 2022/23, for example, specified that “funding will only be released as local policing bodies deliver

against their published recruitment targets”. Similar conditions might be imposed to ensure investment in labour-saving technology, for example, or other forms of innovation. But it is important that this approach is used sparingly: it would be too prescriptive and overly bureaucratic if the grant were allocated through many smaller funds. If ministers wanted to be bolder – particularly in response to strategic threats such as serious and organised crime – they might reform the police grant so it is formally divided into categories for routine policing and meeting strategic threats.

53. Another lever is the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), which was developed after the introduction of police and crime commissioners and first published in July 2012. The purpose of the SPR is to set out the national threats for which the police must prepare and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. Ministers might reform the SPR so the list of threats reflects the national priorities they identify, but also to ensure that force capabilities are what they need to be.

54. The role of the national policing institutions is another lever. HMICFRS is now a more independent organisation, holding forces to account for their effectiveness with greater rigour. The Home Office also uses HMICFRS for thematic inspections where there is concern about systemic failures or shortcomings. Ministers might use HMICFRS more often to investigate and promote different policing approaches to particular crimes, such as knife crime or fraud and cyber-crime.

55.



Equally, the Regional Organised Crime Units need clearer governance and more consistent performance (see below).

56. After some well-rehearsed problems, the College of Policing is undergoing a period of reform under its current chief executive. With the chair and board appointed by the Home Secretary, the College could and should be an important means by which the Home Office can shape police reform. The pipeline of high-quality future police leaders should be routed through the College, with a focus on leadership training across all ranks and specialist courses from those reaching the senior ranks. An academy building, providing the College with a proper headquarters, would help to provide this service and to use the international reputation of British policing to establish revenues by training officers from overseas.

57. Few officials or police officers to whom I spoke believed that the National Policing Board works well. The Board was established in 2019 and is designed to allow the Home Secretary to influence the long-term strategic direction for policing and check against the delivery of important policing commitments, such as the recruitment of the 20,000 extra police officers. The Home Office should review the operation of the National Policing Board, and decide – given other available levers – if it is needed at all. If it is needed, the Board should be made more useful, with perhaps the Home

Secretary chairing it quarterly with the Minister for Policing chairing meetings in between.

58. There are unanswered questions about the role and purpose of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). Some of its stated functions – developing national approaches, for example, and the implementation of national standards and policy – overlap with the work of the College. Others – such as its coordination functions – are important but do not need to reside in the NPCC. Roles like the NPCC scientific adviser should be transferred to the College. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Hosted by the Metropolitan Police, and with governance described by some I interviewed as “light” and “non-existent”, the danger is that the NPCC represents centralised, unaccountable power. Chief constables may wish to have their own forum to exchange experiences and ideas, but I recommend that the Home Secretary reviews the NPCC with a view to abolishing it and transferring its operational responsibilities to alternative accountable entities.

59. Satisfied that there are levers for ministers to pull, the Home Office must also satisfy itself that it has the information to hand that enables sensible interventions. The department once had a police performance unit, which was scrapped at the time of decentralising reforms more than a decade ago. It is unlikely that ministers will want to go as far as to re-establish such a unit, since the trend towards intervention is still only limited. But the Home Office should acquire, in more systematic fashion, the information and data to suit the approach taken by ministers today.

60. And the Home Office will need to answer the fundamental question: what is its broader role when it comes to crime reduction and law enforcement? We have considered the ways in which it might play a closer role to improve policing as a system and creative incentives for change. But the department has other important roles. It should convene experts and exemplars of good policing practice to increase awareness of what works. It should encourage forces to follow the lead of innovators and investors in new technologies and methods. It should develop an unrivalled understanding of what prevents crime, and exploit that understanding by designing out criminality, reforming social policy, and informing the public about how to protect themselves from growing threats like cyber-crime. And it should do what only government departments can do, and produce legislation for Parliament to enact that will make crime harder to commit and take criminals out of decent society by incarcerating them.

61. Where there are visible problems in policing, caused perhaps by a lack of a guiding mind, the Home Office should be prepared to step in. There is a need, for example, for an examination of how police forces respond to the way crime is changing because of new technology: fraud, identity theft and cyber-crimes have increased and will rise further, and artificial intelligence will make the challenge even harder. This raises questions about prevention, investigation, the security of digital identities, and the expertise and capabilities within police forces. The Home Office might consider launching a review into how we tackle these growing crime risks.

62. There is a problem, too, in the recruitment of chief constables and the limited talent pool from which future chiefs are selected. Pension rules that cause senior officers to

retire early should be reformed. Direct entry should be reinstated. New fast-track promotion schemes should be established for the most talented recruits. Workforce planning and better-targeted training schemes should be established – focused on crime-fighting, not management consultancy or academic sociology – with a view to improving the supply of future leaders. The College of Policing should be encouraged to develop leadership training across all ranks.

63. The Home Office must also take a leadership role in driving efficiency and value for money in policing. There are for example many hundreds of different IT systems (and probably more: the Home Office has no up-to-date estimate). Many of these systems, spread across 43 different forces, are not integrated within and between forces. They can be consolidated, improving productivity and effectiveness, and saving money, if the Home Office succeeds in making the police a more intelligent customer. Likewise, the National Police Air Service might be reformed given the cost of police helicopters and developments in drone technology. Duplicated efforts with the Crown Prosecution Service are best addressed by the Home Office taking a lead in Whitehall.
64. Such duplication is only one example of how the criminal justice system is disjointed. In fact is it not really one system but a series of different systems working to contradictory ends. The police work to arrest suspects; prosecutors worry about success rates in court; sentencing policy is dictated by concerns about judicial autonomy and prison capacity; judges and juries are influenced by human rights laws; prisons and probation services struggle to help criminals to turn their lives around. There needs to be better alignment within the system and better accountability throughout. There should be more co-located police and prosecutorial teams, clear alignment of goals throughout the system, and improved accountability. The Criminal Justice System board should be chaired by the Home Secretary, giving her the chance to hold the CPS as well as the police to account, and leaving the Justice Secretary to hold the courts and prison service to account.
65. The police and criminal justice system are, like the wider public sector, disjointed from the perspective of organisational geography. If we expect the police and probation services, for example, or mental health services, to work together better, we should organise them so that the relevant organisations are coterminous. One senior police officer pointed out to me that the geography for performance data differs across police forces, probation services, courts and tribunals, and the CPS. If we want better place-based, multi-agency delivery, the Government should reform the organisational geography of the public sector.
66. There is a pressing need to move the 43 police forces of England and Wales onto common platforms, with interoperable systems, and shared corporate services such as human resources. One solution – the oft-made case to merge local forces and create larger regional forces – is undesirable, since it would take accountability further away from local communities and distract police leaders from the specificities of local needs. But the Home Office should review whether the Police Digital Service and Blue Light Commercial are capable of doing what is needed quickly enough, and whether the department needs policies and institutional changes to push harder.

67. Organised crime is a serious problem in Britain, yet the policy and operational responses are inadequate. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This has a direct effect on the lives of ordinary people in their own homes and local communities.

68. There is too little focus on organised crime within the Home Office, and the lines of responsibility and accountability are confused. Organised crime sits in the Public Safety Group, but fraud and cyber crime sit in the Homeland Security Group. Some serious crime types, such as drugs and gun crime, sit with the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire, [REDACTED]

69. Organised crime is a policy challenge that cuts across the principal responsibilities of the department: public safety, homeland security, and immigration and border control. Economic crime, for example, relates to organised criminal groups but state threats too. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The existing set-up is confused and there is insufficient focus on what is a strategic threat to the security and prosperity of the country. There is no senior civil servant clearly and exclusively responsible for organised crime: it is one of only several responsibilities of a PSG director, who also oversees police and fire funding, the criminal justice system strategy unit, the national police capabilities unit, the critical response unit, and the public safety client side unit.

70. The lack of organisational clarity has, according to some I interviewed, masked a lack of strategic clarity in the way the Home Office approaches organised crime. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Some observed that too few officials in PSG have the right level of clearance. [REDACTED]

71. One option is to create a clearer matrix structure that devotes considerably more staff time and better leadership to organised crime. This model would be led by a senior director reporting to one – and only one – of the directors general in charge of HSG and PSG, who should be given clear control of organised crime in all its forms. A second option would be to create a new command led by a director general in charge of organised crime, taking responsibilities for fraud and cyber-crime from HSG and remaining serious and organised crime policies from CPG. There is a limit to the number of vertical commands in a complex department like the Home Office, but several senior officials reported their view to me that a priority like organised crime would be lost in a matrix structure.

72. Regardless of the model, the department needs to dedicate many more full-time officials to organised crime. All officials should have appropriate levels of clearance. [REDACTED]

[Redacted]

73.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

76.

[Redacted]

77. It would also remove the confusion in the Met's lines of accountability. While other forces are accountable to elected police and crime commissioners or mayors, the Met is accountable both to the Mayor of London, as the police force for the capital city, and to the Home Secretary, because of its national responsibilities. The Home Office can be tempted to cut across the responsibility of the Mayor, while the Mayor can evade his policing responsibilities. The transfer of the Specialist Operations commands

would give to policing in London the clarity in accountability that exists in forces elsewhere.

78. Responsibility for “hidden harms”, such as trafficking and child sexual exploitation and abuse, also sits in PSG. The abuse of the National Referral Mechanism by asylum seekers and illegal immigrants is well-documented and noted below. The arising internal review and likely reforms that follow will be necessary, not only to restore control in the immigration system, but to retain the credibility and integrity of the Modern Slavery Act.
79. Fire services are treated as a backwater compared to policing and crime, but they should not be neglected. Fire risk has been reduced significantly over the past few decades, but as the Grenfell Tower tragedy showed, it remains a serious danger. Equally, scandals about the working environment in several fire services, and reports of firefighters taking photographs of women who had died in car accidents – and similar allegations made about ambulance services – show that there may be a broader cultural problem that needs to be tackled across the blue-light emergency services. There remain efficiency savings that can be made through the integration of the systems and estates of police and fire services too.

Migration and Borders Group

80. It is not a criticism of individual officials to say that the organisation of the immigration system needs change. Nobody knows who, overall, is responsible for the system. Often, nobody knows who ultimately is responsible for the delivery of a particular policy or project. This avoidable ambiguity creates strategic confusion, systemic contradiction, a lack of accountability, and a failure to deliver. As one senior official put it to me, “we are not set up to give ministers what they want. I feel their frustration at the clumsiness of the structure.”
81. The existing model was designed with the best of intentions but it is a matter of consensus among ministers and officials that it has failed. The Second Permanent Secretary has responsibility for “frontline operations and other cross-cutting capabilities” across the department as a whole. Another Second Permanent Secretary is responsible for linking the Home Office and DLUHC to deliver Homes for Ukraine and the accommodation aspects of the plan to deal with the asylum crisis. There is a Director General leading the “mission” on migration and borders, and additional Directors General for Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and “Customer Services”, which comprises visas, passports and asylum casework. It is not clear who is in charge overall, and neither is there a unified purpose in the pursuit of shared objectives.
82. The immigration system is of course highly complex. It operates in a legal environment that was never designed with a single purpose, but has been created in *ad hoc* fashion by the courts and through changes to legislation and the immigration rules. It often deals with individuals who choose not to be compliant and require tough enforcement procedures to be used against them. It works in a context in which organised criminal groups exploit weaknesses in our border security and asylum system, and in which the governments of other countries can be uncooperative.

83. None of this means immigration control and border security are impossible to achieve. Yet where there should be one, coherent system of control and security, there are in fact several confused and conflicting systems working to contradictory ends. Officials working on the Channel crossings complain that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Kent Police – both operationally independent entities – were more cooperative than the Home Office’s own Asylum and Protection Group (now part of “Customer Services”).
84. Those who work to return illegal immigrants complain the flow of cases to them is too slow; those working on case-working complain the returns never happen. Enforcement teams say the visa service is too focused on customer service and not enough on compliance and curtailment. They also complain they arrest illegal immigrants, only to see no follow-up. Asylum seekers are often interviewed as late as two years after their initial claim, by which point they have started to establish a family life or disappeared into the black economy. Speed, senior officials say, means efficiency and better outcomes – but the system is not speedy; it is lethargic. The examples of disconnect are legion.
85. The limitations of existing data systems are often blamed for the poor hand-offs between different organisations in the immigration system. And poor access to data is cited as a reason for difficulties in making strategic decisions. “Ask what is going on,” said one official, “and you get multiple different spreadsheets from multiple people.” Another said, “it takes a team of people weeks to answer a straightforward question.” Ministers report asking what the asylum and enforcement systems might do better if they were given more resources, yet the department was unable to provide reliable models to answer. Of course modernising data systems is not straightforward and takes time and capital investment, but intelligent and interoperable systems, and unified data sets used consistently across the organisations would improve decision-making, systemic coherence and strategic leadership. We still lack a clear way of knowing exactly how many people are arriving in and leaving the country. The modernisation of data systems should be an urgent priority.
86. A frequent complaint is that there is a lack of internal coherence in the work of the department on immigration, with problems and contradictions sometimes only identified by directors general, the Permanent Secretary, special advisers or ministers – if they are identified at all. Vertical operations – for example on Afghan resettlement, asylum dispersal and accommodation – overlap and do the same tasks sometimes two and even three times. Local authorities have reported receiving calls from three different parts of the Home Office about the same issue. Home Office officials have made bids for accommodation at the same sites as contractors operating on behalf of the department.
87. The existing model needs to be replaced by a new systems-based approach. A Second Permanent Secretary should be appointed to direct the whole immigration system – with total authority to do so – and hold no additional responsibilities. The Permanent Secretary should retain responsibility for the department as a whole, but the Second Permanent Secretary should be clearly accountable for the performance of the immigration system and nothing else.

88. How the immigration system is structured will be the decision of the Home Secretary and Immigration Minister, advised by the Permanent Secretary and new Second Permanent Secretary. But there are several principles that should be applied:

- While matrix approaches are necessary in a complex organisation, there will need to be several vertical commands in the immigration system;
- The answer to challenges of interoperability and cross-cutting work lies in leadership, governance and accountability. Cross-cutting boards, regional structures and project teams with end-to-end control of processes provide the best answers;
- No one command should be allowed to get too big, regardless of the temptation to give more responsibilities to successful leaders, to see synergies between operations, or to reduce the number of director general posts;
- The immigration system should not become a department within a department, nor closed and unaccountable like the old UK Borders Agency. [REDACTED]
- Common data systems allowing officials in different parts of the immigration system to track cases and join up efforts are needed;
- There needs to be strategic clarity, with officials across the whole structure understanding not only their individual roles and the purpose of their particular teams and commands, but the overall objectives of the immigration system.

89. One specific issue the Second Permanent Secretary will need to address is the size of the “Customer Services” command, which comprises visas, passports and asylum casework. Not only is the language and culture of “customer services” inappropriate for asylum case-working, there is a legitimate question of whether the command is simply too large. Work on asylum risks engulfing senior officials who might otherwise focus on improving the passports and visas operations. The scale of the challenge with asylum is such that it requires its own director general.

90. Where end-to-end systems exist already, performance is highest. Such systems exist in the passports and visas operations, but not elsewhere. Of course it is not easy establishing clear systems across institutions that stretch across local government, national government, foreign governments, and organisations and agencies sponsored by different government departments. But the Home Office has struggled to establish clear end-to-end systems across the institutions it sponsors itself, such as between case-working and immigration enforcement.

91. The asylum system is a particular problem. The number of asylum cases processed within six months has fallen from around 8,000 in 2015 to 1,500 last year, and the proportion has fallen from around eighty per cent to just ten per cent. The backlog of stands at 166,000 cases, of which 101,000 were awaiting an initial decision. Cases that sit in the backlog become more complex with time, as claimants might become involved in criminal behaviour, illegal working, create new grounds for claiming asylum, such as converting to Christianity, and form relationships that lead them to claim the right to a family life. They also take up accommodation or sometimes simply disappear.

92. Lockdowns and Covid restrictions made productivity worse, but only accelerated the pre-existing trend. During the pandemic, the number of cases processed within six months fell from 2,000 to fewer than 600, or from twenty per cent of the total to six per cent. Officials report that if interviews could not be carried out in person, they were not carried out at all. Yet the productivity of decision-makers has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. There is a target to increase productivity to an average of four completed cases per decision-maker per week, but at present the average stands at just over one case per week.
93. Poor data systems are an important part of the problem. The Case Information Database (CID) is being phased out as it is replaced by Atlas, although this change has been subject to delays and caused “double-keying” as officials entered data on both systems. An interim system called ICATS was introduced to manage case progression, which had previously been carried out on Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Officials complained that ICATS was harder to use than Excel, and simple questions were harder to resolve. Atlas is perceived to be an improvement on CID, but there is scepticism that it will lead to transformative change.
94. Data and technology are only part of the explanation for problems in the wider system, however. Another explanation is about processes, and here officials face numerous obstacles in trying to make decisions. These include referrals to the safeguarding hub, for issues including mental health, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage; referrals for modern slavery; referrals to the Specialist Cases Unit, for example for Taliban security checks; security checks that need to be repeated when new aliases emerge; police and CPS involvement; family tracing; GP letters; research into new material facts that emerge during interviews; issues with Biometric Residence Permits and Application Registration Cards; and the fact that decisions cannot be served on claimants while they are in hotels, as doing so would make them the responsibility of the local authority concerned. These obstacles, and those facing the Case Progression Units, need to be addressed if productivity is to improve.
95. There are plenty of process improvements than can be made, such as addressing the fragmentation in case-working by establishing cohort teams working across organisational divides, and creating teams that specialise in particular nationalities. But legal changes – such as rules setting out when and how claims may be made – should also facilitate improvements in process. There is for example little or no scope for case-working to be usefully divided between simple and complex tracks, since applicants can make (often unfounded) modern slavery or rights-based claims at any stage in the process, meaning simple cases can suddenly become complex.
96. A change in culture would also help. For understandable reasons, a defensiveness has developed in the organisations of the immigration system. The asylum grant rate, for example, is higher in Britain compared to the European Union because decision-making is often defensive, anticipating the arguments and decisions that might be made in the courts. Senior officials observe that the system has become distracted by concerns about process, and rules about protection and safeguarding, rather than remaining focused on the real objective of control. The previous approach of setting stretching case-working targets has been replaced by a tendency to micro-manage the

process and goldplate safeguarding rules. Of course safeguarding matters, but a sensible process would build in policies that protect vulnerable people while remaining true to the objective of the system. There is a task for ministers and senior officials to reassure those employed in the immigration system that control matters, and that through their work immigration officials are serving the public.

97. Sometimes policy can contribute to inefficiency. For example, since the Nationality and Borders Act, asylum claims made by those who have travelled from a safe country are now treated as inadmissible, but if after six months it proves impossible to remove them to a third country, their claim transfers to the asylum system anyway. While the Rwanda scheme is held up by legal challenges, this policy has inadvertently created a situation in which claims are unprocessed for six months, building delay – and with delay further challenges in processing claims – into the system.
98. The steady development of reams of case law established by the courts has made processing asylum claims incredibly complex. The Home Office should commission a study into the radical simplification of immigration laws with a view to making the system more streamlined and easier for everyone – decision-makers, claimants and judges alike – to understand. The study should also make recommendations on where Parliament can define rights established by the European Convention on Human Rights clearly and more narrowly than would be the case if such definitions were left to existing and future case law.
99. This highly complex system relies on high-quality decision-making by executive officers, who are relatively junior officials. The Home Office needs to establish structures and policies that allow the system to work with this fact in mind. Asylum decision-makers cannot be expected to anticipate every possible appeal. Their decisions need to be shorter and clearer. There needs to be better – but not necessarily longer – training for decision-makers, better management, and greater efforts made to understand the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, with subsequent plans to improve, where possible, terms and conditions.
100. For test cases, senior officials and lawyers should pay closer attention to the quality of individual decisions. In the High Court ruling regarding the Rwanda scheme, for example, the Government won its case that Rwanda is generally safe for migrants sent there, but in the cases of the fifteen individuals the Home Office decisions were quashed by the Court on the grounds that they contained errors caused by poor processes and flawed reasoning.
101. There is insufficient training and preparation for junior officials to rise through the ranks within the organisations of the immigration system. Neither is there a structure that allows officials to earn experience in different parts of the system or in different locations. This may be a factor in poor retention records, and it also helps to explain the lack of operational experience among the most senior officials and, relatedly, the difficulties in recruiting for more senior posts. Work should be commissioned to explore how to allow more people to rise through the ranks and bring more operational experience into policy and senior roles.

102. The disconnect between leaders and their organisations is not only explained by the relative lack of operational experience among leaders, but physical distance too. Senior officials spend much of their time in the Home Office at Marsham Street, or working from home, rather than among their teams in operational centres such as Croydon, Sheffield and Liverpool. More effort should be made for leaders and managers to spend more time with their teams.
103. Events at Manston provide a case study in the problems with the immigration system. There is a separate review into what happened at Manston, but I have had the opportunity to review relevant submissions and documents and discuss the matter with officials. On 7 January 2022, a submission informed ministers: “Although we are working to ensure that the site will be sufficiently compliant to allow us to legally hold individuals there for up to 5 days, colleagues are working in parallel to design a better approach to processing them which can take us – depending ultimately on volumes – as near as possible to a 24 hour turn-round.”
104. Even though it was based on reasonable worst-case scenarios of peak daily arrivals of between 2,400 and 3,000, the advice was fatally over-optimistic. “Our ambitious starting position,” it said, “is to design Manston to be able to process 1,600 arrivals in any 24-hour period.” The number of arrivals never reached the levels envisaged in the reasonable worst-case scenarios (the daily record remains 1,295, in August last year), yet Manston blew up because of a lack of onward accommodation for asylum seekers, leaving the facility overcrowded and the department at risk of legal challenge.
105. Officials have admitted that the department was aware of serious problems at Manston, and yet information and advice came to this Home Secretary very late. Several familiar problems apply to Manston as they do to the broader system. First, a lack of clarity about who, ultimately, was responsible and accountable. Second, a misalignment of incentives and lack of joined-up thinking in different parts of the system: broadly between those trying to get claimants out of Manston and those trying to find accommodation. Third, a lack of operational wisdom, with more experienced officials and former officials explaining that the modelled turnaround time was never realistic. Fourth, an optimism bias, which showed not only in the plan for processing at Manston but the broader Channel crossings policy. The objective was to stop the crossings, understandably, but there was too little planning to prepare fully for the number of migrants arriving if the crossings continued. To compare the approach to the CONTEST strategy, while effort went into Prevent and Pursue, too little went into Prepare. There has been little accountability to date over what was a serious failure, and leaks and briefings against ministers came from within the department.
106. The enforcement of immigration laws is poor, and has grown considerably worse in recent years. Enforcement officials were drawn in to support work on the Channel crossings, although this support was withdrawn in January. But the Channel crossings cannot be the explanation for poor outcomes. There has been a significant decline in the flow of cases into Immigration Enforcement from the rest of the system since 2018. Refused cases have declined by eighty per cent. Curtailment of visas has reduced by

more than ninety per cent. And inflow into the Failed Asylum Seeker pool has reduced by forty per cent.

107. The productivity and performance data of Immigration Enforcement has fallen across the board. The return of Foreign National Offenders has reduced from 5,518 in 2018 to 2,278 in 2022. The enforced return of non-Foreign National Offenders has reduced from 3,718 to 527. The number of voluntary returns has fallen from 15,702 to 6,687. The number of enforcement visits is down from 14,828 to 9,366 and fines and penalties issued has fallen from £21 million to £16 million.
108. Following the Windrush scandal, Immigration Enforcement has received far less data from other government departments and public sector organisations. Officials complain that the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions are particularly uncooperative. Rather than allowing Immigration Enforcement to wash its data against other government databases and systems, officials are reduced to approaching public sector colleagues with requests to check individual names, and then only when there is a suspicion of serious criminality. There need to be rules in place that reflect the lessons of Windrush, but this is an overreaction, and proper data-sharing needs to be restored.
109. Similarly, the Shaw Review, into the welfare of people in immigration detention, has not necessarily led to better protections for those who are detained, but is, according to several of those I interviewed, now used as “an excuse not to do things”. Both the Shaw Review and the abuse of the Modern Slavery Act have become barriers to control in the immigration system: the former by drastically reducing the use of detention and the latter by allowing new ways of subverting official processes.
110. Familiar problems reappear. The hand-offs between Immigration Enforcement and other parts of the immigration system are poor, as are the hand-offs with the police and criminal justice system. There is a culture of defeatism among officers, and a sense that high failure rates are an unavoidable fact of life in the system. The work of Immigration Enforcement needs to be more intelligence-led and there needs to be a greater understanding of what works. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Like in other parts of the system, human rights laws and other legal processes work against the goal of enforcement. Those laws and processes should be reformed, but notwithstanding these challenges there is considerable room for improvements in productivity and performance.
111. Some argue that there is a case for the integration of Immigration Enforcement and Border Force, but this idea is attractive only at a superficial level. Both are complex organisations with different purposes and cultures. Both are in need of significant transformation in the coming years. Border Force, for example, has the potential to fundamentally change its operating model thanks to the increased use of technology including e-gates.
112. It will always be necessary to have a border policed by trained officers, and higher-risk passengers and maritime and aviation arrivals should always be met by teams of

officers with immigration powers. But in future ministers and officials should want to consider the appropriate balance between labour-saving technology and human deployment at the primary control point, and what this means for the most efficient use of Border Force resources. With imagination, Border Force has the opportunity to transform itself from a mass processing organisation with legal powers to an intelligence-led, investigations-based law enforcement asset.

113. Labour relations continue to be a problem within Border Force. Senior officials reported issues with Border Force officers refusing to be deployed at different terminals at Heathrow, for example, because they were contracted only to work at one particular terminal. I was told that on any given day at Heathrow, the number of officers deployed is far lower than those who are rostered. Given such cultural problems there, it is a matter of concern that few Border Force officials ever transfer from Heathrow because the terms and conditions are better. The Home Office needs to develop policies to modernise Border Force terms and conditions and end these outdated and unacceptable practices.
114. The recent strikes by Border Force officers – with the military standing in, supported by Border Force officers with IS81 powers to detain – have shown senior officials that the use of technology and smarter deployment of officers can lead to more effective ways of operating. Regardless of the value of such lessons, the Home Office should consider prohibiting the right to strike for Border Force officers, and allowing immigration legal powers to be vested in other law enforcement officers or trained crown servants.

Homeland Security Group

115. The work of the Homeland Security Group is changing as the threats to the country and its interests change. The counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, remains sound, although its Prevent strand requires reforms of the kind set out by William Shawcross in his review. Working with other government departments, HSG is now developing a strategy to counter hostile state activity.
116. The purpose of this report is not to analyse the balance of risks from the threats we face, and the new approach has been approved by the National Security Council. It should be noted, however, that while the Home Office is the Government's lead department for counter-terrorism work, this will not be the case for work to counter state threats. The Cabinet Office leads this strategy, with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office responsible for work overseas and the Home Office responsible for work in this country. Nonetheless, the Home Office plays a strong role in the development of the strategy, and I did not encounter any problems of organisation or coordination.
117. As technology changes, so do the methods used by those who want to harm us. [REDACTED] There is no longer a clear demarcation between international, domestic and cyber threats, and increasingly there is a blurring of lines between hostile states, terrorist organisations and organised criminal groups. [REDACTED]



118. There is coordination of these efforts, of course. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The National Security Adviser and National Security Council provide coordination on security issues, comprising intelligence, cyber, defence and foreign policy, of strategic importance across government. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

119 [REDACTED]

120. To improve ministerial oversight, I recommend building on the role of the Security Minister, who at present attends Cabinet and the National Security Council. This status should be institutionalised, with the role upgraded to become Chief Secretary for Security, still reporting to the Home Secretary, and equivalent to the relationship between the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

121 [REDACTED]

122. Regarding the Prevent strand of CONTEST, familiar problems remain. Prevent is a vital part of our approach to counter-terrorism, and undoubtedly plays an important role in stopping radicalisation and saving lives. Its portrayal as an authoritarian

programme that persecutes and spies on British Muslims is incorrect and offensive. It should be defended robustly from an organised campaign to destroy its credibility.

123. But as William Shawcross notes in his review, there are several serious problems with Prevent that need to be ironed out. The Home Secretary has promised to implement recommendations of the Shawcross Review quickly. But because even a reformed Prevent will remain only part of the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, I also recommend the development of broader counter-extremism and social integration strategies.

124. The delivery of Prevent is dependent upon the wider public sector and indeed the population at large. This presents the Home Office with serious challenges in the delivery of Prevent. All government departments, and the wider public sector, need to respect the core principle that the state should not engage with or fund those aligned with extremism.

Annex: terms of reference

The Post Holder will be appointed as an Independent Consultant working directly to the Home Secretary. At the end of their tenure, they will report to the Home Secretary with recommendations to ensure the Home Secretary is served effectively, and that the Department is set up to succeed.

Specifically, the postholder will be responsible for:

- Advising on improvements to the structures and systems which support Home Secretary decision making
- Reflections on how to improve the delivery system and structures within the Home Office to maximise successful delivery of Home Secretary and government priorities
- Recommendations to ensure the Home Secretary's time is used efficiently and effectively
- Suggesting improvements to ways of working within private office and the wider Ministerial team

The post holder will not advise on policy or specific operational delivery. The post holder will have access to HO email and IT for the purposes of conducting this work. The post holder will be expected to meet with relevant officials, Ministers and Special Advisors. They will be supported by [REDACTED] for the purposes of progressing this work. The Post Holder may attend relevant meetings with the Home Secretary provided they hold appropriate security clearance.

The post holder will not directly commission the department for advice.