



# **Setting up the office of the Independent Chief Inspector for the UK Border Agency (ICIUKBA)**

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# Background



The Home Secretary asked for a full review of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate in July 2006. This committed the Government to “consult on an...independent regulator to provide a transparent assessment of IND as a whole”.

At the time of the 2006 Review, there were a number of different inspection, monitoring and advisory bodies, but there was:

- No assessment of overall effectiveness
- No assessment of enforcement
- No overall assessment of decision making
- No assessment of access to decision making
- Limited assessment of treatment of individuals

# Powers



## SECTION 48 OF THE UK BORDERS ACT 2007

- (2) The Chief Inspector shall monitor and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Border and Immigration Agency; in particular, the Chief Inspector shall consider and make recommendations about:
- (a) consistency of approach within the Border and Immigration Agency
  - (b) the practice and performance of the Border and Immigration Agency compared to other persons doing similar things
  - (c) practice and procedure in making decisions
  - (d) the treatment of claimants and applicants
  - (e) certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (c.41) (unfounded claim)

# Powers



## SECTION 48 OF THE UK BORDERS ACT 2007, *continued*

- (f) compliance with law about discrimination in the exercise of functions, including reliance on section 19d of the Race Relations Act 1976 (c.74) (exception for immigration functions)
- (g) practice and procedure in relation to the exercise of enforcement powers (including powers of arrest, entry, search and seizure)
- (h) the provision of information
- (i) the handling of complaints
- (j) the content of information about conditions in countries outside the United Kingdom which the Secretary of State compiles and makes available, for purposes connected with immigration and asylum, to immigration officers and other officials

# What is the UKBA?



- 25,000 staff in 135 countries and in every part of the UK
- Budget of £2bn
- One of the largest law enforcement agencies in the UK
- Three strategic objectives:
  - To protect the UK border and UK national interests
  - To tackle border tax fraud, smuggling and immigration crime
  - To implement fair and fast decisions

# First Steps



- Define my vision and purpose
- Look elsewhere for inspiration
- Recruit good staff
- Devise a plan
- Manage both set-up *and* delivery

# Purpose & Vision



We work to ensure independent scrutiny of the work of the UK Border Agency, providing confidence and assurance as to its effectiveness and efficiency

Our vision is to see that the United Kingdom Border Agency delivers fair, consistent and respectful services, acting as a catalyst for improvement

# Challenges ICIUKBA faced



- Existing team was very small
- Needed to recruit people fast
- BUT could not compromise on quality
- Unique skill set required
- Needed to ensure Value for Money
- Needed to establish the culture and recruit appropriate individuals

# Values



- High Quality
  - The best of its type, respected, influential and highly regarded
- Fair/Transparent
  - Inclusive, values dignity, respect and consideration, consistency of approach
- Delivery focused
  - Strategic not tactical, to create a distinction between the Chief Inspector's role and the role of the Chief Executive of the UKBA; efficient in its processes, pragmatic in its approach
- Frank
  - Honest, straight-forward, upfront, truthful, direct, candid, open, plain-speaking, firm, in control, unwavering, determined
- Impartial/Objective
  - Fair, equal, even-handed
  - Rigorous, independent, consistent, unbiased

# Inspection Style



- Will consult with the Agency and stakeholders to ensure inspection resources targeted in the best way
- Will be rigorous and evidence-based
- Will take a constructive and balanced approach
- The aim is to drive improvement and provide independent scrutiny and public reassurance

# External Expertise



→ Commissioned Mendas Ltd to design and deliver the process with us

- Firm of Occupational Psychologists
- Experts in assessment and development
- Values and approach in line with ours
  - Fairness
  - Independence
  - Objectivity
  - Transparency
  - High Quality
  - Best Practice



# Best Practice Approach to Design



- Conducted thorough role analysis
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Competency card sort
  - Critical Incident technique
  - Range of stakeholders
- Selected a range of assessment methods
  - Interactive exercise
  - Written Exercise
  - Competency-based Interview
- Designed bespoke assessments
- Piloted interactive and written exercises
- ICI worked in collaboration with Mendas



# Considerations for Exercise Scenario



- Set within an inspectorate context, but inspecting what?
- Non-UKBA scenario
  - Ensure level playing field for all candidates
- Face Validity
  - Reflect human element of UKBA, including diversity issues
  - Reflect scale and complexity of UKBA
- Reflect specific nature of the roles
  - BUT keeping design costs to a minimum
- Flexibility and Longevity
  - Minimise future design costs



# Scenario



- UK Defence Force Inspectorate (UKDFI)
  - Newly set up inspectorate
- UK Defence Force
  - Created in 2013 to manage and coordinate all military activity and personnel (army, navy and RAF)
  - Defence Force Communities (DFC's) - set-up to integrate all military disciplines and encourage 'community living'
  - Also a focus on integration with the wider community.
- Set in 2018



# Best Practice Approach to Delivery



- Pre-event communication
  - Transparency
- Two-stage process
  - Stage 1: Interactive and Written Exercise
  - Stage 2: Competency-based Interview
- 'Day in the life' set-up
  - Candidates manage their own time
  - Reflect level of roles
- Use of camera technology
  - Better candidate experience – more realistic
  - Use of DVD for development



# Best Practice Approach to Delivery cont....



- Assessor pairs
  - 1 ICI and 1 Mendas, working in collaboration
  - Either assess written or interactive for any given candidate
- Use of professional actors
  - Increase consistency
- Pre-agreed decision-making criteria
- Wash-up
- Written feedback for all candidates



# Recruitment outcomes



- Designed and delivered the first recruitment campaign within 8 weeks
- Adopted a lessons learnt approach
  - Introduced an interactive microsite
  - Revised application and sifting process
- Used scenario to create exercises for other roles
- Recruited high quality team
- Up-skilled ICI staff in sifting and assessment skills



# Recruitment outcomes cont...



- Positive candidate feedback
  - 100% agreed or strongly agreed the assessment event was fair
  - 100% agreed or strongly agreed that they were treated openly, honestly and professionally
  - “The exercises were well balanced and did give the opportunity to display ability”
  - Role play very good as it was relevant to the ICI
- Shared best practice with other inspectorates
  - HMI Prisons and HMI Constabulary utilised exercises





# What's happening now?



- Delivery of inspection programme
- Ongoing development for team
  - Analysis of assessment data used for:
    - Individual development plans
    - Establish team profile of strengths & development areas
  - Used team profile to inform learning and development solutions at organisational level
- Developing a Quality Assurance Strategy for the Inspectorate to ensure that we are making a difference to the work of UKBA.

# Conclusions



- Established the culture of my organisation
  - Having clear purpose, visions and values
  - Adopting a best practice and bespoke approach to recruiting my team
  - Commitment to ongoing development of team and methodology
  
- Commitment to ensuring I fulfill my remit
  - Produce inspection reports that address the issues where there's a cause for concern or a need for public reassurance
  - provide public scrutiny that will improve the level of debate about the effectiveness of measures to secure the UK's border and the treatment of asylum seekers.
  - committed to helping to ensure that all UKBA services are fair, respectful and consistent, taking account of its customers whilst maintaining border security

# Contact Details



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