



immigration update 2

Border and Immigration Agency

The Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) is no more. It is now called the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA).

BIA essentially does what IND did previously. However, it has six new Regional Directors; and the Home Office say this will allow them to be responsive to regional issues and stakeholders.

Strictly speaking, BIA has only 'shadow' agency status, which means that for the time being it will have less independence from Ministers than a 'full' agency.

What all this means remains to be seen. Stakeholding arrangements are yet to be settled. The time when regional responsiveness or consistency across regions can be assessed remains some distance away.

UK Borders Bill

Since the previous Update, the Bill has now passed through Committee in the House of Commons. The Government have introduced new clauses for an offence of assaulting an Immigration Officer and empowering the Secretary of State to appoint a Chief Inspector to monitor and report upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the new BIA.

The remainder of the Bill is largely unchanged. It will shortly receive its Third Reading in the Commons before being sent to the Lords for further scrutiny.

New Immigration Fees

On 2 April, the Home Office introduced new and significantly increased fees for a variety of immigration applications. They aim to raise revenue for implementing their immigration strategy.

There are transitional arrangements for those who apply with the wrong fee; and for those applying for ILR who have not included evidence of knowledge of English language and life in the UK (see information sheet on "Applying for

Settlement"). Further information including on the transitional arrangements can be found at: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/newsarchive/newimmigrationfeesapril2007>.

UASC Reform

Last month the Home Office published its consultation paper: *Planning Better Outcomes and Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children*.

For further information, please see the information sheet on "Children's Asylum Claims".

Zimbabwean and Darfuri Asylum Claims

The Court of Appeal has recently issued important judgments affecting the claims of asylum seekers from Zimbabwe and Darfur. Information sheets are available on both.

Legacy Cases

In July 2006, the Home Secretary announced a backlog of around 450,000 asylum cases. These are to be concluded within 5 years. They are called legacy cases.

The legacy directorate at the Home Office has issued questionnaires for dealing with legacy cases. This has led some to think the Home Office is conducting a general amnesty or regularisation process. However, this is a misunderstanding. Further information is available from the "Legacy Cases" information sheet.

Legal Aid

At the beginning of April, legal aid firms were required to sign up to the new contract. Most did so. However, the arrangements expected to be introduced in October 2007 remain highly unsatisfactory.

Further information will shortly be available in a separate information sheet called "Legal Aid Future".

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