

Inspection Report Published: An inspection of the Home Office's processing of family visas September 2021 – February 2022

News story

This inspection examined the Home Office's processing of indefinite leave to remain applications on the family visa route.



The inspection report focused on:

- the efficiency of the process and the quality of decisions
- the accessibility of the application process for applicants
- the impact on an applicant (and their family) when they are placed on a 10-year route to settlement
- whether assurances are in place to ensure that discretion is being exercised in decision-making, where appropriate, to put the applicant at the forefront of the process.

Publishing the report, David Neal, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), said:

I welcome the publication of my report into the processing of indefinite leave to remain (ILR) applications on the family visa route (under Appendix FM).

This was a positive inspection and my inspectors found that decision makers were employing evidential flexibility rather than automatically refusing applications. This demonstrates a team that is taking steps to see the 'face behind the case' and is encouraging to see in the post-Windrush era.

However, clearer and more readily accessible guidance on how to submit an application and the evidence required, with updates on application progress from the Home Office, would represent better 'value for money' for the applicant. I hope that the focus on Customer Services as part of the transformation of the Home Office ("One Home Office") will go some way to address the complexity of the application process.

Home Office data indicates that the vast majority of applications that reach the ILR stage are granted, so delay, complexity and barriers to full integration into our society seem unnecessary.

I find the 6-month service standard difficult to reconcile when compared with the shorter service standards for entry clearance and further leave to remain applications on the same route. The lack of an effective triage system, which results in straightforward applications (95% of which will be granted ILR) sometimes being delayed until the 5-month point, is unfair and needs to be fixed quickly.

Finally, given that it is 10 years since Appendix FM was introduced, the Home Office should collect targeted data to understand the impact of the 10-year route on low-income families and those who become undocumented due to the protracted route to settlement, which should inform a refresh of the Equality Impact Assessment.

This report made 4 recommendations. The Home Office has accepted 2 of them and partially accepted 2. I am pleased that work is already underway to implement them.

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[Support for new affordable green finance products to drive up energy efficiency](#)

- New fund to boost the choice of affordable green finance products for homeowners to help them reduce energy consumption
- government encourages lenders to innovate in the green finance market so

- families can lower their energy bills and reduce their carbon emissions
- research shows houses with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating C sell for 5% more than less energy efficient ones

New support launched by the government today will help banks, building societies and the wider finance industry to create more green finance products for homeowners.

The new products will be designed specifically for those looking to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

Ministers are keen to scale up the green finance market and provide households with more choice of affordable finance options to retrofit their homes, helping them spend less on energy. It is part of wider efforts towards ensuring as many homes as possible to EPC band C by 2035 as possible.

Up to £20 million is being made available for lenders and other organisations, through the Green Home Finance Accelerator, to develop new lending products which provide upfront and affordable capital to those who can afford it, to help make their homes more comfortable, cheaper to run and with lower carbon footprints.

The funding will be used to support lenders and other providers to develop, test, and pilot new and innovative green finance products that can help a wide range of homeowners overcome the upfront costs of larger retrofit. It also seeks to boost knowledge and understanding about green finance and how energy efficiency can make homes cheaper to run.

It follows the launch of the new Energy Price Guarantee, which has capped the bill for a typical UK household to an average of around £2,500 a year until April next year. It also comes in addition to the £400 energy bills discount for all UK households.

20% of emissions come from buildings and nearly 2 thirds of owner-occupied homes are below EPC C rating, meaning their energy bills could be hundreds of pounds more than homes with a higher EPC rating.

The average EPC rating of owner-occupied homes is D. Owners of these properties can help push their homes to EPC C through various measures, depending on the property. This can often be by fitting small things like LED bulbs or heating controls. On other properties it might mean installing cavity wall and loft insulation and possibly insulating draughty floors, which together would cost on average £6,500. But these could save households over £300 a year on their energy bills. The financial products today's funding will help create would ensure households have access to the money they need to make this kind of investment in their homes.

Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, Lord Callanan, said:

Driving up the energy efficiency of homes won't only reduce our

impact on the climate, but will also help houses stay warmer for longer.

Green finance products will allow households with greater means to spread costs over time, empowering them to be able to invest in their properties, improving their energy efficiency and resale value.

Today's funding will give more companies in the financial sector the opportunity to create and offer these products, and in so doing help households reap the benefits both in the investment to their properties, and in the savings they can make on their energy bills.

Today's announcement is the latest in a raft of measures designed to help improve the energy efficiency of the country's housing stock.

The government's £12 billion [Help to Heat](#) schemes includes the £450 million [Boiler Upgrade Scheme](#), which opened to voucher applications in May 2022. This is already incentivising people to move towards low carbon heating, offering grants of £5,000 towards the upfront cost of the installation of an air source heat pump, and £6000 for a ground source heat pump.

The government is providing £4 billion between 2022 and 2026 to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, with 450,000 low-income households having their homes retrofitted with the likes of wall and loft insulation, solar panels and modern heating controls.

Homes Director for Lloyds Banking Group, Andrew Asaam, said:

Around 2 thirds of homes don't currently achieve an EPC C rating, meaning millions of people are living in colder, draughtier, more expensive to heat homes than they need to.

We are committed to helping people improve their properties, cut their carbon emissions, lower their fuel bills, and live more comfortably in their homes. We will continue to develop, test, and launch products that incentivise, support, and reward energy efficiency home improvements.

It follows the Green Home Finance Innovation Fund in 2019, which supported the likes of Monmouthshire Building Society and Lloyds Banking Group to develop online home energy saving tools and green mortgages. They help customers work out how energy efficient their homes are and create an individualised plan for improving this, with additional borrowing at preferential rates to existing customers and tailored green mortgages to new ones.

- Funded through the £1 billion BEIS [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#), the [Green Home Finance Accelerator programme \(GHFA\)](#) competition opens to applications today (18 October 2022). There are no restrictions on the

types of organisations who can apply, other than that they must be UK based businesses; however applicants must demonstrate that their project proposal will lead to a viable green finance product and that they have the resources and expertise to deliver this. Consortiums of different partners (for example a lender and an energy efficiency supplier, installer or advice provider) are encouraged. Information on the competition, including the application form, guidance documents and other resources, are available from the [GHFA website](#).

- the GHFA has an emphasis on encouraging novel and innovative finance product and service proposals which the market is unlikely to deliver on its own, and which will target and support consumer types less well served by existing green finance offers
- energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measure costs and savings will vary by property type and size. Likely bill savings will also be influenced by energy price fluctuation, and the costs and savings detailed above are illustrative only. Individual property owners and households can use the government's new digital [energy efficiency advice service](#) to assess the efficiency of their home and determine suitable improvements. Through the advice service households will be able to obtain information on the estimated costs of installing any recommended improvement(s), how much a measure could save on household bills and get information on next steps if they wish to make the improvement(s)
- the typical UK house price was reported as £273,751 by [Nationwide](#) in August 2022.
- a [pricing study](#) commissioned by BEIS demonstrated a 5% increase in property value in homes with an EPC Band C rating, compared to those with an EPC Band D, when building size and archetype were controlled for. Similar price benefits were identified by a study commissioned by Monmouthshire Building Society as part of their BEIS funded [Green Home Finance Innovation Fund project](#)
- find further information on the [Boiler Upgrade Scheme and how to apply](#)

[Appointment of Bishop of Liverpool: 18 October 2022](#)

Press release

Her Late Majesty The Queen approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Dr John Perumbalath, Area Bishop of Bradwell, for election as Bishop of Liverpool.



Her Late Majesty The Queen approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Dr John Perumbalath, Area Bishop of Bradwell, for election as Bishop of Liverpool, in succession to The Right Reverend Paul Bayes following his retirement.

John hails from the ancient Syrian Christian community in Kerala, India, and trained for ministry at Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. He worked as a youth worker for university students and as a theological educator before his ordination in the Diocese of Calcutta, Church of North India.

He was Curate at St John's Church, Calcutta, from 1994 and was appointed Vicar at St James' Church in 1995. John then served as Vicar of St Thomas' Church in 2000, as well as Chaplain at St Thomas' Secondary School.

In 2002, John moved to the UK and was appointed Associate Rector at St George's Church, Beckenham, in the Diocese of Rochester. He then served as Team Vicar of Northfleet and Rosherville in addition to Diocesan Advisor for Thames Gateway Regeneration. In 2008, he was appointed Vicar at All Saints Perry Street and served also as Diocesan Urban Officer.

John was appointed Archdeacon of Barking in 2013, in the Diocese of Chelmsford, and took up his current role as Area Bishop of Bradwell in 2018. He chairs the Churches Refugee Network for Britain and Ireland and is the Church of England's lead bishop for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

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Insolvency Rules Committee: Appointment of 2 Barrister members

News story

Ministers have approved the appointment of Oliver Hyams and Daniel Warents as

Barrister Members of the Insolvency Rules Committee for 3 years from 31 October 2022.



Ministers have approved the of Oliver Hyams and Daniel Warents as Barrister Members of the Insolvency Rules Committee for 3 years from 31 October 2022.

Biography:

Oliver is a barrister practising from Gatehouse Chambers.

He specialises in insolvency, civil fraud and asset recovery, and commercial litigation. Oliver is recommended as a leading junior for insolvency in the Legal 500, and he regularly writes and lectures on insolvency issues.

He has not declared any political activity.

The appointment as a Barrister Member of the IRC is made under Section 413(3)(e) of the Insolvency Act 1986 Appointments.

Biography:

Daniel Warents is a Commercial Chancery barrister with a particular interest in insolvency. He has been in practice as a self-employed barrister at XXIV Old Buildings since 2010, following the completion of his pupillage. Daniel is a graduate of Downing College, Cambridge where he obtained an undergraduate degree in law followed by an LLM.

He has not declared any political activity.

The appointment as a Barrister member of the IRC is made under Section 413(4) of the Insolvency Act 1986,

The appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments

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UK, D-Cast help students learn how to mitigate plastic pollution

The workshop aimed to use art to connect with young people, raise awareness of the issue, change behaviours toward plastic pollution, and protect marine life.

Supported by the British High Commission in Honiara together with the British Council and Dreamcast Theatre Solomon Islands, students aged between 9 to 11 years, worked remotely with renowned UK artist Mandy Barker to create pieces of artwork made from everyday plastics. Their artwork will be exhibited at the Dreamcast Theatre Art Hub from Tuesday 18 October onwards.

Plastics can be detrimental to both humans and marine biodiversity once used and thrown into our waterways, streams, and river systems. While some are recyclable, others cannot, and sadly most waste on land often ends up in our oceans.

In Honiara city, single-use plastics can be seen along the drains, streets, beachfront, streams, and rivers. Whilst there have been significant waste management efforts by the Honiara City Council, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the issue and prevent plastic pollution.

This is why a group of students from schools in Honiara is coming together to create an art exhibition at Dreamcast Theatre turning plastic waste into art.

Themed “Our Ocean and Plastics”, the workshop aims to use art to connect with young people and raise awareness of the issue, changing behaviours towards plastic pollution, and protecting the marine biodiversity in the Solomon Islands.

Mandy Barker is an international award-winning photographer whose work involving marine plastic debris, over the past 12 years, has received global recognition.

Working with marine scientists Mandy’s artwork aims to raise awareness about plastic pollution in the world’s oceans, highlighting the harmful effect on marine life and ourselves.

Acting British High Commissioner to Solomon Island, Nicola Noble said:

I’m delighted the UK is working in partnership with Dreamcast Theatre to support this special program on Ocean Plastics. Over eight million tonnes of plastic are discarded into the world’s oceans each year, putting marine wildlife under serious threat.

This workshop will provide children in Honiara with a unique opportunity to work remotely with Mandy Barker to raise awareness of this important issue through creative art. I very much look

forward to seeing the children's creations at the art exhibition on Tuesday and thank everyone involved in this important work.

The workshop has been developed as a result of discussions by the British High Commission in Honiara, the British Council in New Zealand, Aotearoa, and Dreamcast Theatre Group, and is funded through the UK's Climate Diplomacy Fund.

Natasha Beckman, Director of the British Council New Zealand and the Pacific said:

British Council New Zealand and the Pacific are very excited to work together on this project with the British High Commission, Honiara, and Dreamcast Theatre Group, and school children between 9 to 11 years old in the Solomon Islands.

We need our children to be aware of the problem of plastic pollution but also to help them have creative ways of dealing with the problem. Our children are our future and equipping them with the right knowledge of plastic pollution, and its effects on marine biodiversity are vital.

Meanwhile, UK artist, Mandy Barker joined the two-day workshop virtually via Zoom and she was excited to be working with children in the Solomon Islands. She said:

It's a pleasure to be involved in such a unique opportunity and to connect across the ocean from the UK to the Solomon Islands. To be able to share my work, raise awareness, and inform young people about the plastic pollution issue, in a location that is in much need of help, is an honor. I hope it will make a difference in the community and go on to inspire change.

About 30 schoolchildren from Koloale, Coronation, Perch, Tuvarufu, and the Honiara Integrated Community Schools in Honiara took part in the workshop. They had the opportunity to listen to Mandy Barker on creating art out of plastic waste. The students used collected plastic waste materials from the beachfront in Honiara to create art pieces for display.

Their completed artwork will be on exhibition at the Dreamcast Theatre Art Hub in China Town from the afternoon of 18 October (Tuesday) onwards and will be open for public viewing for one week. A film and other informative materials will also be produced during the workshop and will be posted online for the wider world to see.