

[News story: The Chief Inspector's report on the Home Office's asylum intake and casework has been published](#)

Mr Bolt said:

"The Home Office devotes significant resources to managing asylum claims. Nonetheless, it continues to struggle to keep on top of the volumes of claims it receives. In 2016-17, despite the evident commitment and hard work of those involved, high staff turnover, prolonged staffing gaps and inexperience caused problems that were not easily or quickly fixed.

"As a consequence, the number of claims awaiting an initial decision rose during the year, as did the proportion deemed 'non-straightforward' and therefore set outside the published service standard of 6 months for a decision. The inspection also found issues with decision quality. Given the life-changing nature of asylum decisions, the Home Office's performance needs to improve.

"The Home Office has described the asylum system as "in transition". I am aware of its plans to transform and enable it to cope better with peaks in demand. However, these plans were not sufficiently advanced at the time of this inspection for their effectiveness to be tested.

"My message to the Home Office is that it needs to accelerate its transformation plans and to ensure it has asylum processing and decision making under control as soon as possible. Otherwise, the next peak in asylum intake, or trough in staffing levels, will see it fall further behind.

"This inspection makes 7 recommendations for improvement. The Home Office has accepted 6 in full and 1 in part. I look forward to revisiting this important area of the Home Office's work in due course and checking on the progress made.

"In the meantime, for the sake of clarity, while the Home Office response is correct in saying that I found no evidence that asylum policy and processes are gender biased, this was because the data was insufficiently detailed to permit meaningful analysis. This is not a positive finding – data collection needs to improve if the Home Office is to persuade stakeholders that their concerns are unfounded."

The completed report was sent to the Home Secretary on 25 September 2017.

[An Inspection of asylum intake and casework.](#)

[Home Office's response to the Chief Inspector's reports](#)