National Audit Office

Departmental Overview, November 2018

Department for International Development

Department for International Development (DfID)

This overview summarises the work of the Department for International Development (the Department) including what it does, how much it spends, recent and planned changes, and what to look out for across its main business areas and services.

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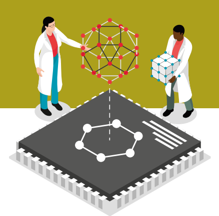

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About the Department

The Department for International Development (the Department) leads the UK government's effort to end extreme poverty, deliver the UN's Sustainable Development Goals overseas, and tackle global challenges in line with the government's UK Aid Strategy.

The UK Aid Strategy (November 2015) has four objectives.

1. Strengthen global peace, security and governance.
2. Strengthen resilience and response to crisis.
3. Promote global prosperity.
4. Tackle extreme poverty and help the world's most vulnerable.

The Department **is committed to spending 50% of its budget in fragile states and regions.**

The Department's **Single Departmental Plan** sets its objectives and how it will achieve them. These objectives are aligned with those established by the UK Aid Strategy (see above). It also includes an objective to *Improve the value for money and efficiency of UK aid.*

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP was appointed **Secretary of State** for International Development in November 2017.

Matthew Rycroft joined the Department as **Permanent Secretary** in January 2018.

The UK has committed to spending 0.7% of UK gross national income on **Official Development Assistance** (ODA).

The Department works with a range of organisations to help it deliver its objectives

With other UK government departments

- Working with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs on combatting the effects of climate change.
- Contributing to the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (focused on conflict and instability) and the Prosperity Fund (focused on promoting growth and prosperity) – both in developing countries.
- Developing Joint Serious and Organised Crime platforms with the Home Office and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
- Promoting trade alongside the Department for International Trade.

Bilaterally with partner countries

- Working in 32 countries (across Asia, Africa and the Middle East) and five regions (across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean), and through development relationships with three Overseas Territories – distributing aid focused on development and humanitarian projects, working with both local and multilateral organisations.
- The Department also has what it describes as development partnerships with China, India and South Africa.

With civil society

- Offering volunteering programmes including the International Citizen Service (for young people) and the Volunteering for Development programme (for skilled professionals).
- Providing funding to organisations via UK Aid Direct.

With multilateral organisations

- Supporting peacekeeping and security through the UN Security Council and the World Bank.
- Combating disease and encouraging public health programmes with, for example, GAVI (the Vaccine Alliance) and the World Health Organization.
- Providing humanitarian aid through, for example, the United Nations Development Programme and World Food Programme.
- Protecting women and children through, for example, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

With the private sector

- Contracting with private sector organisations to advise on and/or implement the Department's programmes
- Promoting investment through CDC Group plc, the UK's Development Finance Institution.

How the Department is structured

The Department is organised into **four divisions:**

1

Country Programmes

Includes the Department's work in overseeing its programmes in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Overseas Territories (see details overleaf).

2

Economic Development and International

For example, economic development and international relations.

3

Policy, Research and Humanitarian

Includes policy development and research and evidence; stabilisation; humanitarian, security and migration issues; and the chief scientist and chief economist.

4

Corporate Performance Group

Includes HR, finance, communications, and strategy development.

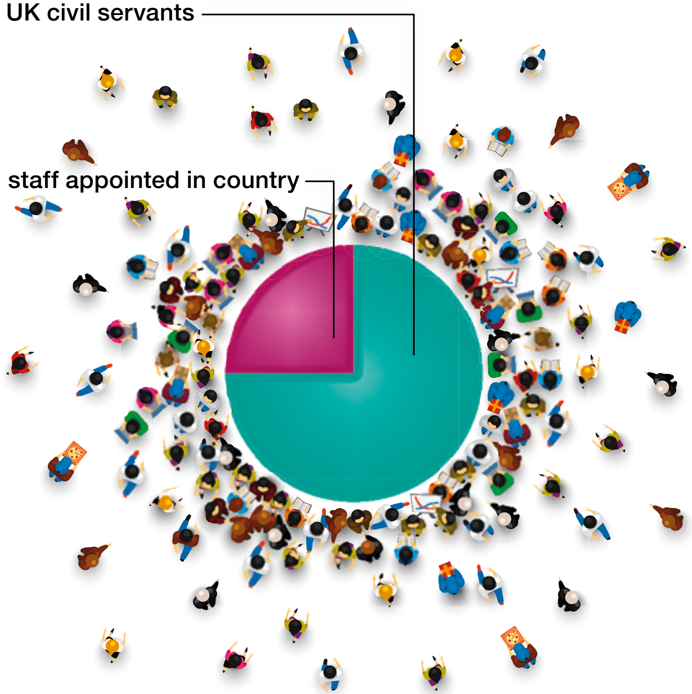
The Department is the sole shareholder in the UK's Development Finance Institution, **CDC Group plc**, which provides capital investment to businesses in developing countries.

The Department **employed almost 3,400 people at the end of March 2018**

75% UK civil servants

and

25% staff appointed in country

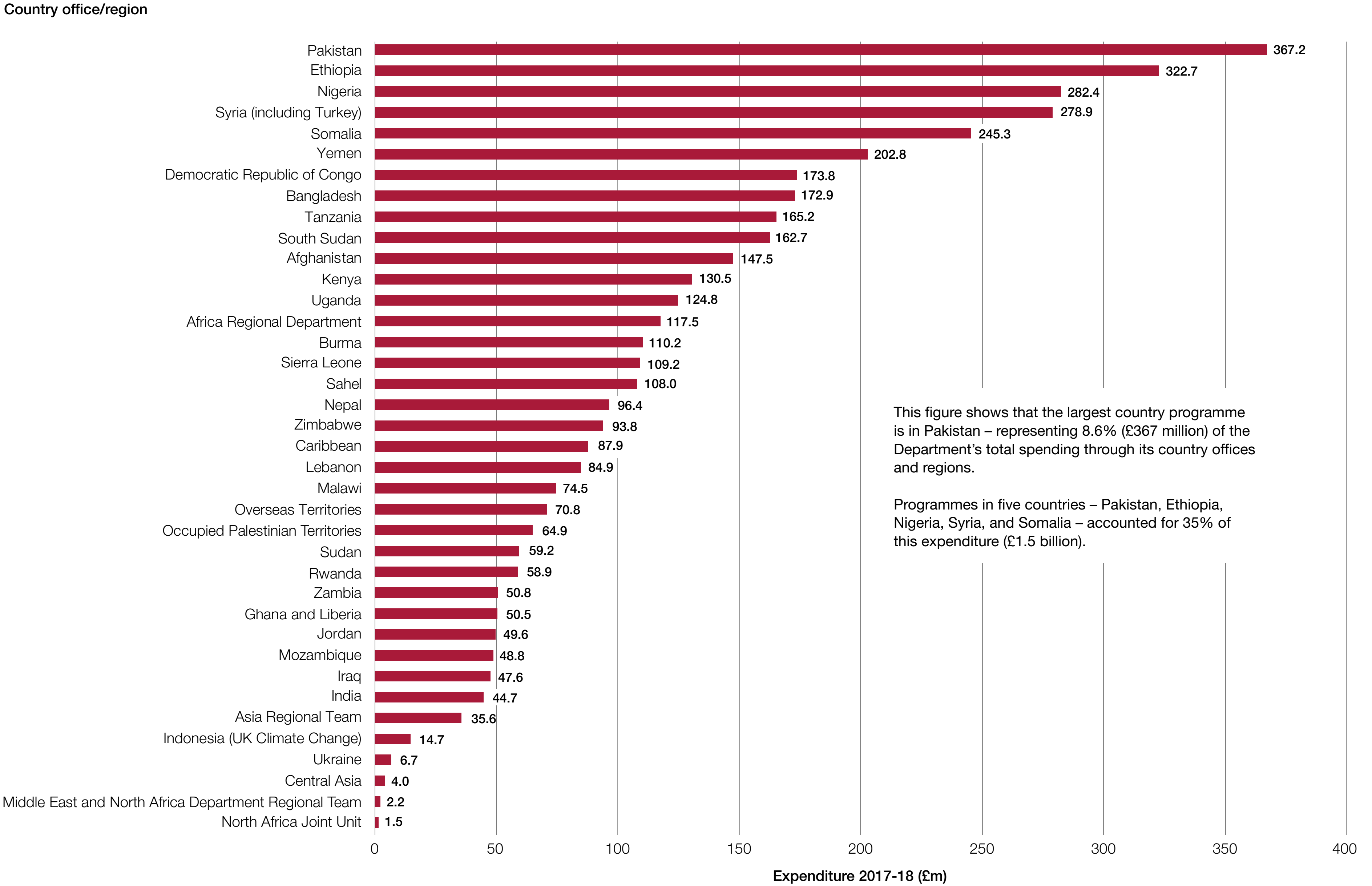


The Department is also responsible for **two non-departmental public bodies.**

- The **Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom**, which manages the UK contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme.
- The **Independent Commission for Aid Impact**, which provides independent scrutiny of UK government aid.

How the Department is structured

Programme spend by country office and region – 2017-18



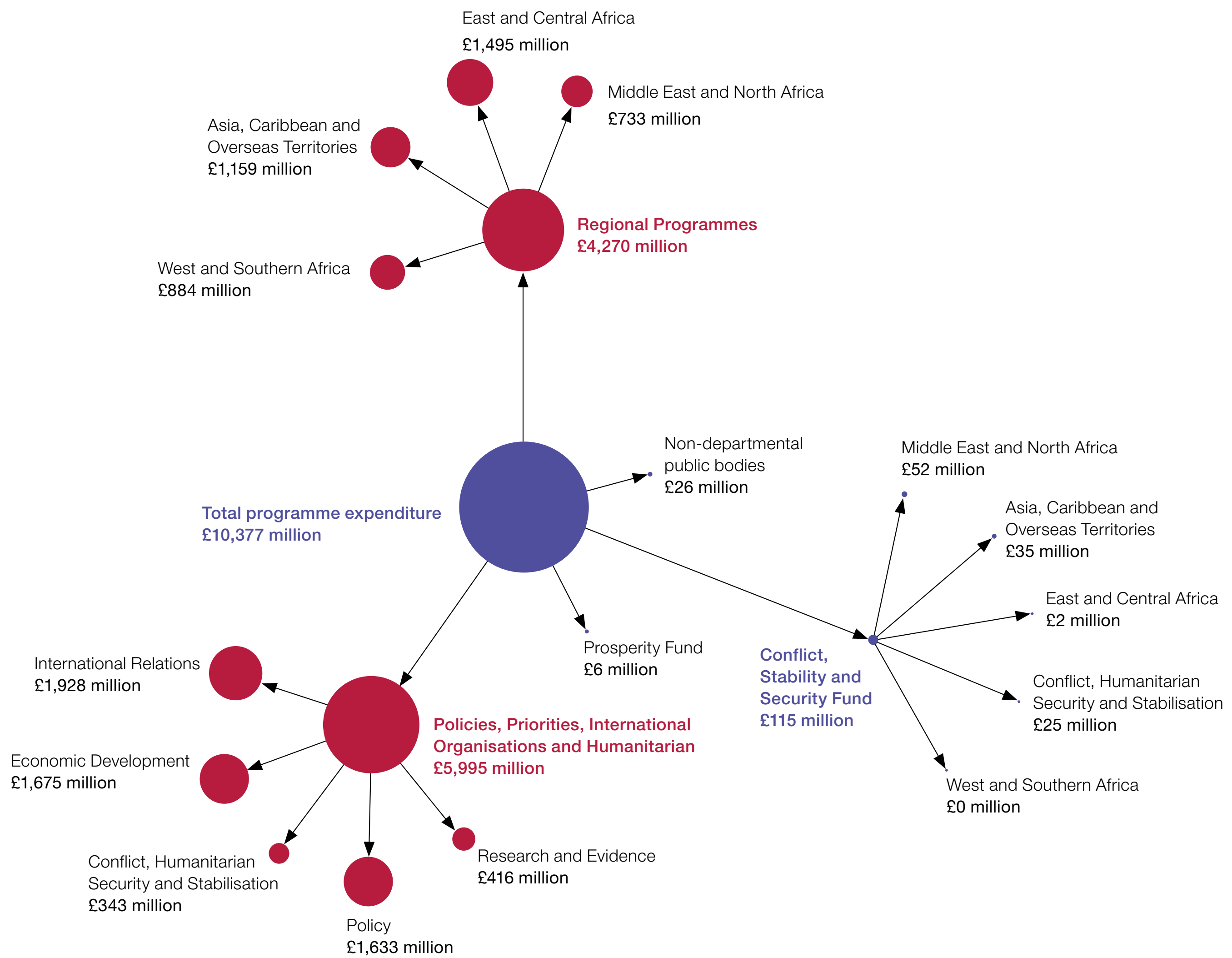
This figure shows that the largest country programme is in Pakistan – representing 8.6% (£367 million) of the Department's total spending through its country offices and regions.

Programmes in five countries – Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Syria, and Somalia – accounted for 35% of this expenditure (£1.5 billion).

Source: Department for International Development *Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18*

How the Department spends its money – funding development and humanitarian programmes

In 2017-18 the Department spent £11 billion across all of its activities



Notes

1 Total programme expenditure takes account of income of £35 million from loan repayments.

2 Figures may not cast due to rounding.

3 Figures are rounded to the nearest milion.

Source: Department for International Development *Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18*

In 2017-18 the Department spent **£10,969 million against a budget of £11,210 million** – an underspend of £241 million.

The majority – £10,377 million (94.6%) – was spent on **development** and **humanitarian programmes.**

- Almost 60% of the Department's expenditure (58% – £5,995 million) was directed towards **policy priorities including economic development, international relations, and research and evidence.** This includes funding provided to multilaterals and civil society, and to developing policy programmes.
- Just over 41% (£4,270 million) of expenditure supported the **Department's Regional Programmes** – interventions through individual country programmes as well as regional programmes covering, for example, Africa and Asia.
- The Department spent around 1% of its budget on supporting peacekeeping and economic development activities through **cross cutting funds** such as the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and the Prosperity Fund, which operate across a number of government departments.

The Department's expenditure has increased steadily since 2010, when total spend was £7.7 billion – up a total of 42%. This overall increase is largely due to the government's commitment to meeting the ODA target.

Managing public money – the Department's use of loans and financial investments

Alongside grants to specific programmes (amounting to almost £11 billion in 2017-18), the Department uses loans and financial investments to achieve its development goals.

Loans

Bilateral loans are made directly to sovereign states.

Multilateral loans are made to sovereign states through multilateral bodies such as the European Investment Bank.

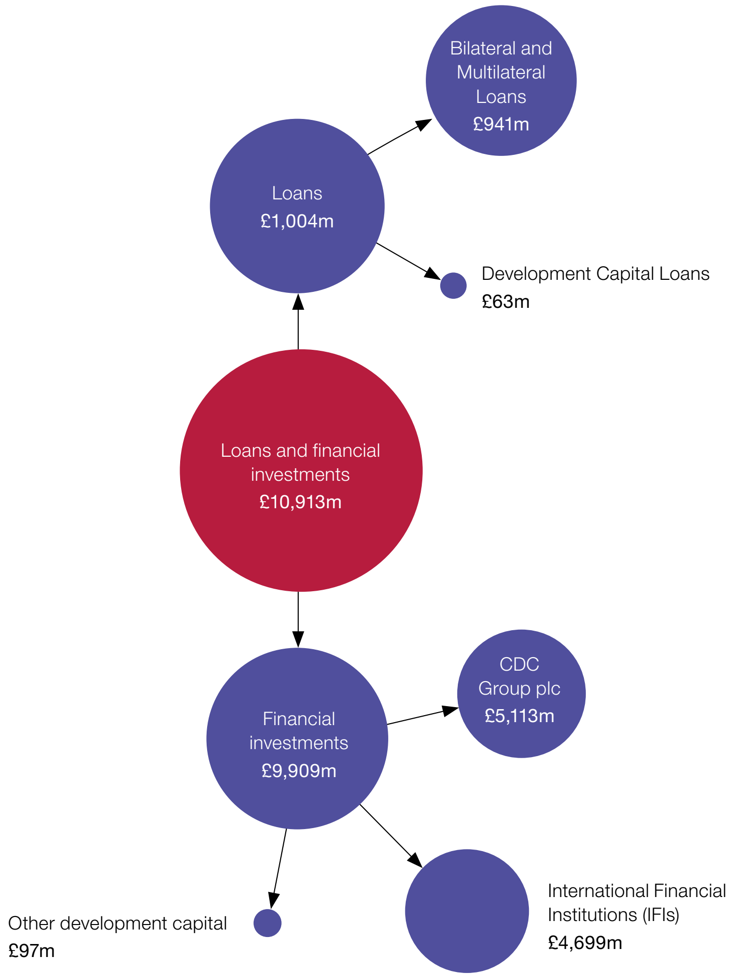
From 1 January 2018 loans **ceased to be eligible for ODA.**

Financial investments

The Department makes financial investments in order **to achieve defined development objectives** while retaining an ongoing, recoverable interest in the assets funded.

The **single largest investment** held by the Department is 100% of the share capital in **CDC Group plc.** CDC aims to demonstrate to the market that it is possible to invest successfully in challenging environments, thereby attracting other sources of investment and growing the overall economy. In 2017 CDC's portfolio return was 7.8%, up from 5.2% in 2016.

International Financial Institutions, such as the World Bank, provide support to governments and the private sector and are a key part of the Department's approach to the involvement of multilateral bodies. The Department currently holds investments in nine International Financial Institutions, the largest of which is the European Reconstruction and Development Bank (£1.2 billion at 31 March 2018).



Note

1 Balances as at 31 March 2018.

Source: Department for International Development *Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18*

The Department's major programmes – some examples

Strengthen global peace, security, and governance

Improving tax systems – £27.2 million (2017).

Combatting modern slavery – the Department announced £40 million of new funding in 2017 intended to reach at least 500,000 people at risk of slavery.

Launching the Transparency Agenda, to improve the transparency of international aid – February 2018.

Strengthen resilience and response to crisis

Undertaking humanitarian relief – £1,465 million across eight countries and regions such as Yemen and the Sahel region (in 2017).

Building vulnerable people's resilience to the impacts of climate change and supporting low-carbon development through International Climate Finance – £586 million (2017-18).

Addressing global health risks through, for example, antimicrobial resistance – £250 million.

Promote global prosperity

Investing development capital to create more and better jobs that benefit people across society, including women – £1,247 million (cumulative to 2017-18).

Committing £7.4 million in 2017 to the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative – which provides advocacy on women's entrepreneurship issues, as well as access to, for example, debt, equity and insurance products.

Supporting legislation to allow up to £12 billion of investment through CDC.

Tackle extreme poverty and help the world's most vulnerable

Announcing an additional £75 million investment in the Global Partnership for Education, to support its pledge to keep 880,000 children in school each year (in February 2018).

Supporting the Global Polio Eradication Initiative – £100 million pledged for 2018–2020.

Committing to spending an average of £225 million annually for the next five years on family planning.

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Major developments during 2017 and 2018, and for 2019

January 2017

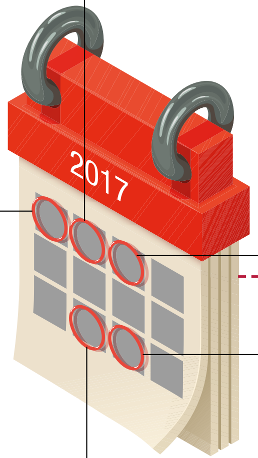
The Department published its Economic Development Strategy.

February 2017

CDC Act 2017 gained royal assent, allowing for investments up to, in certain circumstances, £12 billion (the ceiling was £1.5 billion).

March 2017

Article 50 triggered, starting the process of leaving the EU.



October 2017

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee agreed to look at possible changes to ODA, to allow short-term ODA support for catastrophic humanitarian crises.

The Department published its Supplier Review, including a new code of conduct.

November 2017

Hon. Penny Mordaunt appointed as Secretary of State.

January 2018

The Department's new Permanent Secretary, Matthew Rycroft, starts.

February 2018

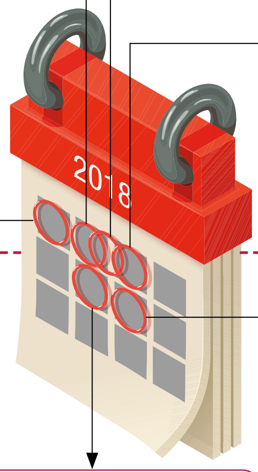
The Department published its new Transparency Agenda.

February/March 2018

The Department established a Safeguarding Unit and hosted a Safeguarding Summit in response to widespread allegations of sexual assault by aid workers.

March 2018

The Department launched its Strategic Vision for Gender Equality.



June 2018

The International Development Committee published its report on the definition and administration of ODA.

The Department alongside BEIS and DEFRA published the International Climate Finance results.

July 2018

The Department co-hosted the Global Disability Summit, along with the government of Kenya and the International Disability Alliance.

March 2019

UK due to exit the EU.

September 2019

UN Climate Summit.

Exiting the European Union – the Department's current and potential future relationship with the EU

The European Union is one of the Department's key partners. It provides funding to EU multilateral organisations. In 2016, the UK spent £1,504 million of multilateral ODA via the European Commission. This represented 11% of the UK's total ODA and 31% of the UK's multilateral ODA in 2016.

£1,031 million

An attribution of the UK's annual contribution to the European Commission (£553 million of which is allocated to the Department and £478 million of which is allocated to non-DFID sources). This funds the **Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations** (DG-ECHO) which focuses on, for example, building resilience and responding to crises and the **Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development** (DG-DEVCO) which focuses on, among other things, development policy and aid delivery.

£473 million

Funding for the **European Development Fund** which funds activities focused on, for example, economic, social, and human development in countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and across the Pacific.

The **Department** is managing **five work streams** relating to policies affected by leaving the EU.

These cover on- and off-budget development funding instruments, UK organisations and staffing.

Specific examples include planning and negotiating the UK's post-exit relationship on development and negotiating and clarifying funding eligibility rules for UK organisations.

At the Autumn Budget 2017, the Department was not allocated any of the £3 billion over two years provided to departments and devolved administrations to help prioritise the programmes they identified as necessary for a successful exit from the EU.

The impact of the UK's decision to leave the European Union

The White Paper ***The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union*** (July 2018) sets out how the UK's departure from the EU does not mean "that **the UK and the EU should not stop acting together** to alleviate poverty, promote peace and security, tackle migration and provide humanitarian aid". It also established the position that the UK and EU can achieve more in some areas by **continuing to act "in concert"**.

The UK is proposing that an **"overseas development assistance and international action accord"** which would provide for UK participation in "EU development programmes and instruments" and in "EU external spending programmes". The White Paper is clear that UK participation would require **"an appropriate level of influence and oversight** over UK funds in line with the significant contribution and benefits that the UK brings".

In its **Annual Report and Accounts for 2017-18** (July 2018), the Department says that "it is in the UK's interest that the **EU continues to be a strong development partner"** once the UK leaves the EU. It also stated that the Department will "provide continuity in **duty-free access to the UK market for the least developed countries**, and [will] continue to offer…tariff reductions to around 25 other developing countries". It will also seek to **replicate the EU's Economic Partnership Agreement**, which promotes trade with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries "to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction".

The Department concludes that, when the UK is no longer a Member State "our relationship with the EU will be different, and [it] will decide **how to spend the entirety of [the UK's] foreign aid budget"**.

Our work looking at the Department for International Development in 2016

Securing value for money in the context of changing demands

Our January 2016 report on *Responding to Crises* found that the Department was responding to an increasing number of crises, with spending on humanitarian interventions almost trebling between 2010-11 and 2014-15 to reach £1,288 million. The Department was well placed to secure value for money for sudden onset crises and more stable protracted crises, but its management of more fluid and protracted crises had yet to reach a similar level of maturity.

Picture: Sgt Neil Bryden/RAF

Assessing the costs and benefits of major projects

Our June 2016 investigation *Realising the benefits of the St Helena Airport project* examined the key assumptions in the Department's business case to support its £286 million investment in an airport on St Helena, and the likelihood of realising the benefits. In October 2017, the airport became operational for scheduled commercial flights, some 18 months later than planned due to the impact of wind conditions on safe landing.

The Department's cost–benefit model for the project was particularly sensitive to two assumptions – the number of tourists who will visit the island once the airport opens and the amount they will spend. The year in which the Department stops paying a subsidy, and the amount paid, will depend on whether these assumptions are exceeded or missed.

Measuring development impact

In 2015-16, the Department approved a £735 million recapitalisation of CDC to expand its business. Our November 2016 report *Investing through CDC* found that the Department's oversight of CDC had improved and that it had directed CDC to address weaknesses identified by Parliament. The governance arrangements were thorough, but should make explicit the Department's role in investment decisions.

We found that CDC had met the financial performance it agreed with the Department. However, a clearer picture of actual development impact would help the Department to demonstrate the value for money of its investment.

Since we reported, government has agreed a further investment of between £3.1 billion and £3.5 billion over the five-year period between 2017 and 2021.

The Department's approach to tackling fraud

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The **government's commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on international aid** (£12.1 billion in 2015) has increased the Department's budget by more than a quarter since 2011. In addition, the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review **committed the Department to spend at least 50% of its budget in fragile states and regions** (those areas perceived as most corrupt) at least until 2020.

These factors could **potentially increase the risk of fraud** in the Department's budget.

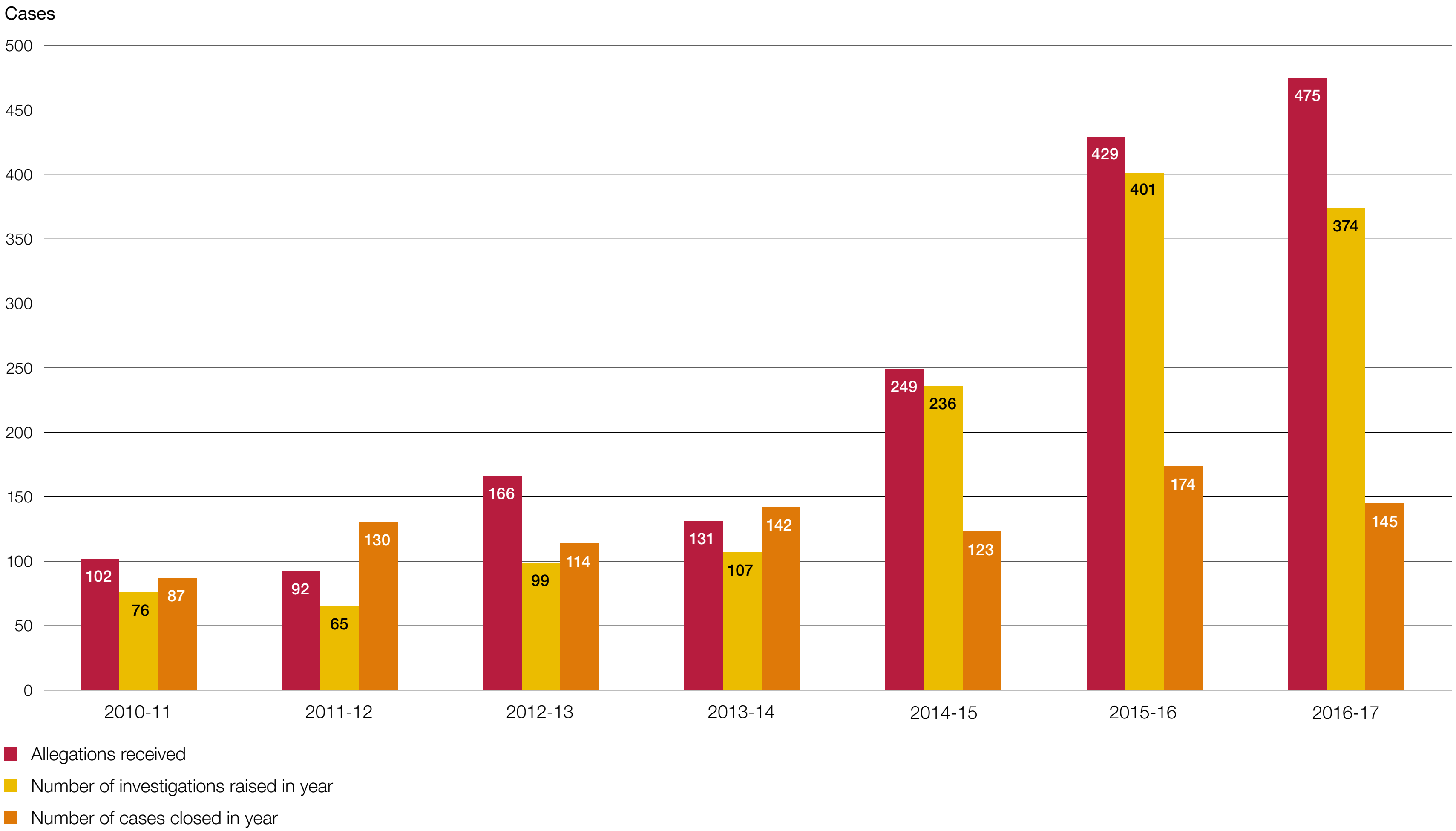
In February 2017 we published *Investigation into the Department for International Development's approach to tackling fraud* which looked at how the Department managed the risks to its expenditure and, where relevant, compared its approach to that taken by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the British Council.

We found that:

- the Department had **changed its counter-fraud strategy** in response to previous criticism by external scrutiny bodies, building the consideration of fraud risk into the process that teams must follow when setting up programmes;
- the **number of allegations of fraud reported to the Department had increased**, as a result of its work to increase awareness of fraud and reporting requirements among its staff and suppliers;
- the Department's **fraud caseload quadrupled between 2010-11 and 2015-16** and it received 475 new allegations during the nine months to 31 December 2016 (see figure overleaf). There were few allegations of fraud reported in some of the countries ranking among the most corrupt;
- detection of fraud is **more challenging where the Department does not have direct control over all the funds it provides**, as in the 55% of expenditure routed through multilateral bodies; and
- **annual gross losses owing to fraud in 2015-16 were around 0.03% (£3.2 million) of the Department's budget**. Since 2003, the Department has recovered around two-thirds, by value, of the reported fraud loss.

The Department's fraud caseload: 2010-11 to 2016-17

The Department for International Development's fraud caseload has quadrupled over the last five years



Note

1 Figure for 2016-17 as at 31 December 2016; it does not represent a complete financial year.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of the Department for International Development's fraud caseload data

Managing the Official Development Assistance target

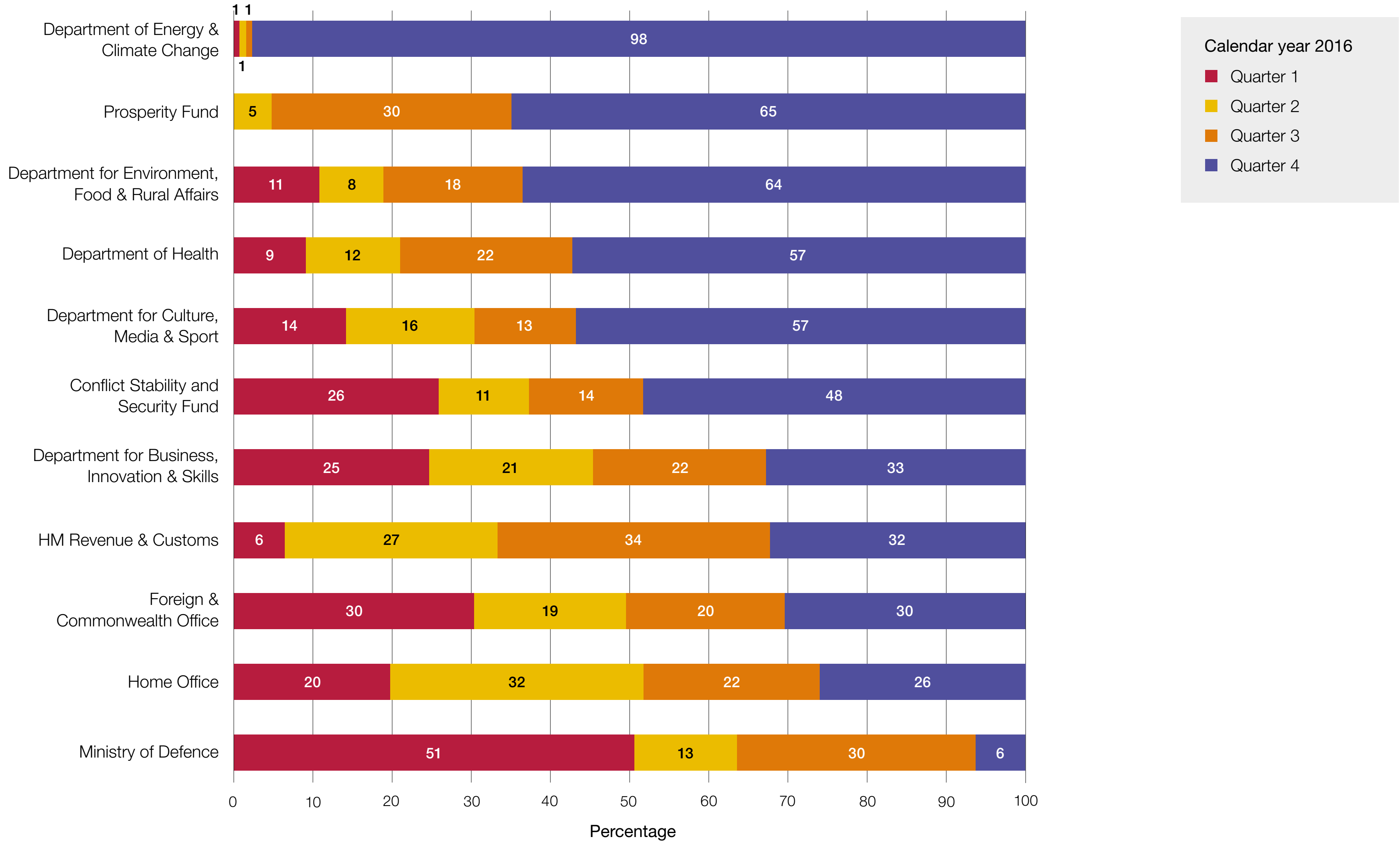
Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the amount of money a country spends on overseas aid. The UK committed to spend 0.7% of its national income in this way from 2013 – which has it has achieved. While the Department for International Development **spends the majority of the UK's ODA**, its contribution relative to that of other government departments is declining.

In our 2017 report *Managing the Official Development Assistance target – a report on progress* we concluded that:

- the UK had **met the ODA target** for each year since 2013 – with sources other than the Department contributing an increasing proportion of total ODA expenditure;
- the Department had **improved its own management** of its ODA expenditure and had provided support to other government departments which had seen their ODA expenditure increase;
- responsibilities for the target were **fragmented across government**;
- despite government's **efforts to coordinate its approach**, we identified **gaps in responsibility and accountability**. For example, **no single part of government** had responsibility for monitoring the overall effectiveness and coherence of ODA expenditure;
- departments had taken **positive steps to build their capacity** to manage their larger ODA budgets; and
- departments were **experiencing similar challenges** to those the Department for International Development faced in 2013 (when its budget was increased). For example, some departments spent more than 50% of their budget in the final quarter of the 2016 calendar year (see the figure overleaf); and some departments also **struggled to spend their ODA** budgets.

Profile of 2016 Official Development Assistance expenditure in other government departments and cross-government funds

In 2016, four departments and one cross-government fund spent more than half their calendar year ODA budget in the last quarter of the calendar year



Notes

1 Other departments with ODA expenditure in 2016: HM Treasury, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education, and Office for National Statistics. They are not included as their ODA expenditure did not include any programme expenditure.

2 Some figures do not sum due to rounding.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of departments' actual ODA expenditure in 2016 as reported to the Department for International Development in December 2016 to January 2017

Promoting international development

In 2011, the Department launched the **International Citizen Service (ICS)** to provide volunteer placements for 18- to 25-year-olds. ICS brings together **young people from the UK and developing countries to volunteer together** in some of the poorest communities in the world. It seeks to make a positive contribution to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the host country, and to volunteers' personal and social development; and build volunteers' skills to better understand international development.

The Department committed a **total of £173 million** to ICS between 2011 and 2019. It contracts with **Voluntary Services Overseas** (VSO) to deliver ICS.

In our 2017 report ***International Citizen Service*** we concluded that the programme had had some successes – it was **over-subscribed** and was **meeting two of its three objectives.** But the Department had **missed some of the programme's targets for diversity** and had **not consistently demonstrated development impact** – its third objective for the programme.

Our more detailed conclusions included:

- comparisons of the **ICS's cost** with similar programmes presented a mixed picture – it was less expensive than some comparable programmes, and more than others;
- the programme's **development impact** was unclear;
- ICS had met its targets for the **number of UK applicants**;
- the Department's performance against its **diversity targets** for applicants was variable (see overleaf);
- the Department had not achieved its ambition that ICS UK volunteers were broadly **representative of the UK population**; and
- the Department and VSO recognised and looked to manage the **safeguarding and security risks** associated with the programme.

Promoting international development

Ethnicity: Asian – performance against target, 2012 to 2017

ICS has met targets for Asian applicants in the three years when the target was 7%, but missed the target in two of the three years since the target was increased to 10%

Year	Target	Applicants	Applicants versus target[1]	Participants	Percentage of Asian participants compared with Asian applicants
	(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)
2012	7	7.6	🟢	6.6	Lower
2013	7	7.6	🟢	6.3	Lower
2014	7	9.1	🟢	6.7	Lower
2015	10	8.5	🔴	7.2	Lower
2016	10	10.1	🟢	7.4	Lower
2017[1]	10	9.5	🔴	8.8	Lower

Notes

1 Data for 2017 are for the five months from January to May 2017.

2 Green rating = target met or exceeded; red rating = below target.

3 Our analysis excludes respondents who did not answer or who chose the option "Prefer not to say".

Source: National Audit Office analysis of International Citizen Service applicant and participant data

Ethnicity: black – performance against target, 2012 to 2017

The percentage of black applicants has been more than double the 3% target each year

Year	Target	Applicants	Applicants versus target[1]	Participants	Percentage of black participants compared with black applicants
	(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)
2012	3	7.6	🟡	7.7	Higher
2013	3	6.5	🟡	5.1	Lower
2014	3	8.1	🟡	6.7	Lower
2015	3	7.9	🟡	6.6	Lower
2016	3	7.6	🟡	7.0	Lower
2017[1]	3	7.4	🟡	7.0	Lower

Notes

1 Data for 2017 are for the ten months from January to October 2017.

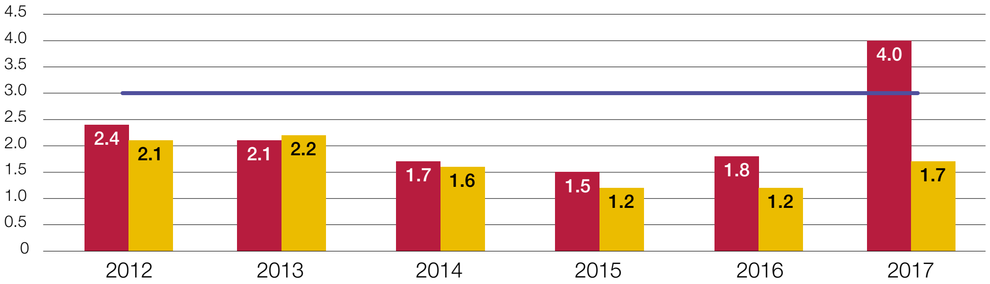
2 Green rating = target met or exceeded; red rating = below target.

3 Our analysis excludes respondents who did not answer or who chose the option "Prefer not to say".

Source: National Audit Office analysis of International Citizen Service applicant and participant data

Disability: performance against target, 2012 to 2017

Taking into account tolerance levels, ICS has met its target for the number of applicants declaring a disability in 2012 and for the first 10 months of 2017



Percentage of applicants declaring a disability

Percentage of participants declaring a disability

Target percentage of applicants declaring a disability

Notes

1 Data for 2017 are for the ten months to October 2017.

2 Our analysis excludes respondents who did not answer or chose the option "Prefer not to say".

Source: National Audit Office analysis of International Citizen Service applicant and participant data

Regional diversity of ICS applicants compared to targets, 2012 to 2017

ICS consistently exceeds its target for the percentage of total applicants from London and the South West. This means that targets for applicants from other regions are often not met

Regions	Target (%)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
South East	13	14 🟢	15 🟢	14 🟢	14 🟢	13 🟢	14 🟢
London	12	21 🟢	21 🟢	20 🟢	18 🟢	19 🟢	17 🟢
North West	11	10 🔴	11 🟢	11 🟢	11 🟢	12 🟢	12 🟢
East of England	9	8 🔴	9 🟢	8 🔴	8 🔴	9 🟢	9 🟢
West Midlands	9	7 🔴	7 🔴	8 🔴	8 🔴	8 🔴	8 🔴
Yorkshire and the Humber	9	9 🟢	7 🔴	7 🔴	7 🔴	7 🔴	8 🔴
East Midlands	8	7 🔴	6 🔴	6 🔴	6 🔴	6 🔴	6 🔴
Scotland	8	6 🔴	6 🔴	7 🔴	7 🔴	7 🔴	7 🔴
South West	8	9 🟢	10 🟢	9 🟢	9 🟢	9 🟢	8 🟢
Wales	5	4 🔴	3 🔴	4 🔴	5 🟢	4 🔴	5 🟢
North East	4	3 🔴	3 🔴	4 🟢	3 🔴	4 🟢	4 🟢
Northern Ireland	3	2 🔴	2 🔴	2 🔴	3 🟢	2 🔴	2 🔴

🟢 Met or exceeded target 🔴 Did not meet target

Note

1 Data for 2017 are for the ten months from January to October 2017.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of International Citizen Service applicant and participant data

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What to look out for

	Issues	Future developments, risks and challenges
01	**The consequences of the Spending Review**	The Spending Review 2019 will set out the Department's budget for the next five years as well as the distribution of ODA expenditure to other government departments, cross-government funds and so on.
02	**Potential changes to ODA rules**	The OECD's Development Assistance Committee members agreed to work on creating a new mechanism to allow countries and territories to regain their ODA-eligible status, if there is significant reduction in income per person.
03	**Progress improving aid transparency by 2020**	The UK Aid Strategy set an ambition for all UK government departments to be ranked as 'Good' or 'Very Good' in the international Aid Transparency Index by 2020.
04	**Considering the impact of the UK's decision to leave the EU**	For example, progress with regard to the development of an overseas development assistance and international action accord and consideration of the impact on meeting the ODA target in the future.
05	**Dealing with sexual exploitation**	For example, the early progress made by the Department's new Safeguarding Unit and the implementation and impact of new standards.
06	**Managing the supply chain**	For example, suppliers' progress in adhering to the Department's new code of conduct introduced in November 2017 alongside the outcome of its supplier review.