



5 August 2017

Consultation on Home Office's Immigration Statistics – arrivals data

1. The Home Office aims to facilitate legitimate travel; deter and prevent individuals from entering the UK who would harm the national interest; and provide demonstrable effectiveness, efficiency and value for money.
2. The Home Office is investing in transformation at the border to further enhance its ability to deliver the above objectives. This includes the increasing application of digital technology. There are already 232 e-gates at 21 ports that since June have seen more than a million passengers use them each week, including third country nationals as part of the Registered Traveller programme. Border Force is also now using Advanced Passenger Information and data from other government systems to verify identity, confirm status, better target risk and deliver a better border experience for legitimate travellers.
3. The transformation to digital systems means that the Home Office is reviewing its use of the paper based landing card data collection. Landing cards are currently used to produce National Statistics on purpose of journey by category and nationality and have in the past been used to provide additional information on passenger travel movements. There are known limitations of landing card data as it currently exists: cards are sampled to produce statistical estimates and the data relies on the manual input of information recorded on cards by the passenger or Border Force Officer. As digital systems are introduced at the border, much of the data collected on paper landing cards will be available digitally. So while landing cards have previously been a principle source of passenger information, this will no longer be the case.
4. In light of these changes, from 1st October 2017 the Home Office propose to end the requirement for non-EEA passengers to present a paper landing card on arrival into the UK. Instead Border Force will use digitally collected data provided ahead of arrival and at the border to provide information about passengers. This will not require a reduction in the security checks being carried out at the border; the change relates only to the way data is collected. In fact, Border Force expects security to be significantly enhanced in the move to digital data systems.

5. This change will also be an improvement to the border process: landing cards will no longer have to be purchased and distributed by carriers; there will be no burden on passengers to complete these cards; and it will reduce the administrative costs to the taxpayer by freeing up Immigration Officers' time related to the processing of landing cards. Whilst not directly quantifiable, these benefits to carriers, passengers and the taxpayer are expected to be not insignificant (potentially up to £2.8m pa Border Force officer time alone) and taken alongside wider digital improvements will enable Border Force to better direct its resources to the highest impact areas.
6. New digital data collections are planned but are subject to testing and cannot yet provide new data on non-EEA nationals entering the UK by visa category. It is expected that data from new systems will not be directly comparable to the current arrivals estimates based on landing cards, and may not provide data for 2017. However, the future digital collection of passenger information is expected to provide data that is generally higher quality and more comparable with the data published by the Home Office on visas. In light of the potential savings to the public and convenience for passengers and carriers, the Home Office believes this change should be introduced now, but wants to seek the views of data users and other stakeholders before coming to its decision.
7. There is currently an alternative published source for estimates of numbers of persons travelling to the UK, this being the published estimates from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹ and which are also published by Visit Britain². Figures are survey based and not directly comparable with landing cards admission data for non-EU nationals, but do give useful information on flows of visitors and have greater statistical coverage as these include data for EEA and Swiss nationals, as well as UK nationals.
8. The IPS collects data from individuals via face-to-face interviews with passengers at UK ports. The IPS is carried out 362 days a year and approximately 90% of passengers entering and leaving the UK are covered within the survey's sampling frame. In total, there are over 700,000 IPS respondents each year. The published data provides estimated numbers of passenger departures, with figures available for those nationalities who visit the UK in significant number.
9. In line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics we are writing to inform you of our plans. The Code requires that (Principle 6) the cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics: The Home Office's view is that the data series as currently collected no longer fully meets this principle. Under Protocol 1 of the Code we are also required to consult users before making changes that affect statistics (for example, to coverage, definitions, or methods) or publications. Annex A details the changes to National Statistics that would result from the withdrawal of paper landing cards.

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration> and
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism>

² <https://www.visitbritain.org/latest-quarterly-data-uk-overall>

Response requested

10. If you have any comments on these plans, please send these to landingcardconsultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk marking your email 'For the attention of the Consultation Co-ordinator'.
11. You can also write to us at the following address: Consultation Coordinator, Migration Statistics, Migration and Border Analysis, Home Office Analysis & Insight, 14th floor Lunar House, Croydon, CR9 2BY.
12. Please also provide the following information, to help us better understand your needs:
- i. Name
 - ii. Role or occupation
 - iii. Organisation
 - iv. Email
 - v. Telephone
 - vi. Are you responding as an individual user or on behalf of an organisation?
(Please specify)
 - vii. What sector do you work in? (Please select 1 answer only)
 - i. Central government department or public body
 - ii. Local authority
 - iii. Other public sector
 - iv. Academic or research
 - v. Charity and voluntary
 - vi. Commercial or private sector
 - vii. Media
 - viii. International organisation
 - viii. Should we want to follow up or clarify any specific points, may we contact you to discuss your response to this consultation?

Consultation timetable

13. This consultation will run from 5th August 2017 – 2nd September 2017.

After the consultation

14. We will publish a summary of the comments made once the consultation closes, alongside our final decision.

Kind regards

Jon Simmons
Director responsible for Migration
Statistics
Home Office Analysis and Insight

Emma Moore
Chief Operating Officer
Border Force

E: landingcardconsultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

National Statistics

Passenger arrivals and visitors

Admissions

[Admissions data tables](#)

These following tables from the Home Office published statistics will still be available:

- ad 01 Passenger arrivals including EEA and Swiss nationals
- ad 01 q Passenger arrivals including EEA and Swiss nationals

The above two tables would be limited to total arrivals as the non-EEA element is shown and used to calculate British, EEA and Swiss national figures.

- ad 04 Passengers initially refused entry by nationality
- ad 04 q Passengers initially refused entry by nationality

The following tables would no longer be available from Home Office statistics:

- ad 02 Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom by purpose of journey, excluding EEA and Swiss nationals
- ad 02 q Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom by purpose of journey, excluding EEA and Swiss nationals
- ad 03 Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom by purpose of journey by main category and country of nationality
- ad 03 w Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom in work categories by country of nationality
- ad 03 s Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom in study categories by country of nationality
- ad 03 f Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom in family categories by country of nationality
- ad 03 o Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom in other categories by country of nationality