



Border Force



## Partner Bulletin

Essential information for Border Force's partners

August 2014



As you will know, the summer is by far the busiest time of the year for Border Force and many of our partners. I am pleased to report that we continue to work closely with ports, airports and operators to maintain a secure border, whilst continuing to deliver an excellent experience to our customers during this challenging time. Thank you for your continued constructive engagement.

Despite the seasonal pressures on our operations, there has been no let up in the pace of transformation as we work to create the Best Border Force in the World. You can read about both our operations and transformation programme in this bulletin.

As part of Border Force's commitment to delivering excellent customer service, the roll out of next generation of ePassport gates continues apace with 15 e-passport gates coming into service at Stansted Airport in the past month and London City Airport to follow in September.

Alongside professionalising my workforce, through new diplomas endorsed by Skills for Justice, Border Force transformation will continue to enhance the quality of technology, intelligence and targeting available to my officers, such as through the new Freight Targeting System. This will ensure that, whether we are stopping people or goods, our success rate will increase and the impact on legitimate passengers and trade will be kept to a minimum, delivering on my twin strategic aims of securing the border and contributing to national prosperity.

As well as continuing to invest in the security of the Port of Calais, the Border Protection Squadron of Cutters and their dedicated surveillance aircraft has been put into action along the south coast to ensure we have the strongest response to protect the UK border. Border Force operational capability means that no matter

whether criminals and would be illegal migrants use air, land and sea or land routes to attempt to evade our controls, we have the capability to stop them.

You will, no doubt, have read about the recent outcome of the Home Office's arbitration with Raytheon associated with the eBorders Programme. You can read the Home Secretary's letter on this matter [here](#). As the Home Secretary said in her letter, the original e-Borders requirement – to record Advanced Passenger Information for checking against terrorist and crime watchlists – is being delivered. The technology Border Force uses to secure the UK border is the best in Europe and amongst the best in the world and the Border Systems Portfolio will continue to drive this work forward.

### **Sir Charles Montgomery, Director General, Border Force**

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**Key:**  for information;  invitation to action

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### **Operational updates**

#### ▶ **Upgrading security at Port of Calais**

Border Force has strengthened security at the Port of Calais to prevent migrants from entering the UK illegally. So far nearly half a million Euros has been invested in thermo-detection security cameras and enhanced secure perimeter fencing at both the Calais port and the Channel Tunnel. This comes on top of £3m invested to upgrade vehicle scanning equipment with the latest technology, in order to detect people hiding in lorries and tankers. The number of body detection dogs stationed at the port have also been increased. This will ensure that our borders remain secure and passengers will continue to be processed with minimal disruption.

As well as launching a new UK taskforce, in February, with the National Crime Agency and Immigration Enforcement officers, Border Force continues to work with

European and international partners to tackle the issue at key transit points and in source countries.

▶ **Cutters on patrol in the English Channel**

The fleet of Border Force cutter ships has been put into action along the south coast in response to the number of illegal migrants attempting to cross the channel. The 21-mile stretch of English Channel is the busiest shipping lane in the world and has recently seen increased numbers of migrants trying to cross it using makeshift rafts.

Patrols have now been stepped up, as last month two men had to be rescued after trying to cross the English Channel in a child's rubber dingy. Border Force will continue to work closely with operators to ensure that our ports and borders are secure, using all our resources to achieve this. The five Border Force cutters are primarily used to intercept drug smugglers. Three years ago they seized one of their biggest hauls, when £10million worth of cannabis were found on board a yacht in the Solent.

▶ **Border Force Northern Regional Command Centre opens**

A Regional Command Centre (RCC) for Border Force North has opened at Seaforth docks in Liverpool. The RCC will serve as a 24/7 conduit for ports covering real time reporting of operational events including control breaches, queue breaches, significant detections, high profile refusals and clandestine finds. It is also involved in planning the regional response and management of operations during a critical incident. It will help to coordinate regional operations and get the right resources in the right place at the right time to deliver an excellent service to port operators and carriers. The North region RCC will now become the nerve centre of the region, which comprises of all the northern England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and areas of Wales, establishing a world-class command and control capability for the North.

▶ **Border Force sharing lessons about Commonwealth Games**

After a very successful and well organised Glasgow Commonwealth Games, Border Force officers at Glasgow airport hosted a visit from officials of the Australian government. Australia will be hosting the next Commonwealth Games in 2018, on Queensland's Gold Coast, and to help them with their preparations, Border Force colleagues shared with their Australian visitors what they had learnt handling the thousands of extra people visiting Glasgow for the Commonwealth Games, sharing our considerable experience of hosting high profile international events as we strive to be the best Border Force in the World.

▶ **New resource available to help student arrivals**

Border Force has produced on line advice for first time students arriving this autumn to commence their studies in the UK. The helpful list of 'Top Ten Tips' are now available on the [Gov.uk website](#). It advises students that as well as having passports ready and landing cards filled out, if coming to study for more than six months, they will need to show their Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number. The tips are designed to ensure students are not unduly delayed as they enter the UK. It will help us to continue delivering an excellent experience to our customers as they pass through our ports this autumn, whilst ensuring minimum disruption to our services. Border Force is asking its partners to share these top tips through their communication channels. You can read more [here](#).

## Border technology and transformation

### ▶ **ePassport gates roll out in Stansted**

The updating of technology at ports across the UK continues as Stansted airport became the latest airport to have 3rd generation e-Passport gates installed with 15 coming in to service during August. Over the summer months and going forward these e-Passport gates will help speed up the time it takes passengers to be processed at the borders. It will ensure that the best technology is used to enhance customer experience and keep passenger queues to a minimum at our ports. Over the past few months the latest e-Passport gate technology has also been introduced at Edinburgh and Glasgow Airport and Heathrow Terminal 2, and they will be introduced in London City Airport for the first time during September. The UK's ePassport gates are now processing more passengers using facial recognition than any other country in the world.

### ▶ **Working towards Exit Checks**

New powers in the Immigration Act will enable carrier and port operator staff to play a role in delivering exit checks by April 2015. Exit checks are the way Border Force will confirm the departure of people when they leave the UK. It will improve border security and make it easier to identify those at risk of overstaying.

Border Force are now working with partners to identify the best way of delivering exit checks and aim to use existing arrangements, including Advance Passenger Information, alongside embarkation checks at ports where necessary. Ongoing trials are helping to identify and establish the best and least intrusive method for delivering exit checks. This involves Border Force working closely with carriers and rail, maritime and air port operators to understand what will work best in each environment. If you would like more information please contact [fiona.mackay1@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.mackay1@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

### ▶ **Eight men rescued from farm amid slavery claim**

Men from Romania, Latvia and Poland have been rescued from a farm in Hampshire after investigation into potential slavery and servitude. They were aged between 21 and 46 and were taken to a survivor reception centre where they received emotional and practical support. A 27-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of knowingly holding another person in slavery or servitude. Recently the Home Office has launched a campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery. It aims to educate people about the different types of slavery, how to spot the signs and lets people know how to report it. More information can be found [here](#)

## Partnership Working

### ▶ **Taking the Border Force message to Albania**

Border Force South East and Europe senior managers have been working in partnership with the Albanian Authorities to ensure that the numbers of illegal migrants arriving at the UK is minimised from the Country. Recently the Border

Force South East and Europe Regional Director joined a returns charter flight to Albania's capital city Tirana. Whilst there he met with Albanian officials and gave a TV interview on Albanian National TV highlighting tough measures being taken by UK to reduce Albanian illegal migration and to target Albanian crime gangs behind trafficking and people smuggling.

▶ **Maritime Sector Group meeting**

The 2nd Home Office Maritime Sector Group was held on the 11 August 2014. This quarterly forum discussed issues around border security and the movement of passengers and goods into the UK through maritime and rail routes. Although attendees have to be limited due to space, more information including copies of the minutes, actions and outputs can be obtained through [Daniel.Smith84@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Smith84@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

▶ **Air Carrier Group meeting**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Air Carrier Group will take place in late September 2014. This Home Office-sector quarterly forum discusses issues around border security and the movement of passengers and goods into the UK by air. Although attendees have to be limited due to space, more information including copies of the minutes, actions and outputs can be obtained through [Daniel.Smith84@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Smith84@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

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**News Round-up** 

▶ **Accreditation for Border Force staff**

Border Force staff have now joined teachers, police officers and other public sector professionals in having their own recognised set of professional qualifications. The first officers have now successfully completed the accreditation process to gain their level three diplomas in work undertaken at the primary control point, the secondary examination area and also in further investigation and examination. This works towards having the best trained staff at our borders to ensure ports operate as efficiently as possible. Border Force has developed the qualifications in partnership with Skills for Justice. The qualification will mean that vital frontline work undertaken daily at air and seaports are now professionally recognised as a level three qualifications for the first time.

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**Detections and seizures – highlights** 

▶ **Aladdin's Cave of Drug seizures by Border Force**

Over the past year cocaine in carpets, chocolate and a chapatti oven are just some of the ways organised crime gangs have tried to smuggle drugs into the UK. Border Force has released a range of images showing the lengths criminals will go to in their attempts to circumvent border controls as a deterrent to would-be smugglers. Border Force remains committed to preventing goods from entering the UK that would cause harm. In 2012-13, Border Force met or exceeded its targets for the seizure and detection of Class A drugs. A total of 2.4 tonnes of cocaine and 445 kg of heroin were seized during this period. You can find out more information [here](#).

▶ **Opium monkeys**

Last month an attempt to smuggle opium into the UK hidden inside two monkey statues was stopped by Border Force officers at the Coventry International Postal Hub. Each of the statues contained 1kg of the drug with a total street value of £20,000.

The class A drugs had been concealed within a consignment of statues flown to the UK from India.

▶ **Cocaine wheelchair**

A man from North West London was sentenced to three and a half years, in June 2012, for attempting to smuggle around £370,000 (almost 3 kilos) worth of cocaine into the UK hidden inside his wheelchair. The man had flown to Heathrow Airport from Peru, via Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

▶ **Cocaine seized on banana boat at Dover**

This month Border Force seized approximately 40 kilos of cocaine from a cargo ship at Dover. The drugs, once cut and sold on the streets, have a potential value running into millions of pounds. Officers from Border Force's Felixstowe based national deep rummage team searched the MV Esmeralda ship and discovered the drugs in the hold. The ship was en route from South America to Rotterdam loaded with bananas. There were no arrests and the ship was allowed to continue its journey. The investigation was passed to the National Crime Agency and enquiries are continuing.

**Published statistics**

Statistics on migration and border control can be found on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK).

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