

Have you got what it takes?

Working with the Home Office
on tackling illegal immigration



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Important facts

Illegal immigration puts pressure on public services, local communities and legitimate businesses. The Home Office is responsible for working across government to tackle all forms of immigration abuse, including illegal working, sham marriage, overstaying by students or visitors and foreign national offending.

The Home Secretary disbanded the UK Border Agency in 2013 and there are now three operational commands of the Home Office which manage the immigration system. Border Force applies immigration and customs controls on arriving passengers at the border, UK Visas and Immigration processes visa applications overseas and applications for further stay from those already in the country, and Immigration Enforcement seeks to reduce the illegal population in the UK by enforcing immigration laws, removing illegal migrants and prosecuting those who facilitate immigration abuse. There is also a separate immigration policy directorate in the Home Office, the Immigration and Border Policy Directorate.

Following the general election in May 2015, the Prime Minister was clear that tackling illegal immigration is a cross-government responsibility and one that requires all departments and agencies' efforts to tackle it. The public will expect their Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to work closely with all parts of the immigration system to ensure that local communities are protected from the harmful effects of illegal immigration and the criminality behind it.

Background

The mass migration to and across Europe recently has brought in to even sharper focus the need to have effective border controls and a robust enforcement arm for those who attempt to enter or stay here illegally.

Border Force employs a rigorous and effective control regime at its borders, predicated on a policy of carrying out full checks of all arriving passengers and an intelligence-led approach to searching for contraband goods that ensures resources are used as effectively as possible. The organisation also utilises some of the most advanced technology systems and benefits from having many hard-working and talented officers with expertise in areas including, but not limited to, modern slavery and trafficking, deep rummage of commercial vessels and forgery detection.

Immigration Enforcement is responsible for enforcing immigration law and reducing the size of the illegal population. Working with a range of government and law enforcement partners, Immigration Enforcement is making the UK a harder place to remain illegally. This includes cross-checking tax (HMRC), driving (DVLA) and benefit (Department for Work and Pensions) records with the immigration databases and introducing sanctions for all landlords in England who rent to people who are unlawfully in the country. Immigration Enforcement works in partnership with Local Authorities in areas

of common interest, such as abuse of local authority housing and tackling illegal working, where employing illegal migrants is often only one aspect of criminality in evidence. Where illegal migrants do not elect to leave the UK voluntarily, Immigration Enforcement will arrest, detain and remove them.

Immigration Enforcement works in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, such as the NCA and police forces around the country to tackle immigration crime. The agencies exchange information and pool resources operationally to target all forms of immigration abuse. For example, in Manchester, under the banner of Operational Challenger, Immigration Enforcement and Greater Manchester Police work together with other partners, including the local authority, to tackle abuse linked to trafficking and modern slavery, interchangeably employing immigration and criminal sanctions to deal with the abuse in the most effective way.

What is Immigration Enforcement doing to remove foreign national offenders (FNOs)?

Immigration Enforcement removed over 5200 FNOs in 2014/15 and has removed more than 25,000 since 2010. Increasing numbers of EEA national FNOs are now being deported as the rules have been significantly tightened with regard to their criminality versus a right to remain. Changes include strengthening Immigration Enforcement's ability to remove low-level EEA offenders and, through the Immigration Act 2014, setting out in law where the public interest requires deportation of any foreign national offender notwithstanding Article 8 (family rights) claims. It also allows deportation to occur despite an appeal being lodged.

Another key area of Immigration Enforcement and police cooperation is Operation Nexus which, through embedded immigration officers and partnership working, is identifying foreign nationals encountered in police custody suites across the UK and bringing immigration solutions to bear on anyone illegally in the UK who is involved in criminality.

In addition to the immigration officers posted to specific custody suites, Nexus includes a specialist high harm function which enables foreign nationals to be deported from the UK if they are a significant threat to their community, even if they have not been convicted of an offence.

Since 2012, Nexus has facilitated over 3,600 removals, including over 600 high harm criminals. Alongside Nexus, work is taking place to upgrade current IT and biometric systems so that by this summer there will be full automation of biometric checks between police and immigration data systems.

Police forces have also committed to increasing checks against foreign criminal record databases; the volume of foreign offenders arrested in the UK and checked against these overseas records has significantly increased over the last 12 months.