

Steve Dann
Chief Operating Officer
Border Force

I am writing as the Chief Operating Officer for Border Force. Thank you for taking the time to contact Border Force regarding your recent experience travelling through the UK border.

As you will be aware, upon arriving at the UK border, the UK's Immigration Rules require all passengers to establish their eligibility for admission. To maintain a safe and secure border, a passenger's passport will be checked. The eGates and manual checks are two methods of conducting the same process.

The eGates work in part by using facial recognition technology to compare the faces of passengers to images held in their biometric passport, in addition to biographical and security checks. As a result, there are a number of technical and security reasons why a person's passport may fail to be accepted by the eGates. I am sure you can appreciate; I am not able to disclose the particular security arrangements of how eGates work.

Passengers might on occasion be unable to access the eGates for reasons other than IT problems. These could include the failure to remove the passport from its cover; wearing any hats, headphones, glasses or face masks; or when the passport is not correctly placed in the scanner by the passenger.

In some cases, the passport microchip may not open correctly, or there may be another fault in the passport that prevents its being successfully read by the scanner. If you have any concerns about your passport, you can contact His Majesty's Passport Office to have the document checked at no charge. Further details can be found on the Home Office website at: www.gov.uk/passport-advice-line.

When such instances as those described above happen the passenger must be manually checked by a Border Force Officer at a designated referrals desk. This may result in a passenger having their journey disrupted and I therefore want to apologise for any delay you may have experienced. I can assure you that officers have no wish to delay anyone's legitimate travel more than is necessary to undertake the enquiries needed to maintain a safe and secure border, and are expected to carry out their duty in a respectful, courteous and professional manner.

Kind regards



Steve Dann
Chief Operating Officer