



# Home Office

**Damian Green MP**  
**MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION**

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Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP  
Chairman, Home Affairs Select Committee,  
Committee Office House of Commons  
7 Millbank  
London  
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Dear Keith,

I am writing further to my oral evidence session before the Home Affairs Select Committee on Tuesday 15 May, at which I offered to write to the Committee on two issues.

## UK Border Agency and Border Force Governance

Further detail on the existing governance in place for the UK Border Agency was provided to you by the Permanent Secretary in letters dated 14 and 30 November 2011. Since that time Philip Augar has been appointed as non-Executive Chair of the UK Border Agency. Mr Augar has been a non-executive board member at the Home Office since December 2010. In this new role for the UK Border Agency he will chair Strategic Board meetings and play a key role in supporting and advising the Agency on its performance and development.

Border Force is an operational command within the Home Office. At present Border Force has a senior management team and, as discussed at his appearance before the Committee on 22 May, interim Director General Brian Moore is seeking to introduce a Board structure and to put in place further independent oversight of the Border Force. He will write to you once all arrangements are in place.

## Secondary checks

The Committee asked how the 230,000 examinations for customs, anti-smuggling and revenue purposes in April 2012 compares with the equivalent period in 2011. The Border Force automated management information systems were still being rolled-out in April 2011 and had not achieved national coverage. Consequently, reliable data on the total number of examinations conducted as a comparison is not available. I am therefore unable to provide an equivalent figure but will of course be happy to provide the Committee with updates on our performance in this area in the future.

I also wanted to clarify two further points.

### Stansted

At the session you provided your observations following your visit to Stansted Airport between 10pm and midnight on Sunday 13 May.

We were expecting the arrival of approximately 6,000 passengers during that time and had rostered sufficient staff to deal with those volumes.

There are 24 immigration desks at in total at Stansted. Four are redundant, two are used to operate the e-Gates and the other 18 are used as standard passport desks. One of these desks was inoperable on the night due to a hardware issue. All 17 available desks were occupied from just after midnight. 14 of the 17 were occupied for the two hours before midnight. During this time we had officers deployed to deal with tobacco seizures and others deployed in the Common Travel Area channel addressing a specific threat.

A passenger arriving into a full arrivals hall at Stansted will usually be cleared within 20 minutes and that was the case on 13 May. However, due to the capacity of the arrivals hall, passengers will occasionally be held at busy times on the connector from the aircraft gates. This occurred on occasions from around 11pm on 13 May. CCTV confirms that on two occasions the queue did reach just over 30 minutes, but were less than that for most of the period in question.

The five e-Gates at Stansted are owned by BAA and are currently open between 7am and midnight. Those opening hours are agreed between BAA (which provide the hosts) and Border Force. On 13 May, the gates had a technical fault and were not being used. Border Force is working with BAA and the Gate engineers to improve the reliability of the gates, to reduce instances where they are not available due to technical faults and consider the hours when they are available.

### Heathrow

In my evidence I quoted figures given to me by a Border Force officer about Terminal 5 arrival projections from 6am to 9am on Monday 14 May when I was visiting Heathrow. The officer told me that projections had risen from 2,500 arriving passengers on Friday, to 5,000 on Sunday and then, when looking at the live arrivals screen in the Terminal on the Monday morning, he could see 7,500 passengers had actually landed.

I have since established that projections were for about 7,800 total passengers to arrive and the actual total arrivals on the day were just over 7,600. In providing the information to me, the officer in question confused various different types of data available to him.



**DAMIAN GREEN**