



Home Office

**UK Border  
Agency**

# **KEY FACTS AND FIGURES**

JULY 2009

**Working together to protect the public**

The UK Border Agency was established in April 2008 to create a strong new force at the border by bringing together immigration, customs and visa checks to strengthen the UK Border. We want the UK to stay open and attractive for both business and visitors, but at the same time we are determined to deliver a system of border control which is among the strongest in the world.

Our purpose is to secure our borders and control migration for the benefit of our country. We will do this by delivering three strategic objectives:

- We will protect our border and our national interests
- We will tackle border tax fraud, smuggling and immigration crime
- We will implement fast and fair decisions

The new agency is equipped to protect our border in the 21st Century. We have a budget of more than £2bn and 25,000 staff, including more than 9,000 customs and immigration officers. They work in local communities, at the border and in 135 countries around the world.

## **WE WILL STRENGTHEN OUR BORDER**

### **Delivering our strategy**

- We will secure our border using our single border force.
- We will use new technology to screen high risk individuals and goods.
- We will use fingerprint checks to stop illegal immigration.
- We will facilitate trade and travel that benefits the UK.
- We have a new border force with the strongest customs and immigration powers.

### **Facts and figures**

- Since January this year, we have stopped over 14,000 individual attempts to cross the channel illegally.
- Since January this year, UK Border Agency officers have searched over 400,000 freight vehicles to check they were not harbouring illegal migrants.
- We are extending the number of visitors who require visas, and since December 2007, 100% of visas have been fingerprint based. We have enrolled 4 million sets of fingerprints, detecting thousands of false identities.
- We have introduced identity cards for foreign nationals. By November 2009 we will have issued 75,000 cards. 90% of foreign nationals will have an identity card by 2014-15.
- We have introduced iris scanning at some airports, and by August 2009 we will have new facial recognition technology in 10 terminals.
- The first facial recognition gates were installed at Manchester Airport in August 2008 and Stansted in December 2008. Nearly 420,000 travellers have already used this convenient, secure, self service border crossing.

## **WE WILL CONTROL THE NUMBERS COMING TO THE UK TO MAXIMISE BENEFITS FOR BRITAIN**

### **Delivering our strategy**

- Migration has brought us economic benefits but we need to control it carefully as there can be impacts on public services and communities.
- We have introduced a flexible Points Based System to ensure non-EEA migrants have the skills we need. With these changes and better enforcement around illegal immigration and illegal working we expect to see a fall in the number of migrants coming here.
- Protectionism is not the answer; a flexible immigration system rather than an arbitrary cap is better for British business and the British economy.
- In hard times we are using the flexible Points Based System to ensure we have the right mix of skills, and have recently increased the requirements of highly skilled migrants.
- We will listen to independent advice on how to fill skills gaps.
- We will boost the skills of the UK workforce to get the jobs of the future and drive economic growth.
- We will offer resident workers a fair chance at applying for jobs.
- We will attract the best talent to the UK by keeping the UK's position as a global leader in international education.
- We will stop the automatic right to stay; newcomers must earn their citizenship by speaking English, paying taxes and obeying the law.
- We will protect genuine refugees, but remove those who come to the UK for economic reasons and clog up our asylum system.

### **Facts and figures**

- If the Points Based System had been in place in 2007, we estimate there would have been 12% fewer people coming in to the UK to work through the equivalent work permit route to Tier 2.
- The Home Secretary announced in February 2009 three significant changes to support British workers and to be more selective about the migrants coming to the UK from outside the EEA. The changes which took effect from 1 April have:
  - Strengthened the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) for Tier 2 skilled jobs so that employers must advertise jobs to resident workers through JobCentre Plus before they can bring in a worker from outside Europe;
  - Ensured that each Shortage Occupation List is used to trigger skills reviews that focus on up-skilling resident workers for these occupations to make the UK less dependent on migration for the future; and,
  - Tightened new criteria against which highly skilled migrants seeking entry to the UK are judged, by raising the qualifications and salary level required for Tier 1 of the PBS to a Masters degree and a minimum salary of £20,000.
- We have reached a key milestone with 60% of new asylum cases now being concluded within 6 months.
- Asylum intake has remained broadly at the same level over the past 4 years and it's less than a third of the level when it peaked in 2002 (84,130).

## **WE WILL COUNT PEOPLE IN AND OUT OF THE COUNTRY**

### **Delivering our strategy**

- We will use electronic controls to count people in and out at the border.
- E-Borders will improve the security, efficiency and effectiveness of the border. It will:
  - keep out or monitor individuals that could cause harm to the UK;
  - be capable of processing increasing numbers of travellers;
  - make legitimate travel easier, along with use of other technology such as biometric passports, iris and facial recognition systems; and,
  - count people in and out of the country.
- We will make life hard for anyone who overstays and get stricter at deporting those who don't play by the rules.
- We will include safeguards for the law-abiding majority.

### **Facts and figures**

- E-Borders has screened 94 million passenger movements so far, resulting in over 3,400 arrests, and significant counter-terrorist interventions.
- By December 2009 e-Borders will have screened against watch lists 120 million passenger movements in and out of the UK – 60% of the total. This will rise to 95% by December 2010 and 100% by March 2014.
- 66,275 people were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK in 2008 – a 5% increase on 2007 (63,365).
- We are expanding our detention capacity to increase our removals further. Brook House (a new 426 bed centre near Gatwick) opened in March 2009.

## **WE WILL TARGET CRIMINALS**

### **Delivering our strategy**

- We will stop known criminals and other high-risk individuals from coming to the UK.
- We will strengthen our ability to stop drugs, weapons and illegal goods at the border.
- We will use immigration and customs powers to target law-breakers.
- We will continue to deport record numbers of foreign criminals.
- We will be tougher on European criminals removing those who cause harm to our communities.

### **Facts and figures**

- We are deporting record numbers of foreign prisoners – nearly 5,400 in 2008.
- From 1997-2008 5,160 persons were refused entry at the UK border on grounds relating to the public good.
- We will be tougher on European criminals by reducing the removal threshold for consideration for automatic deportation to all those who receive sentences of 12 months or more for cases involving drugs, violent or sexual offences.
- We will also target and deport low-level, persistent foreign offenders who cause harm in their communities but have not been given a prison sentence – like those who offend while on community service.
- Since January this year, we have seized in excess of 240 million smuggled cigarettes – representing a potential loss of nearly £45 million in tax revenue.
- Since January this year, technology used in customs checks at ports has helped in the seizure of illegal drugs worth over £100 million.

## WE WILL ENSURE FAIRNESS AND MINIMISE LOCAL IMPACTS

### Delivering our strategy

- We will take tough action against rogue employers who knowingly hire illegal workers or exploit vulnerable workers.
- We will control access to benefits or social housing for migrants.
- We will deploy new Local Immigration Teams to track down the most harmful illegal immigrants and to respond to local concerns.
- We will continue to provide fair funding to reduce pressure on housing, health, schools and policing.
- We will make migrants pay into a £35 million pound fund to help manage the transitional impacts of migration.

### Facts and figures

- Local Immigration Teams are being established to serve every community in the UK. Each local team will enforce immigration laws, working shoulder-to-shoulder with police, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Local Authorities and other local partners to target immigration crime and address local community concerns on migration. By December 2011 there will be a team serving every community in the country.
- New charges are being added to our visa fees for 2009/10 that will ensure migrants contribute to the UK and provide extra financial help to communities experiencing change from migration.
- Since tough rules to combat illegal working were introduced in February 2008, over 2,000 fines worth nearly £20 million have been issued.

## OUR 10-POINT DELIVERY PLAN

The UK Border Agency has announced 10 wide-ranging milestones for 2009, which will help ensure that we meet our ongoing commitment to further strengthen the border, count people in and out of the country and target criminals.

Building on work already being done by the agency to strengthen the United Kingdom's immigration controls, the ten milestones to be met are:

1. **March 2009** – Open a new immigration removal centre to help remove immigration offenders.
2. **April 2009** – Use our Points Based System to ensure that migration matches the country's needs in hard times.
3. **April 2009** – Start charging migrants to create a multimillion-pound fund to reduce the impacts of migration on local services.
4. **April 2009** – Introduce new technology to help detect drugs and other illegal goods.
5. **May 2009** – Be tougher on European criminals, removing European nationals who cause harm to our communities.
6. **July 2009** – Start tough new visa controls, which will cover five countries.
7. **August 2009** – Have completed delivery of new facial recognition technology in 10 terminals, giving British passengers a faster, secure route through the border.
8. **November 2009** – Issue 75,000 compulsory identity cards to foreign nationals.
9. **December 2009** – Hit target to screen 120 million passengers entering and leaving the United Kingdom against security watch-lists, and introduce a new high-tech security centre.
10. **December 2009** – Deport a record number of foreign prisoners.

We have already met the first six milestones.

## NEW LEGISLATION

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill, introduced to Parliament in January, will strengthen our border, make newcomers to the United Kingdom earn the right to stay here, and ensure we have a firm but fair immigration system.

Key measures in the Bill will:

- strengthen Britain's security by integrating customs and immigration powers in the UK Border Agency;
- implement the framework for the Government's Earned Citizenship proposals;
- Introduce a duty on the UK Border Agency to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its work;
- amend existing legislation on the Common Travel Area to enable the application of routine immigration controls; and,
- enable the transfer of judicial review applications on asylum, immigration and nationality matters to the Upper Tribunal.

The figures contained in this leaflet are based on both National Statistics and management information, which is subject to change.

Please see [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/ourwork](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/ourwork) for further information, including sources for all the statistics contained in this leaflet.

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