



Border Force

**BORDER FORCE RESPONSE TO THE INDEPENDENT CHIEF INSPECTOR'S
REPORT:**

**"A SHORT NOTICE INSPECTION OF BORDER SECURITY CHECKS AT
HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINALS 3 AND 4"**

Border Force response to the Independent Chief Inspector's report 'A Short Notice Inspection of Border Security Checks at Heathrow Terminals 3 and 4'

Border Force response to the recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Border Force ensures its new framework of border security checks, set out in its Operating Mandate, are resourced appropriately to deliver an efficient and effective service.

Border Force accepts this recommendation.

The Independent Chief Inspector's report "An investigation into Border Security Checks" published in February 2012 recommended that a new framework of border security checks, approved by Ministers, should be urgently developed and implemented. This report on Heathrow Terminals 3 and 4 found that significant progress had been made in developing the framework known as the Border Force Operating Mandate. The Chief Inspector found that the mandate is a positive step forward in defining the full range of checks to be conducted; describing the known circumstances of variance where mandatory checks cannot be conducted and setting out the alternative processes and the limited circumstances in which the suspension of checks is acceptable. Moving forward he considers it will be critical for Border Force to ensure the new Operating Mandate is resourced effectively.

As announced in May of this year the recruitment of new staff for Terminal 2 at Heathrow, due to open in 2014, has been brought forward so that extra staff will be available for the post-Olympic period. New recruits will be appointed to our mobile teams, providing us with the maximum flexibility to move them to demand. Our new Operating Mandate, together with additional resources, will enable us to ensure border security checks are carried out while at the same time delivering an improved service for passengers.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Border Force must ensure officers from the secondary detection area receive the necessary support and training to carry out immigration work to the same standards as staff with an immigration background.

Border Force accepts this recommendation.

Staff from our secondary examination area can be deployed to the Primary Control Point to help manage queues and the inspection team found that these officers were very much aware of the need to carry out full border security checks. However, their observations revealed that some of these officers appeared less confident when processing passengers. This meant they often took longer to process them and asked fewer probing questions. The team considered that this effected how efficiently and effectively Border Force were able to progress passengers through the terminal.

The report also found that Chief Immigration Officers spent the majority of their time during busy periods in the watch house – the dedicated room which provides an overall view of the Primary Control Point and as such were unable to closely observe and support staff during these periods.

Over 95% of our officers based in the secondary examination area have now received the required training to operate on the Primary Control Point. This training is supported by a period of mentoring where they work alongside an experienced member of staff. We recognise that these staff may take longer to process passengers until they gain in confidence and experience and we are factoring this into our deployment decisions and our on-going modeling work to make the best use of our resources. We have also introduced a number of changes to improve overall management control and support including the appointment of additional managerial staff.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Border Force examines the forgery aspect of its work to satisfy itself that:

- all forgery detection equipment is working effectively;
- its staff are appropriately trained to use this equipment; and
- forgery refresher training is delivered to all staff at least annually.

Border Force accepts this recommendation.

Border Force have a specialist unit responsible for a national programme of forgery training as well as conducting training for other government departments and external stakeholders and organisations. All Border Force operational officers at Heathrow receive basic forgery training and each region (including Heathrow) has a specialist local forgery team who have received intermediate and advanced training.

The inspection team saw evidence of work to identify forged documents, and in both terminals included in the inspection (3 and 4) found that specialist forgery officers walked the floor behind Border Force staff working on the Primary Control Point, providing advice or assistance as necessary. They considered this was a positive approach in helping to identify and deal with the problem of forged documents. They did identify however inconsistent use of forgery equipment across the two terminals and that the delivery of forgery refresher training appeared to have diminished. The team also identified a variance of 36% in the level of detections across the two terminals and whilst they recognised that might be based on the different types of passenger traffic have suggested that these observations should be investigated to ensure they are not having an adverse impact on forgery detection.

All Heathrow local forgery examination teams have received the appropriate training and are proficient in the use of the equipment. They provide specialist advice and support to officers on the Primary Control Point who also receive training.

We have recently reviewed our forgery training requirements and a newly developed forgery refresher course is due to be delivered to officers in the post-Olympic period. This will help spread best practice and consistency between the terminals.

Formal forgery training however is not the only way in which we increase our capability to detect document abuse and we continually and systematically gather information and intelligence which is shared via regular briefings with staff. These include key detection points and developments in document abuse and enable staff to keep up-to-date with forgery trends. Nominated delegates act as points of reference and officers can also access the information, intelligence, knowledge and comparison documents held at the national unit.

The national unit also assesses, procures, manages and evaluates forgery detection equipment and its maintenance on behalf of Border Force. All equipment has been recently reviewed and is working effectively. We are seeking to enhance this equipment at Heathrow by procuring some additional hand held devices.