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Welcome to the July edition of our bi-monthly update, our first since the change in government. This regular update aims to keep partners informed on key developments and news from the agency.

As you will know, the [Coalition's programme](#) set out the government's key immigration commitments, these included cutting migration and ending the detention of children for immigration purposes.

On 28 June the Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced that the number of workers entering the UK from outside the EEA will be controlled by a new limit. Details of how the final limit will be delivered will be agreed following a 12-week consultation with businesses which will run until the end of September. Permanent limits on non EEA economic migration routes will then be decided and put in place by 1 April 2011. There will also be an interim limit that will come into effect on 19 July ([page 8](#)). The Home Secretary has also asked the Migration Advisory Committee, the government's independent adviser on migration issues, to launch a separate consultation into what level the limit should be set at, taking into account social and economic impacts ([page 8](#)).

Our new Minister, Damian Green, announced that there will now be no overnight detention of children at Dungavel, and he is currently leading a review of alternatives to detention ([page 9](#)). We are committed to delivering this in a way which is safe and humane and which also ensures that we can remove those with no right to stay in the country. The Minister visited Glasgow on Monday 14 June to listen to views on these plans from partners, including representatives from local authorities, children's charities and refugee organisations ([page 9](#)).

The more detailed coalition programme confirms additional commitments which we are developing with our Ministers and we will keep you informed of progress. These include:

- The creation of a dedicated Border Police Force, as part of a refocused Serious Organised Crime Agency to enhance national security and to crack down on the trafficking of people, weapons, drugs and wildlife
- Supporting e-Borders and reintroducing exit checks.
- Apply transitional controls as a matter of course in the future for all new EU member states
- Introducing new measures to minimise abuse of the immigration system (including via student routes) and to tackle human trafficking as a priority

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- Exploring new ways to improve the current asylum system to speed up the processing of applications
- Stopping the deportation of asylum seekers who have had to leave particular countries because their sexual orientation or gender identification puts them at proven risk of imprisonment, torture or execution

Finally, we have also announced that we will introduce compulsory English language tests for non-European migrants applying to come to the UK to join or marry their settled partner. This new requirement is intended to help promote integration, remove cultural barriers and protect public services ([page 10](#)).

We hope you find this edition both informative and accessible, and we welcome any further comments you might have. For general enquiries please write to the [Partnerships & Engagement Team](#). For specific enquiries please see the contact details under the relevant article.



Lin Homer
Chief Executive
UK Border Agency



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Changes to the UK Border Agency website

Following the UK general election on 6 May 2010, the UK Border Agency website has undergone some changes. All news stories published before April 2010 have been removed from this website, as has information about our strategies and aims under the previous government. This content can be viewed on the [UK government web archive](#).

World of Work Day

Thirteen companies including the UK Border Agency participated in the Manchester Airport Community Network's biggest ever World of Work Day held at St Anthony's RC Primary School, Wythenshawe, in March. The school, which has over 600 pupils, was turned into an airport for the day to demonstrate the variety of jobs available and inspire the children to seek employment after leaving school.

Our dog handlers talked to the children about things passengers are not allowed to bring into the UK and which sniffer dogs are trained to detect. One of the dogs, Cass, was brought into the classroom to give a demonstration, by sniffing along a line of bags and stopping at the one containing some prohibited meat. There was also a display of things made from endangered species, including a carved ivory tusk and a leopard skin rug.

Government asks public for ideas to create a more open and less intrusive society

As part of the coalition government's drive to create more open politics, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has launched a new public consultation website, called 'Your Freedom'. The website asks the public for their ideas on three themes:

- Restoring civil liberties, led by the Home Office: which current laws would you like to remove or change because they restrict your civil liberties?
- Cutting business and charity regulations, led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: which regulations do you think should be removed or changed to make running your business or organisation as simple as possible?
- Repealing unnecessary laws, led by the Ministry of Justice: which offences do you think we should remove or change and why?

Once ideas have been submitted, users of the site will be able to comment and rate their favourite ideas. Relevant departments will respond to the most popular workable ideas, and the Deputy Prime Minister will give regular updates.

The aim is that the government will roll back the unnecessary regulation that really matters to people.



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There will be a Freedom Bill in the autumn that will take into account the views expressed on Your Freedom, and departments will consider every suggestion.

Nick Clegg said “What I find especially exciting about this project is that, now we have got the ball rolling, the debate is totally out of government’s control. Real democracy is unspun -it is the raucous, unscripted conversations that always throw up the best ideas.

So be demanding about your liberty, be insistent about your rights. This is about your freedom, and this is your chance to have your say.”

To visit the Your Freedom website go to:
www.hmg.gov.uk/yourfreedom

For further information please contact Tim Lennon,
tim.lennon@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk 020 7035 3916

UK Border Agency supports national researcher network

Representatives from universities, NGOs, think tanks and other government departments will meet with UK Border Agency analysts and policy colleagues later this year to discuss key topics in migration and asylum, continuing the agency’s regular programme of engagements with external researchers.

The UK Border Agency’s Analysis, Research and Knowledge Management group is convening a series of meetings with researchers in the area of migration, following last December’s conference at Rhodes House, Oxford. Like the Oxford conference, this year’s national network meetings – dates to be arranged for this Autumn – will provide an opportunity for an exchange of knowledge between policymakers and researchers in relation to a range of topics in migration and asylum.

Jon Simmons, Director for Analysis, Research and Knowledge Management says: “These meetings will provide an opportunity for researchers in the area of migration to engage with UK Border Agency staff and find out more about key areas of the agency’s business.”

For further information please contact Ben Smith (ARK) ben.smith6@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or call him on 0208 760 8642



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GEO at Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre gets British Quality Foundation award “Committed to Excellence”

The British Quality Foundation (BFQ) is an independent, not for profit, corporate membership organisation. It provides a broad range of performance improvement services including awards.

GEO at Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre have achieved the BQF ‘Committed to Excellence award’ which required them to complete three stages. These are self-assessment, improvement projects and validation. A structured, rigorous approach to prioritisation, documentation and implementation of the resulting improvement activities. This process included receiving constructive feedback from an experienced external source on the improvement projects implemented and the results achieved. The feedback provided is designed to help focus further improvement activity and can serve as an input for business planning.

As a result of this achievement GEO at Campsfield has received a distinctive and prestigious international recognition based on the most widely used Management framework in Europe (The EFQM Excellence Model).



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New Visa Customer Service Standards

We have changed our customer service standards for processing visa applications. We are doing this to improve our service to customers, to provide more information about visa processing times and make them simpler to understand.

From 1 April our service standard for all applications, except in settlement categories, is: to complete 90 per cent of visa applications (except settlement categories), in not more than three weeks, 98 per cent in six weeks and 100 per cent in 12 weeks. We will continue to publish performance each month showing actual visa processing times, broken down by visa category and by visa application centre.

Our aim is to process all applications as quickly as possible, subject to completing the necessary security checks we need to carry out in order to protect the UK border. In the majority of cases, we can process visa applications earlier than our published service standards.

To help customers calculate the overall time needed to complete their application, we are introducing a new service standard. In some locations we require that they make an appointment in order to give their biometrics (fingerprints and digital photograph). Where customers are required to make an appointment to give biometrics, our service standard is to offer an appointment that takes place within one week of requesting it.

For customers whose appeal has been allowed by an Immigration Judge, our visa processing centres aim to conclude the application as quickly as possible. We have introduced a new service standard for the time it takes us to do this. See our [Appeals guidance](#).

For more information about local processing times, please look at the website for the correct visa application centre in the country where you are applying for a visa.

For more information about our customer service standards please see our [Customer Service Standards page](#).



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Operation MIDSTREAM

Operation MIDSTREAM is an ongoing intelligence led criminal enquiry by Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and the agency with assistance from Central Scotland, Lothian and Borders, and Strathclyde Police. This joint operation targeted large scale facilitation into and within the UK of foreign nationals and exploitation of them in the restaurant industry in Scotland.

The Scotland and Northern Ireland crime team in conjunction with SOCA Central Scotland, Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde police forces carried out the biggest immigration crime operation ever seen in Scotland on Wednesday 26 May 2010. Seventeen warrants were executed simultaneously on domestic and business addresses involving restaurants, staff accommodation and private residences in various locations in Glasgow, Falkirk and West Lothian. This resulted in the arrest of 36 Chinese nationals for suspected immigration offences. In addition two British females aged 25 and 42 were arrested under immigration legislation and charged with a number of offences in relation to the facilitation of illegal immigrants. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal, and enquiries are ongoing.

Carolyn Wallace, Head of the Crime and Compliance Team said: "This has been an excellent example of partnership working in the fight against organised immigration crime."

Investigations are ongoing and the second phase will take place in the coming weeks. For further information please contact Caroline Murray on 0141 555 1234

Cocaine smugglers jailed for more than 54 years

Five international drug smugglers have been jailed for more than 54 years after they were caught at Manchester Airport with more than £2.5 million worth of cocaine. This case demonstrates the UK Border Agency's successful operations in preventing Class A drugs from reaching our communities.

To read more about this story please go to our [website](#). Anyone with information about illegal smuggling activities should contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 where anonymity can be assured.

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UK Government to impose a limit on non-EU immigration

The number of workers entering the UK from outside Europe will be controlled by a new limit following a 12-week government consultation that will run until the end of September. Permanent limits on non EU economic migration routes will then be decided and put in place by 1 April 2011.

To avoid large numbers of applications between now and April next year, there will be an interim limit which will take effect from 19 July 2010. This will ensure the number of visas issued under Tiers 1 and 2 of the points-based system are below that issued in 2009. These interim measures include:

- capping the number of Tier 1 migrants at current levels and raising the number of points needed by non-EU workers who come to do highly skilled jobs from 95 to 100; and
- limiting the number of certificates of sponsorship that licensed employers can issue to those who wish to come to fill skilled job vacancies. This will reduce the number of people entering through Tier 2 by 1,300.

The results of the consultation on the permanent limit will pave the way for the government's fundamental changes on the way in which workers from outside the European Union (EU) will be chosen to come and work in the UK.

You can find out about the consultation and how to take part on our [consultation page](#). This website also contains more information about the [Tier 1 interim limit](#) and the [Tier 2 interim limit](#).

The Home Secretary has also asked the Migration Advisory Committee, the independent adviser on migration issues, to launch a separate consultation into what level the limit should be set at, taking into account social and economic impacts.

This [consultation](#), launched on 30 June, will look at the annual limit of the number of non-EU migrants admitted to work in the UK through Tiers 1 and 2 of the points based system. As well as the economic impacts, the MAC will take into account the social and public service impacts of immigration on the UK. This consultation will be open for submissions until 7 September 2010, and the MAC advice will be presented to the government by the end of that month.



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Detention of children for immigration purposes

In response to the government's commitment to end the detention of children for immigration purposes the agency is currently undertaking a Review and will be engaging with a range of experts and organisations. The Terms of Reference for this Review have been agreed by the Minister of State for Immigration, Damian Green, and the review will be accountable to him. The Review will run for six weeks starting on 1 June 2010 and will be led by David Wood, Strategic Director, Criminality and Detention Group, UK Border Agency. The findings from the Review will be made public.

It was also announced on 19 May that children of failed asylum seekers would no longer be detained overnight at Dungavel immigration removal centre. Families detained in Scotland may undergo initial health and welfare screening at the facility but will then be moved to Yarl's Wood centre in Bedfordshire which has specialist facilities and support services.

Damian Green also visited Glasgow on Monday 14 June 2010 to listen to views on the plans to end child detention. The Minister listened to a wide range of people, including representatives from local authorities, children's charities and refugee organisations and also met with key corporate partners to discuss the Family Returns Project, the pilot of an alternative to detention which has been running in Glasgow for almost a year.

He also had the opportunity to meet with staff from the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People to gather their feedback into the review of child detention.

The event was the first public meeting for corporate partners to air their views on the review on ending the detention of children and was well attended and received by all key corporate partners in the region.

Further information on the review can be found at: [UK Border Agency | Update on child detention](#)

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Identity cards for foreign nationals become Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs)

As a result of the changes to identity cards announced in the Queen’s Speech on 25 May, the UK Border Agency is changing the name of identity cards for foreign nationals to biometric residence permits (BRPs). This change is with immediate effect. Even though the government are scrapping identity cards for British nationals and ending the national identity register (see story at related link), the agency is still required by European law to provide biometric residence permits to third country foreign nationals.

There will be no change to the card. The cards produced already have the words “Residence Permit” on them and do not refer to the term “Identity Card”. They therefore do not need to be changed. All Biometric Resident Permits will continue to remain valid while the conditions of the card are still being met. The permits enable the agency to lock an individual into their identity to prevent them from making multiple applications under different identities. For migrants, they provide proof that they are in the UK legally and any rights to work they may have. As a result, the agency will continue to issue biometric resident permits.

For further information please visit [UK Border Agency | Identity cards and national identity register to be scrapped](#)

Migrants marrying UK citizens must now learn English

We have announced that compulsory English language tests will be introduced for non-European migrants applying to come to the UK to join or marry their settled partner.

The requirement will apply to all non-EEA migrants coming to the UK to marry a British citizen or a non EEA national settled here. This includes spouses, civil partners, unmarried partners, same sex partners, fiancés and proposed civil partners. It will apply to applicants in the UK, as well as visa applicants overseas.

From autumn 2010, they will need to demonstrate a basic command of English which allows them to cope with everyday life before they are granted a visa. The new English requirement for spouses is intended to help promote integration, remove cultural barriers and protect public services. It is being introduced as an initial step, prior to a review of English language requirements across the immigration system with a view to tightening the rules further in the future.

Full details of the requirements for applicants, including a list of approved tests and test providers will also be published on our website in due course. To read more about this story, please go to our [website](#).



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COMPASS Update

Earlier COMPASS briefings advised that the procurement was likely to commence in March 2010 but in view of the General Election the Programme timescales were revised with the procurement expected to commence in July 2010. There has been a review of the programme which will involve a re-planning. This will mean procurement will not commence in July 2010. The COMPASS Programme is examining the available options. At this point no decisions have been made about the timescales that will apply to the competitive process but as a minimum it will comply with the European Directives on Procurement. If you have any other queries relating to COMPASS, please:

- E-mail general enquiries to:
Compass@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk; or
- Procurement specific enquiries to:
DCOPProcurement@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk; or
- Information and updates are available through the UK Border Agency's website.

Family Reunion

The Scottish Refugee Council presented the outcomes from some recent research on the family reunion process in the UK to the National Asylum Stakeholder Forum (NASF) on 25 June. The paper made recommendations for the UK Border Agency, Chief Inspector and for those organisations working with refugees. It suggested that these partners needed to provide help and support to aid the integration of refugees and their families; to ensure that the right to family reunion for refugees was realisable; and to commission more extensive and detailed research in the area. UK Border Agency officials will be meeting with corporate partners to discuss this issue in further detail with a view to reporting back at a future NASF.

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New AVR pilot for families and children, and changes to existing eligibility

On 1 April 2010 a new Assisted Voluntary Return programme became available for families and unaccompanied children. For the first time, reintegration assistance has become available to failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants. This is a significant development in terms of the availability of assistance to families whether they have been part of the asylum system or not. Under the two main Assisted Voluntary Return programmes, reintegration assistance has only been available to those people who have come into contact with the asylum system at some stage – applying, appealing, refused.

Since 2002, under the VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) IOM has offered reintegration assistance to anyone who has been in the asylum system who wishes to return to their home country. This is in addition to help with obtaining travel documentation, purchasing flight tickets and domestic transportation in this country and the country of return.

At present a relocation grant of £500 in cash is given at the airport (Heathrow or Gatwick) to each person returning. Reintegration assistance is however delivered in kind, not cash, according to an IRP (Individual Return Plan) drawn up during discussions between individual

returnees and IOM officers, to ensure that the money is targeted in a way which best contributes to a sustainable return.

For further information, please contact Stephen.Hall@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Four arrested in sham marriage operation

Four people were arrested as part of an investigation by our officers into a suspected sham marriage. Acting on intelligence, our officers from the Thames Valley immigration crime team swooped on Oxford Register Office at around midday on 8 June 2010, just as the service was about to start. To read more about this story, please go to our [website](#).

Twenty four arrested in raid on Acton dairy

Twenty-four people were arrested following a UK Border Agency raid on the premises of Freshway Dairy on Eastman Road, Acton in the early hours of Thursday 27 May. The twenty four, all males, were arrested for a variety of immigration offences, including illegal entry, working in breach of their visa conditions, and overstaying their visas. Twenty-two of the men were Indian nationals, while the other two were Pakistani. To read more about this story, please go to our [website](#).

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Upcoming partner meetings

Partner Group	Date of Next Meeting	Contact
National Asylum Stakeholder Operational Forum (NASOF)	21 July 2010	Adam.Whisker@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Detention User Group	26 July 2010	Carolyn.Seaman@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
National Asylum Stakeholder Forum (NASF)	29 July 2010	Adam.Whisker@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk Sheelagh.Warde2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Gateway Protection Programme	8 September 2010	Helen.Gray@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Children's Sub Group	13 September 2010	Sheelagh.Warde2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Voluntary Returns Steering Group (VRSG)	15 September 2010	Helen.Cordingley@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
National Migration Group	22 September 2010	Amanda.Bryan@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Corporate Partner Group	14 October 2010	Tunmbi.Kayode@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

For further information about any of the groups listed please email the relevant contact.

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Local news within your region of interest

London and South East

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=LondonandSouthEast

Midlands and East of England

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=MidlandsandEastofEngland

North East, Yorkshire and Humber

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=NorthEastYorkshireandHumber

North West

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=NorthWest

Scotland and Northern Ireland

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=ScotlandandNorthernIreland

Wales and South West

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=WalesandSouthWest