



Home Office

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By email only.

15 December 2022

Dear Chair,

Thank you again for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee on 1 December on the important issue of Progress Combatting Fraud.

Please see below answers to a number of questions on which I committed to write to you.

You asked for information about how often we have told MPs and local authorities about people being moved into their area and how often we have failed to do that.

I recognise the Committee's previous recommendation and our response at the time. Since your report was published, the pressure on the system has increased, including through the vast increase in arrivals via small boats in need of accommodation and our statutory obligation to housing those who would otherwise be destitute while ensuring people are not kept in short-term holding facilities for any longer than is necessary.

In particular, given the immediate challenges at Manston we have had to make spot bookings to acquire hotel rooms on a night-by-night basis. This is an additional, temporary measure due to it being imperative to move a significant number of people from Manston at pace. We continue to work in collaboration with local partners to keep them adequately informed as far in advance as possible.

The Home Office keeps a record of every contact between the department, the local MP and the local authority and would be able to interrogate these on a case-by-case basis; but unfortunately we do not currently hold that information in a way which is easily reportable to the committee.

Over the past year the department has stood up over 200 hotels, and it has long been our standard practice to inform MPs in advance of putting those hotels to use. I acknowledge we may have fallen short on our previous commitments for a brief period where we had to spot book a small number of hotels at pace.

As you are aware, we have since renewed and improved our approach in line with the Minister for Immigration's letter to MPs on 18 November. This will include ensuring email notification is sent upon a new hotel being stood up in their area not less than 24 hours prior to arrival on-site, clearer and more comprehensive written notification of the intention to use a hotel followed by a fulsome factsheet and briefing pack on asylum; asylum support and accommodation; and information on the proposed cohort to be accommodated -

accepting that this can change as arrivals take place and we may be required by the Courts to accommodate people at very short notice. This is alongside the regular multi-agency forum discussions that take place with local authority partners to operationalise the arrival of asylum seekers.

These performance standards will be reviewed regularly and, wherever possible, service levels will be progressively raised. In addition to the above, Home Office officials will also provide email notification to local MPs not less than 24 hours before arrival on-site, followed by a phone call to their constituency office and an offer of a meeting with a senior official to discuss the proposed use of a hotel. We have also stood up weekly virtual drop-in sessions for MPs to discuss asylum accommodation.

You asked if the department informed local public health officials of diphtheria cases.

Diphtheria is a notifiable disease and therefore all suspected cases should be reported to the relevant local Health Protection Team to enable prompt public health management.

The Home Office has committed to sharing information on confirmed and suspected cases of diphtheria who are being moved around the asylum estate to ensure advice can be given on isolation and treatment at destination and safe transport.

The Home Office is fully committed to working in partnership with local authorities, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the NHS to improve services for supported asylum seekers and we recognise that data plays an essential part in delivering on this responsibility. In line with the notification process outlined above, we will continue to work with UKHSA to improve the sharing of relevant available medical data between health partners, within the remit of our statutory obligations on data protection.

You asked for information on whether the department is vaccinating or screening and testing people coming into Manston for diphtheria and other diseases.

On arrival, all individuals are medically assessed by paramedics at the Western Jet Foil site. Screening measures are in place at Western Jet Foil to identify symptoms of diphtheria and assist anyone requiring additional treatment or screening. Those individuals will be seen by the onsite doctors.

If diphtheria is suspected, the individual is swab tested and - until the result is known (2-3 days later) - the individual will be isolated with antibiotics being offered immediately.

There are 24/7 medical facilities onsite at Manston and access to onsite isolation facilities for any suspected or confirmed diphtheria cases. These isolation pods have beds, dedicated toilets and showers for until such a time they are dispersed safely from site utilising the agreed pathway with UKHSA. Additionally, all arrivals are offered a Diphtheria vaccine.

We have sought further assurance from UKHSA that our testing and screening processes, and general infection prevention and control measures in Manston are robust.

I committed to writing with the specifics on international work against fraud.

The Fraud strategy will set out our ambition to become the global fraud-tackling leader. We will work with the international community to drive forward intelligence and information sharing, build stronger partnerships with key international partners, and work with the FCDO to play a key role in driving the fraud response on the global stage.

In 2023 we are establishing a Five Eyes working group, the first of its kind, to draw key international partners together to share best practice, work collaboratively across shared threats, and jointly lobby key industry partners. Through this working group, we will work closely with key partners to establish and deliver a UK-led Global Summit, chaired by the Home Secretary, which will unite partners on the global stage and demonstrate the UK's role in driving the international response to fraud.

With law enforcement, we will work alongside partners to better understand the global fraud threat, and bolster our law enforcement presence in key source countries of fraud to the UK. We will build greater law enforcement capacity in these countries, working closely with upstream partners to disrupt more fraud before it reaches UK citizens.

Further detail on this work will be set out in the upcoming fraud strategy.

Duncan Tessier committed to writing to the Committee with specifics of who attends the joint fraud taskforce.

JOINT FRAUD TASKFORCE GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Joint Fraud Taskforce (JFT) was established by the Home Secretary in 2016 and is a Home Office led Ministerial level Board, accountable to Home Office Ministers for strategy and progress.

Chair -The Minister of State for Security will chair the JFT Board.

The JFT Board - The JFT Board will comprise of senior representatives from:

Home Office	OFCOM	TechUK
National Economic Crime Centre (NECC)	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales	Communications Crime Strategy Group (CCSG)
City of London Police	Victims Commissioner	Serious Fraud Office
National Trading Standards	Citizens Advice	DCMS
UK Finance	Victim Support	No10
British Retail Consortium (BRC)	FCA	HMT

Cifas	Law Society of England and Wales	Devolved Administrations (Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland)
National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)	Association of British Insurers (ABI)	

This wider list of stakeholders will be subject experts drawn from organisations and bodies who operate across the counter fraud environment. The stakeholder list will:

- provide a source of expertise that can be drawn upon as a resource to assist in the delivery of JFT initiatives; and will
- be a pool of industries for the development of sector charters in the future.

On request they may attend the JFT Board, or officials group where they have an expertise that can inform discussions under consideration by the Board.

Duncan Tessier also said he would write on Mr Djanogly's question of how Parliament finds out what work the taskforce is doing.

The minutes from each Joint Fraud Taskforce meeting is [published on Gov.UK](#)

You suggested that I think about how best to present this information for all parties to access.

As above, if helpful, we can send the meeting minutes to Committee chairs, each time they are published.

Yours sincerely,
Matthew Rycroft

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