

<p style="text-align: center;">UK SECURITY UPDATE</p>
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What this paper is about

To update delegates on developments in the UK on airport security issues including:

- Foreign Nationals – Criminal Records Checks – para 6
- Project Griffin – para 9
- Review of Airport Policing – para 12
- Transport Security Bill – para 14
- Airport and Security - Funding – para 18

Points for Discussion

- *Para 6 - Foreign Nationals – Criminal Records Checks:* This is an issue which is of concern to a number of Consultative Committees. Members may wish to discuss whether the issue should be pursued.
- *Para 22 – Charging for Fast Track Security:* Members from other airports may wish to tell the meeting whether schemes similar to that introduced at Liverpool are in use elsewhere.

Points for Possible Action

The meeting will wish to decide whether to submit any representations in respect of:

- Para 58 - Foreign Nationals – Criminal Records Checks

Note:

For an update on Aviation Security at EU level see paragraph 21 of *European Aviation Update* elsewhere on the Agenda for this meeting

Introduction

1. The security alerts on 10th August 2006 at Heathrow, and 30th June 2007 at Glasgow, has continued to dominate airport security across the world and at many airports there continue to be difficulties and delays for users.
2. Following the 2006 alert new restrictions on hand baggage were introduced including a limit of one item of hand luggage for passengers departing the UK as well as EU-wide limits on liquids and gels that can be taken through airport security. Following the attack at Glasgow measures were introduced to move vehicles further away from terminal buildings.
3. In an effort to speed up the security process most airports have increased the number of security staff, and to provide more passenger search facilities, in order to cope with the extra security requirements. Even so there are still periods of delay in some places.
4. The restriction limiting passengers to one piece of carry-on hand luggage was particularly contentious, not least because there were no such restrictions elsewhere in the world even in the US. Following months of campaigning by airlines, who complained the one-bag rule was unique to Britain and had caused a headache for passengers arriving from abroad and transferring to UK flights, the DfT started to lift the restriction early in 2007. But the relaxation was piecemeal. The restriction was lifted immediately at 22 airports, including Heathrow, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh. But at Gatwick, Luton, Bristol, Liverpool, East Midlands and 35 other airports the restriction remained until the Department's officials were satisfied that the Airport in question could handle the extra workload without compromising security. The restriction finally came to an end on 7th January 2008. The maximum size for items of hand luggage is 56cm x 45cm x 25cm per bag. However, airlines apply their own operational policies governing the number of items of hand baggage which may be taken in to the aircraft cabin and this can give rise to confusion for passengers.
5. Liquids, gels and aerosols are only allowed in hand baggage in individual containers of 100ml. All containers must fit comfortably in one, transparent, re-sealable bag no larger than 20cm x 20cm (e.g. a freezer bag).

Foreign Nationals – Criminal Records Checks

6. Last year we drew attention to the correspondence between the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee and the Department about the difficulty the Airport company is experiencing in obtaining correct and complete criminal history checks from abroad for foreign nationals.
7. This issue has now surfaced in the media following a feature on the BBC's programme *Newsnight* – see the *BBC News* item annexed to this paper. A more recent article in the *Daily Telegraph*¹ suggests that Ministers have known for five years that checks on foreigners working in airports did not cover overseas criminal records. The same article notes that last year the Department of Transport's head of aviation security, warned of the insider threat noting that the next terrorist attack "would have the components available airside with the help of people who work there".
8. Is this an issue which the Liaison Group would like to pursue with the Government?

Project Griffin

9. Gatwick will become the first UK airport to 'go live' with the *Project Griffin*² counter-terrorism initiative, which has already been launched in 25 cities across England, Scotland and Wales. *Project Griffin* was developed by the City of London Police to advise managers, security officers and employees of large public and private sector organisations on security, counter-terrorism and crime prevention issues.

¹ Sent to members on 9th May 2008

² For more info see <http://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/CityPolice/CT/ProjectGriffin/>

10. Being a self-contained policing area, Gatwick Airport is an ideal location for introducing *Project Griffin* as all of its members of staff are working towards the same goal – maintaining the security and efficient running of the airport. The project will be launched with an Awareness Day related to the running of the airport, and aimed squarely at equipping members of the airport community with knowledge and information to help them to work with the police on detecting and deterring terrorist activity or crime.
11. The Awareness Day is designed to introduce the *Griffin* concept and establish relationships and networks. The focus is on how to recognise, respond to and report any suspicious activity and behaviour. It also helps participants think about their own local procedures for dealing with certain types of incident and emergencies.

Review of Airport Policing

12. As previously reported, the Government in November 2005 announced it had commissioned an independent, wide-ranging review of policing at airports. The review aimed to identify a sustainable approach to airport policing which took account of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in protecting an airport and in particular addresses the need for funding arrangements that are objective and transparent. The review was also asked to compare the present method of policing airports with that of other modes of transport to establish any differences or similarities in policing approaches, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities which may apply. The Review team were also asked whether the principle of designation could be made to work and, if not, to propose alternatives.
13. The report of the Review was submitted to the Department for Transport in July 2006. For security reasons was not published but some aspects of what it said were covered in a statement by the Secretary of State on 21st July 2006 - see Annex D of the paper submitted to the Liaison Group last year³. A follow-up statement was promised and this was received by Parliament on 14th June 2007⁴. Nothing more was heard about the review until the new Transport Security Bill was published in May this year. If passed the Bill will provide the powers to implement some of the recommendations of the Review – see below.

Transport Security Bill

14. Included in the legislative programme announced by the Government on 14th May 2008 is a Transport Security Bill.
15. If passed the Bill will establish new arrangements for airport security and implement the UK's international obligations to combat terrorist acts at sea. In particular the Bill will:
 - Require the majority of airports in the United Kingdom to agree a local airport security plan with their key stakeholders, based upon an agreed threat and risk analysis;
 - Allow the policing element of this plan to be charged to the airport operator.
16. Other proposals in this area include:
 - Publishing guidance to assist airport security stakeholders in the process of threat assessment and security planning.
 - Investigating the possibility of developing bespoke national performance standards for airport policing.
17. The Department for Transport plans to launch a public consultation on these proposals in the summer of this year.

Airport Security - Funding

18. A major element of the cost of airport security is the cost of policing which, increasingly, is becoming more obvious and expensive.

³ <http://www.ukaccs.info/07almfiles/07security.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/statements/airportspolicing>

19. At present only those airports designated by the Secretary of State under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 for the purposes of policing are obliged to contribute. There are currently nine such airports - Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Prestwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. The primary responsibility for policing activity at these airports lies with the Chief Constable and the airport manager must make such payments in respect of policing the airport as the manager and the relevant authority may agree. If they cannot agree, the Secretary of State may be required to determine the amount to be paid to the police by the airport manager (section 26(3)). The Civil Aviation Act 2006 made provision for Police Services Agreements at designated airports. It is understood that new agreements have recently been entered into for the policing of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports.
20. The Review of Policing referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13 recommended that the system of "designation" should be discontinued and that policing costs should generally be met by the industry on the basis that policing forms part of an agreed airport "community" response, that costs should be clear and transparent, and that policing at airports should be brought within the mainstream policing agenda. The Transport Security Bill is the Government's response to those recommendations. If passed, the Bill will allow the cost of the policing element of the airport security plan to be charged to *all* airport operators, not just those designated by the Secretary of State under section 25.
21. There is growing concern among airports about the increased cost of security which are said to have risen by more than 150% since new security measures were brought in after the 11 September attacks in 2001. Security costs are now said to account for a quarter of the income of major airports.
22. It was reported last year that Liverpool airport was seriously considering a charge for passengers to cover its security costs. The scheme would require people to pay up to £2 to pass through a turnstile before boarding. Managers said the extra revenue would help meet the £3m cost of increased insurance and security. In the event the scheme was introduced on a voluntary basis. Passengers have the choice of using the Fast Lane for which the charge is £2 per passenger. It may be that members from other airports will be able to tell the meeting about similar measures introduced elsewhere.

Stuart Innes
May 2008

Annex

BBC News Item: Airport staff avoid crime checks

Aviation minister Jim Fitzpatrick is grilled by Newnight's Jeremy Paxman

Foreign workers who work airside at UK airports do not have to undergo full mandatory criminal records checks, the BBC's Newsnight has discovered.

Since 2003, staff have been checked against UK criminal records, but offences abroad are not covered.

Aviation Minister Jim Fitzpatrick has defended vetting procedures for staff.

"Anybody who is able to work in a restricted zone is screened in exactly the same thorough way as any member of the public," he added.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, governments across the world pledged to make airports more secure.

In the UK, the government introduced mandatory criminal records checks for all staff working airside.

But Newsnight has discovered a serious loophole in the legislation. Foreign workers are being employed without undergoing any criminal records checks.

The government says it would simply take too long and be too complex to check criminal records from abroad.

The Conservative Shadow Home Affairs Secretary, David Davis, told Newsnight: "It's astonishing given the history and, of course, the risk on the airside of any airport in the United Kingdom."

He went on, "To not do anything about it because it's inconvenient, it's a disgrace."

The list of offences covered by a Criminal Records Check is comprehensive. Anyone who has an unspent conviction for anything from theft or criminal damage to murder or terrorism would be refused a pass airside - known as the restricted zone.

But that is not true if those crimes were carried out abroad. The Criminal Records Check only covers offences which take place in the UK.

Thousands estimated

And that, says aviation analyst Chris Yates, leaves passengers very exposed.

"We really need to ask the question, is it now necessary to restrict employment at our airports to those people for whom we can carry out the full panoply of checks?"

Around 200,000 people work airside at airports across the country. BAA would not confirm how many are foreign - though it is estimated to be in the thousands.

The sensitivity of airside security was highlighted just last year. John Parkinson, the head of aviation security at the Department of Transport, told a conference that terrorists "would have the components available airside with the help of people who work there."

And when an Al-Qaeda sympathiser, Samina Malik, who worked airside in a shop at Heathrow, was convicted of owning terrorist manuals last December, it prompted the government to launch a new review of airport security.

That is being headed by former Home Office official, Stephen Boys Smith.

One of the union's key concerns is the lack of consistent checks on staff allowed airside, as its general secretary, Jim McAuslan, explained.

"I would suggest that if someone can't pass the test like that they shouldn't be employed airside at all. It seems pretty simple to us.

"If it's good enough for pilots it should be good enough for anyone else that's working airside. These checks need to be carried out on everyone."

In a statement, the Department for Transport said: "Attempting to check overseas records would require the co-operation of a large number of foreign countries, delays and complex comparisons of international legal systems."

But a spokeswoman said the government was considering introducing checks on foreign criminal records as part of the transport review.

And she stressed that all workers, including foreign nationals, were subjected to a rigorous checking process.

"This includes having their identity and right to work verified, five years of employment history and a check of UK criminal records," she said.

"The more thorough counter-terrorist check is then required for staff at airports who work in specific security functions.

"From 2009, the government will be introducing new biometric ID cards for people who work airside in the country's airports, allowing an individual to be linked more securely to their own true identity, helping protect against crime, illegal immigration and terrorism."

'Worse than complacent'

Under repeated questioning on Newsnight, Mr Fitzpatrick insisted the UK was not "complacent in the face of terrorism".

"What we are able to do is to demonstrate that anybody who is able to work in a restricted zone is screened in exactly the same thorough way as any member of the public who is travelling through our airports, and in that instance we are very confident and are safe in the knowledge that they do not pose a threat."

But not everyone shares that confidence. The Conservatives' David Davis demanded urgent action from the government. "They should immediately carry out security checks on all people currently working airside.

"Anybody who fails should be removed and before anybody else is employed, those security checks should be completed. And they should do that irrespective of cost and as fast as can be done - otherwise it's worse than complacent; it's reckless."

But any action to close this loophole is unlikely to be immediate. The Department of Transport says it will wait for the outcome of the transport inquiry, and that is not expected until this summer.