

# Press release: Banks and building societies start immigration status checks on personal current account holders

The checks will be done against the details of known illegal migrants which the Home Office is sharing with Cifas, an anti-fraud organisation.

Once a bank or building society has found a personal current account that is being operated by an illegal migrant, the Home Office will double check the details before instructing the bank or building society on action to take, which may include closing the account.

In cases where criminality is suspected, the Home Office may apply to the courts for an order instructing the bank or building society to freeze the individual's accounts.

We are only sharing details of illegal migrants who are liable for removal or deportation from the UK or who have absconded from immigration control. We consider these individuals should be denied access to banking services.

Minister for Immigration Caroline Nokes said:

These new measures are part of our commitment to make it more difficult for people with no right to live or work in the UK to remain here.

This will not affect those who are in the UK legally but we must be firm with those who break the rules as illegal immigration impacts the whole of society. Those living and working in the UK illegally can drive down the wages of lawful workers, allow rogue employers to undercut legitimate businesses and put pressure on taxpayer-funded public services.

By tackling abuse in this way, we can build an immigration system which works in the best interests of the country and prevents vulnerable people from finding themselves at risk of exploitation.

Powers to stop illegal migrants opening new current accounts were introduced 3 years ago and these new measures – which were agreed by Parliament – build on that.

They are part of wide-ranging legislative efforts to encourage those who are living and working in the UK illegally to leave. Other measures prevent illegal migrants from working in the UK, renting accommodation, obtaining driving licences and working as private hire vehicle and taxi drivers and

operators.

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## [News story: More than 100 lorry operators caught deliberately damaging air quality](#)

In August 2017, DVSA started to include checks for emissions cheat devices in roadside checks of lorries at 5 locations across Great Britain.

By the end of November 2017, DVSA examiners had searched 3,735 lorries at these locations and found 293 lorries with a cheat device fitted.

The drivers and operators were given 10 days to fix the emissions system, or face a £300 fine and having the vehicle taken off the road.

Where a driver or operator repeatedly offends, DVSA can take the vehicle off the road immediately.

Where the vehicle was registered	Percentage of vehicles without a cheat device	Percentage of vehicles with a cheat device	Total
Great Britain registered	91.5%	8.5%	100%
Northern Ireland registered	79.6%	20.4%	100%
Registered outside the UK	95.1%	4.9%	100%
Total	92.2%	7.8%	100%

### **How cheat devices damage air quality**

Cheat devices cut the cost of operating, but give false emissions readings which can result in the release of excessive emissions into the atmosphere.

Some of the way this is done include:

- using devices designed to stop emissions control systems from working
- removing the diesel particulate filter or trap
- using cheap, fake emission reduction devices or diesel exhaust fluid
- using illegal engine modifications which result in excessive emissions
- removing or bypassing the exhaust gas recirculation valve

### **Checking more than 100 operators' fleets**

Following the roadside checks, DVSA examiners are inspecting more than 100 operators' vehicle fleets for emission cheat devices. Some of the companies being inspected operate up to 80 vehicles.

DVSA is passing its findings on to the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain, who have the power to take away an operator's licence.

## **Working with EU agencies to deal with polluters**

DVSA is also working with its counterpart agencies across Europe to make sure that all offences committed by hauliers from outside Great Britain are dealt with in the country they're based.

Following the success of this operation, DVSA will start checking for emissions cheat devices at more locations across Great Britain from Spring 2018.

## **Damaging air quality and risking public health**

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK.

It's known to have more severe effects on vulnerable groups, for example, the elderly, children and people already suffering from pre-existing lung and heart conditions.

The government is committed to taking action against poor air quality. The checks support the government's [plan for reducing roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#).

This includes looking at ways to reduce emissions produced by vehicles, including those used commercially.

## **Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles**

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect you from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

We are committed to taking dangerous lorries off Britain's roads. Stopping emissions fraud is a vital part of that.

Anyone who flouts the law is putting the quality of our air and the health of vulnerable people, at risk. We won't hesitate to take action against these drivers, operators and vehicles.

Richard Turfitt, Senior Traffic Commissioner, said:

Traffic Commissioners welcome the steps being taken by the enforcement agency to identify emissions cheats.

Use of these devices threatens to undercut responsible and compliant operators as well as damaging the environment and public

health.

Traffic Commissioners will look to take action wherever an operator seeks an unfair and illegal advantage over the rest of industry.

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## **Press release: PM meeting with financial services firms**

This afternoon the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the senior executives from some of the world's leading financial institutions to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the financial sector posed by Brexit.

The Prime Minister gave an overview of the UK's position and updated on Brexit negotiations – including the UK's aim to agree an implementation period by the end of March.

The Chancellor emphasised the need to make the interests of consumers and taxpayers central to the future regulatory relationship between the UK and EU.

The business leaders were united in emphasising the need for as much certainty as possible. The conclusion of phase one talks were deemed to have provided reassurance and the business leaders gave their views on how to maximise the benefits of an implementation period.

The Chancellor said that the UK's financial services sector was an enabler of the real economy across Europe and that any moves to undermine it risked undermining Europe's economies. There was agreement that fragmentation of the European market would likely benefit centres outside of Europe.

In her closing comments the Prime Minister asked that in their conversations in European capitals, the attendees emphasise the benefits for Europe as a whole of the UK's financial centre.

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## **Press release: Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement plans**

## across the West Bank

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt condemns the advancement of plans by the Israeli Authorities (10 January) for 1,122 settlement units across the West Bank.

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## News story: Education Secretary makes first visit to Cambridgeshire school

Damian Hinds met with pupils and teachers at a primary school in Cambridgeshire today (11 January) during his first visit as Secretary of State for Education.

Mr Hinds was given a tour of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School in Soham, one of nearly 19,000 good or outstanding schools across the country, which included watching pupils taking lessons. Pupils in Year 5 showed him around the school library and asked him about the world of politics, ahead of a forthcoming visit they have to the Houses of Parliament.

St Andrew's – which is in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, one of the Department for Education's twelve Opportunity Areas – has a strong focus on encouraging every child to realise their potential and raising standards. Recent results have shown pupils are above average for reading.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It has been an absolute pleasure to meet the talented and hardworking teachers at St Andrew's and meet school children benefiting from a school which is inspiring them to make the most of their lives.

Up and down the country, schools like St Andrew's are raising educational standards for our young people and helping the government to deliver on its bold reforms. There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and our pupils are now amongst the world's best readers.

I want to make sure everyone in this country gets a world-class education and look forward to visiting more nurseries, schools, colleges and universities to see for myself some of the excellent progress being made and what more needs to be done.

Standards in primary schools are rising across the country, with latest

national assessment results in reading, writing and maths up 8 percentage points on last year and 154,000 more six-year-olds now on track to become fluent readers than in 2012.

The school is also part of a high-performing multi-academy trust, which has 86% of schools rated good or outstanding. 1.9 million more children are now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, and a record nine out of ten schools were given this rating at their last inspection. Fenland and East Cambridgeshire is one of twelve areas receiving a share of £72million pounds to help create opportunities and raise education standards in parts of the country where children and young people face greater challenges.