

# UK and France sign new agreement to tackle illegal migration

The number of officers patrolling French beaches will double as a result of a new agreement reached by the Home Secretary and her French counterpart today to tackle migrant activity in the Channel.

Home Secretary Priti Patel and French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin reaffirmed their commitment to make this route unviable. They signed an enhanced agreement which builds on the joint co-operation that has already seen the proportion of crossings intercepted and prevented rise from 41% in 2019 to 60% in recent weeks.

This increase in officer numbers represents a major uplift in capability that will significantly enhance law enforcement operations against illegal immigration, including doubling the number of gendarmes, French police, patrolling the beaches from 1 December. This will bolster the patrolling of the 150-kilometre stretch of coastline regularly targeted by people-smuggling networks and enable quicker response rates to suspicious activity, stopping migrants leaving French beaches in the first place and preventing more dangerous and unnecessary crossings.

In addition to increased officer numbers, the Home Secretary and Interior Minister also agreed an enhanced package of cutting edge surveillance technology – including drones, radar equipment, optronic binoculars and fixed cameras. The specialist equipment will allow the French to be more efficient in searching and clearing areas faster and help ensure officers are deployed in the right place at the right time, as a result increasing the number of migrants and facilitators detected and prevented from entering the water.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today's agreement is a significant moment for our 2 countries, stepping up our joint action to tackle illegal migration. Thanks to more police patrols on French beaches and enhanced intelligence sharing between our security and law enforcement agencies, we are already seeing fewer migrants leaving French beaches.

The actions we have agreed jointly today go further, doubling the number of police officers on the ground in France, increasing surveillance and introducing new cutting edge technology, representing a further step forward in our shared mission to make channel crossings completely unviable.

On top of these new operational plans, we will introduce a new asylum system that is firm and fair, and I will bring forward new legislation next year to deliver on that commitment.

This focus on tackling criminal smuggling networks builds on collaboration between the UK and French law enforcement agencies which has already seen the creation of a new Joint Intelligence Cell (JIC). Since it opened in July, the JIC has helped secure around 140 arrests and prevent approximately 1,100 crossings.

In addition, this year Immigration Enforcement have convicted 57 individuals for people smuggling, including those convicted of facilitating small boats Channel crossings, resulting in sentencing of over 138 years. A further 46 people have been convicted of offences related to the small boat crossings. The total sentencing for small boats related convictions is over 26 years.

The package agreed at the meeting today also includes:

- steps to support migrants into appropriate accommodation in France in order to take them out of the hands of criminal gangs; and our continued support to accommodation centres where migrants can be supported and advised on claiming asylum in a safe third country
- measures to increase border security at ports in northern and western France to reduce opportunities for smuggling and ensure that we avoid the illegal migration threat shifting towards freight traffic

Both sides also agreed the importance of a continued close dialogue to reduce migratory pressures at the shared border both today and next year.

This is just one element of the plan to make this route unviable. We are fixing our broken asylum system to make it firm and fair, welcoming people by safe and legal routes and stopping the abuse of the system by people who come here from safe EU countries.

The new plan will come into force in the coming days. It will be subject to regular evaluation by the UK's Clandestine Channel Threat Commander Dan O'Mahoney and his counterpart in France.

---

## [How leaving the EU will boost Scottish farming](#)

Andrew McCornick  
President  
NFUS

27 November 2020

Dear Andrew,

I have been disappointed to read in the media recent comments on funding for

Scottish farming. I want to reassure you that claims that £170 million will be cut from Scottish farming support are simply incorrect and that Scotland's farmers will have far greater security in this coming year than they would have had inside the EU.

Here are the facts. In 2019, the UK Government made a commitment to match the current annual budget to farmers in every year of this Parliament. In 2019, Scotland's farming community received almost £595 million in total farm support. In 2021/22, Scotland will receive a little over £24 million in outstanding EU funds, and just over £570 million in new Exchequer funding, totalling almost £595 million.

In 2021/22, the UK Government has also been able to increase Scotland's block grant by £2.4 billion in real terms, which the Scottish Government can use to benefit farmers and farming communities. We promised that no farmer would be out of pocket – we have delivered on that promise, and will continue to deliver for every year of this Parliament.

The EU is in fact taking a very different direction on funding the Common Agricultural Policy. CAP funding is likely to be cut by around 10% for the coming funding period. For Scotland, this would have amounted to an annual loss of almost £60 million. Within the EU, Scotland and the rest of the UK had too little say in how farming payments were distributed to our farmers. Farmers, consumers and taxpayers will benefit from closing the door on the CAP.

Being outside the EU not only gives our farmers a guarantee that their funding will be maintained, but also means we can develop specific policies which are suitable for Scottish and UK farmers. This will allow the UK to innovate and to incentivise sustainable practices to support our ambitious, world-leading 25 Year Environment Plan.

We are working constructively with the Scottish Government as they lead on developing new ways of funding farming, to ensure that, throughout these trying times, Scottish farmers can continue to produce the world leading food and drink that is so coveted.

The UK Government has frequent, constructive and highly valued discussions with both NFUS and the Scottish Government, and we look forward to more of the same. We have a wonderful opportunity in the coming months and Scotland's produce and farmers will be at the forefront of the UK's new start.

As this is a matter of general interest, I am releasing this letter to the media.

DAVID DUGUID MP PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

---

# Ministerial Appointment: 28 November 2020

## Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey

---

## New UK Government Covid testing site opens in Cumbernauld

The UK Government has today, Saturday 28 November, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at Fleming House Car Park (G67 1JW) in Cumbernauld. The centre is easily accessible for people without a car.

The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities. It is operated by Mitie on behalf of the UK Government.

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of 6 drive through sites, 16 walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all Covid testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and

tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 500,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic

Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people. I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts for the good of the country at this difficult time.

Gabe Docherty, Director of Public Health, NHS Lanarkshire said:

The public health department continues to contact-trace positive cases and clusters in our community and this addition to the UK testing provision is welcome.

I want to thank the public for their co-operation in reducing

spread of the virus and ask that they please remain vigilant. The general measures to minimise the risk of Covid-19 remain the same – face coverings, avoid crowded places, clean your hands, two metre distance, self-isolate and go for a test if you have symptoms.

Please do not hesitate if you have symptoms. It's critical that you go for a test and this walk-in centre is a very welcome addition to our testing capacity.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Cumbernauld, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

---

## **Government-backed 5G facility to be built in Oxfordshire**

The engineering hub, set to be built by the IT and business consultancy CGI in ESA-ECSAT at the Harwell Campus in Oxfordshire, is being backed by over £3 million of government investment and due for completion in 2021.

Providing a base for UK researchers and businesses to experiment, the new 5G hub – eventually planned to extend across the entire Harwell campus – will provide a testing facility that can show the benefits of hybrid 5G and satellite communications networks. The hope is that once the technology is demonstrated the techniques can be rolled out to other businesses across the UK.

5G connectivity is likely going to change the world and is considered the next meteoric leap in wireless communications, offering faster data speeds and less latency across networks. This low "latency" – the millisecond gap between action and reaction – has the potential to accelerate the green revolution needed to tackle climate change. It paves the way for vehicles to swap data nearly instantly, which can aid navigation and, for example, mean a car can begin to apply the brakes before a driver is aware of an accident.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

This year staying connected has taken on a new profound importance – from keeping in touch with loved ones and competing in Zoom quizzes to helping us tackle COVID-19.

This new state-of-the-art facility backed by government funding will enable our brightest researchers and engineers to better understand how 5G can help connect us all, creating new business opportunities, while delivering green efficiencies across the UK.

Space and tech companies are focusing on 5G because it allows for a broad range of applications across industries, including Internet of Things technology and augmented reality, all of which can be applied to manufacturing, public safety, enterprise and communications software and entertainment and gaming.

5G will enable more devices to be connected for more of the time: the “Internet of Things”, where chips in billions of devices talk to one another, bringing the prospect of huge efficiencies in everything from medicine and manufacturing to farming. It is also a quick, affordable way of bringing a fast data network to places where cables will not reach, from remote villages to disaster zones.

This new facility will develop software that allows satellite networks, including low-Earth orbit networks, to be integrated into terrestrial public and private communications networks. This will create new business opportunities for application developers and mobile network providers.

Credit: ESA

The centre is being backed by a European Space Agency contract, and as part of the development CGI is working with BT, Avanti Communications and the University of Surrey on a project to see how it can connect rural communities to 5G in the most affordable way possible.

Elodie Viau, director of telecommunications and integrated applications at ESA, said:

ESA’s novel 5G Hub will showcase how space technology enables connectivity, partnering with industry to foster innovation in the realms of autonomous vehicles and smart cities, and to enable machines to exchange information with one another via the Internet of Things.

Adding satellites to existing terrestrial 5G infrastructure is essential to ensure a reliable and safe telecommunications network that supports such connectivity, which in turn promotes a seamless and more environmentally friendly experience. Investing in space improves life on Earth.

Shaun Stretton, Senior Vice President for UK & Australia Space Control and Information Solutions at CGI, said:

This exciting facility will bring closer the potential benefits of satellite integration into 5G networks.

Through our work with the European Space Agency and industry partners, including the development of our Carnot-Sat hybrid network planning tool, it became apparent that the ability to demonstrate the benefits of integrated 5G and satellite communications networks would help to accelerate the delivery of 5G in the UK and across Europe.

CGI invested in our own innovative 5G Accelerator lab which is being used as a model for the 5G Hub at the European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications.

Matthew Evans, Markets Director, techUK, said:

This facility is another indication of the UK's commitment to being a global leader in 5G innovation. Hybrid solutions such as these could be a powerful way of providing connectivity and services to hard-to-reach areas across the UK, as well as enhancing the capabilities of our space sector to global markets.

In October three UK employers pledged to create 5,000 tech-related jobs. Liberty Global, the owner of Virgin Media, and O2's parent, Telefónica, unveiled plans to create 4,000 jobs in the UK and another 1,000 apprenticeships to accelerate the rollout of 5G.