[Call for evidence: An inspection of ePassport Gates](#)

News story

The Independent Chief Inspector invites anyone with knowledge and experience of the Home Office's use of ePassport Gates to submit their evidence for his forthcoming inspection.

Launching the 'call for evidence', David Bolt said:

> I am about to begin an inspection of the Home Office's use of ePassport Gates and would like to invite anyone with relevant knowledge and experience to write to me with their evidence.
>
> In recent years, the use by Border Force of ePassport Gates to manage arriving international passengers has increased. The Gates use technology to authenticate e-passports and to link the passenger to the travel document through a facial biometric comparison and have become a key component of Border Force's strategy for managing the UK border efficiently and effectively.
>
> My inspection will look at how well the ePassport Gates are working and where improvements are necessary. I am keen to hear from anyone who wishes to contribute to this inspection, but in particular from port operators, airlines, rail operators, passenger groups, education providers, NGOs and legal representatives detailing their experiences of:
>
> - the ease of use of ePassport Gates, including signage, passenger assistance, queues, positioning, numbers in use, problems
> - the impact of extending the use of ePassport Gates (in 2015) to 12-17 year olds
> - the impact of extending the use of ePassport Gates (in 2019) to 'B5JSSK' nationals (Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand,

Singapore, South Korea and the United States of America)
- the impact of ending the provision of passport endorsements on arrival in the UK, particularly for short-term students using the gates in error, or those required to evidence their immigration status, such as for a right to rent check
- the robustness of ePassport Gates in terms of their ability to detect attempts to circumvent the passport control
- the measures taken by Border Force to identify and protect vulnerable travellers using ePassport Gates, and the effectiveness of those measures

This inspection is still at the scoping stage, so I would be happy to receive suggestions of other areas that contributors feel should be included.

Please note that my remit does not extend to investigating individual cases. This remains a Home Office responsibility. However, I am keen to hear about individual cases, insofar as they serve to illustrate particular points, issues or trends.

How to respond

Please click here to email your submission to the Chief Inspector by 7th September 2020.

Please note:

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we need your permission to process and retain the information you submit in your submission, by clicking here a consent statement will automatically be added to your email.

However if you are using a non-compatible email client then please send your submission to epassportgates@icibi.gov.uk with 'ePassport Gates evidence submission' in the subject line and include the following consent statement in the body of your email, 'I consent to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration retaining and processing the information and data in this email.'

Please do not include this statement if you do not wish to give your consent. The information you submit may be quoted in the final inspection report, but it is the ICIBI's practice not to name sources and to anonymise as much as possible any examples or case studies.

Published 10 August 2020

[NHS Test and Trace service to strengthen regional contact tracing](#)

- NHS Test and Trace will provide local authorities with a dedicated team of contact tracers for local areas
- Local and national teams will work as one to ensure that as many people as possible are reached by contact tracing
- Approach has already been successfully used in Blackburn with Darwen, Luton and Leicester and is now being offered to all local authorities

NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England (PHE) will extend its partnership with local authorities in order to reach more people testing positive and their contacts to stop the spread of COVID-19, the government has announced today.

This new way of working will give local areas dedicated ring-fenced teams from the national service. These dedicated teams of NHS Test and Trace contact tracers will focus their work on specific areas, alongside the relevant local public health officials to provide a more tailored service.

If the dedicated national team cannot make contact with a resident within a set period of time, the local public health officials can use the data provided by NHS Test and Trace to follow up, which in some pilot areas has involved local authority teams and voluntary partners visiting people at home.

This integrated national and local system combines specialist local knowledge with the additional resources and data required from NHS Test and Trace. It has already been successfully used in Blackburn with Darwen, Luton and Leicester and is now being offered to all upper tier local authorities who are responsible for public health locally.

All data will be fed into the same system by both the national and local teams to ensure there is a complete view of how the service is working and how the virus might be spreading.

Executive Chair of NHS Test and Trace, Dido Harding, said:

> NHS Test and Trace is one of the largest contact tracing and testing systems anywhere in the world, and was built rapidly, drawing on the UK's existing health protection networks, to stop the spread of coronavirus. At the height of the pandemic we ensured the system had extra capacity in place to cope with potential peaks in the virus.
>
> We have always been clear that NHS Test and Trace must be local by default and that we do not operate alone – we work with and through partners across the country. As we learn more about the spread of the disease, we are able to move to our planned next step and

become even more effective in tackling the virus.

After successful trials in a small number of local areas, I am very pleased to announce that we are now offering this integrated localised approach to all local authorities to ensure we can reach more people in their communities and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Councillor James Jamieson, Chairman of the Local Government Association, said:

This announcement is good news for everyone. A strong national and local partnership is critical for test and trace to work as effectively as possible and it is right that local resources are kept under constant review to ensure everyone involved is able to help stop the virus spreading further.

Using councils' unrivalled local knowledge and vast experience of contact tracing within local public health teams is vital in the government's national efforts.

As the approach becomes more locally targeted the national service will adjust. NHS Test and Trace will reduce current extra capacity and reduce the number of non-NHS call handlers.

Data on the virus continues to be actively monitored through PHE and the Joint Biosecurity Centre so that staff numbers can be quickly scaled up, or down, depending on requirements for the national service and as part of winter preparations. This will continue to be determined by detailed forecasting of calls, informed by the experience of the service, the spread of the virus and citizen behaviour. As a result the national service will move from 18,000 to 12,000 contact tracers on 24 August with remaining teams to be deployed as part of dedicated local Test and Trace teams.

Staffing numbers of NHS clinicians who advise people who have tested positive will remain at current levels and can also be expanded further if required. And staffing has already been increased in PHE's local health protection teams, who have doubled in size and will increase this further ahead of winter.

More localised testing also continues to be rolled out, with over 200 mobile testing units already in operation and over 200 walk-in centres to be open across the country by October. In areas of high prevalence NHS Test and Trace supports local areas with even more testing as required.

This announcement builds on the recently published [Contain Framework](#), which sets out how national and local partners will work together at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks, and [NHS Test and Trace's business plan](#) which were both published in July.

NHS Test and Trace and PHE will continue to work with local authorities to

continuously improve the service provided to local residents.

[Application of building regulations where additional storeys are provided to existing buildings: circular 03/2020](#)

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[Portal enhancement View My Applications now available to all users](#)

This means HM Land Registry customers can now manage all of their portal applications and correspondence, including notices, requisitions and letters, in one central place.

The accessible, user-friendly interface will make it quicker to find the information they need, reducing the time they would previously have spent contacting us for status updates.

HM Land Registry is committed to making itself an organisation that is easier to do business with and part of this commitment is the launch of View My Applications to its customers.

Here's what some of our early users say about View My Applications.

Bill Chandler, Hill Dickinson

> The ability to view current applications and related correspondence
> in one place will save valuable time and reduce risk for
> conveyancers.

Sara, Skipton Building Society

> I like the way it alerts you to it being 'new' content. Very easy
> to find and clearly laid out.

Victoria McDermott, Beaumont Legal

> I'm loving using View My Applications – this has really helped me
> while I've been lodging applications in the lockdown period.

You can access View My Applications from the left-hand menu within the
portal.

For more information on View My Applications, read our [guidance page](#).

[View My Applications](#)

We recently held a webinar about our portal enhancements. You can now view
the recording of the portal [webinar session](#).

During the webinar we make reference to the Digital Registration Service
which will simplify the way customers submit applications to us, validating
data to eliminate the need to send out requests for further information.

[Digital Registration Service](#)

View My Applications is in beta and therefore we are continuously developing
it. New features we are considering will include 'View My Colleagues'
Applications'. Further communications will keep customers informed about
where we are heading and a potential timeframe for delivery.

[Innovative new pilot launched to speed up access to key services](#)

An innovative scheme has launched to give people easier and safer access to
digital services which require identity checks, such as online mortgage

applications, financial services and recruitment onboarding.

The new service will also help organisations tackle fraud and test if there is a market for this type of digital identity checking service.

The pilot, which will run for approximately a year, will deliver significant time savings for people who previously went through in-person processes to verify their identities. It will also provide financial savings for organisations who can move their identity proofing processes online.

Cabinet Office Minister, Julia Lopez, said:

> The DCS pilot provides an opportunity to establish how the Government and private sector might work together for the convenience of the citizens we serve. It will help us learn how we can help citizens and businesses access online services by verifying a person's identity more safely and easily, unlocking the huge potential of technology to improve our everyday lives.

The [Document Checking Service](), run by the Government Digital Service, allows a small number of approved organisations to digitally check a person's passport data to speed up application processes. Up until now, the Document Checking Service had only been available to [GOV.UK Verify]() identity providers.

The move underlines the government's commitment to make it easier and safer for people and businesses to access services online.

Under the pilot, no organisation will be given access to government-held data and an individual must consent to having their data verified. The organisation checking the ID will simply receive a 'yes or no' answer confirming whether the document provided is valid.

Up to eleven organisations have been selected to be part of the pilot from a range of sectors.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:

> The UK has a thriving digital economy and we are committed to making it easier for people to prove their identity online without compromising personal information and for businesses to conduct checks in a safe and secure way.
>
> This pilot is a significant step forward in our work and will help speed up access to financial services and make sure more people can benefit from the huge potential of technology

Digital identity checking is vital not only for government transformation but also for citizens who benefit from a safe, effective and functioning digital economy.