

## Small Boats: Illegal Migration

Date and time	[Private Office to advise]		
External attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Name] Permanent Secretary, Home Office</li> </ul>		
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A briefing has been requested by [Name] to discuss the 'return at sea' of illegal migrants using small boats to reach the UK from France.

### Key Issue

- During the first three months of 2020, there have been roughly four times as many migrants intercepted by Border Force vessels in the Channel as the same time last year. In recent weeks Home Office and Border Force colleagues have been working at pace to develop policy options in response.
- The expectation is that [Name] will outline the level of ambition that the Home Secretary and her Ministerial team in Home Office have on reducing the number of illegal entrants to the UK by small boat, with particular focus on developing a model which will see the interception and **return at sea** of clandestines in the channel. This is not without its challenges – operationally, legally and diplomatically.

### To be aware

- The Home Secretary is expected to write to Secretary of State Grant Shapps this week seeking the DfT's support for this ongoing workstream.
- DfT are proactive in coordinating cross-Whitehall activity on maritime security in UK waters.

### Lines to Take:

- DfT recognises that this is a key priority area for Home Office Ministers, and we are willing and able to continue to support work on this issue.
- Since the uptick in activity in the Channel, DfT has been working with colleagues in Home Office, Border Force, JMSC, MCA and others to contribute to a response that's aligned with our wider maritime security agenda.
- DfT has responsibility for coordinating Whitehall partners on cross-cutting maritime security issues, however, it is important to recognise **Home Office remain the lead Department on small boat activity**.
- DfT is an active member of the recently established working group, led by the Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC) which is developing operational response options in the Channel for the return of migrants.

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- DfT Maritime Director Roger Hargreaves chairs the National Maritime Security Committee (Officials) at which cross-Whitehall decision making takes place on cross-cutting maritime security work priorities.
- DfT coordinate the input on the 'Security of UK Waters' to the XO Committee. This is based on a risk assessment of illegal activities in UK waters – which small boat activity forms part of.
- **DfT is therefore well placed to continue facilitating dialogue across Government on illegal activities in UK waters – including the small boats issue.**
- For your information only

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### Background Information

- Home Office, and in particular Border Force, are lead on border security and immigration. The Home Secretary has directly sought action on the issue and DG Border Force (Paul Lincoln) will be briefing the Minister for Immigration compliance Name this Friday.
- Within Home Office, the small boats response remains a key strand of (and accountable to) a recently created 'Illegal Migration Strategy'.

### Home Office Strategy

The response to organised criminality linked to small boats remains a national priority for UK law enforcement.

This response is set by, and accountable to, the National Tasking Board (chaired by DG National Crime Agency).

A Clandestine Threat Board directs and oversees the strategic and tactical response across all agencies in the UK. The current strategic objectives are;

- Preventing loss of life and minimising risk to those at sea
- Protecting the UK border and the integrity of the immigration system
- Disrupting, dismantling and prosecuting the facilitating criminal networks
- Collaborating closely with French colleagues
- Reviewing and strengthening asylum policy to enable swift returns
- Increasing the use of targeted strategic communications