

THE CRANSTON INQUIRY

PRE-INCIDENT CHRONOLOGY

This pre-incident chronology sets out background context to the events of 23-24 November 2021. It does not purport to be and is not exhaustive or conclusive or final. Entries in the chronology are drawn from the cited source material; inclusion in this chronology does not denote the Inquiry's acceptance of the accuracy of these entries.

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
2017	The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) begins attending "migration related" search and rescue (SAR) incidents in the English Channel.	INQ010101
2017-2022	RNLI deems the facilities at Dover for the handover of rescue casualties to be "lacking and under resourced to meet the demand" in the period from 2017 to 2022, creating a bottleneck and delay, impacting on the ability of RNLI assets to redeploy and protracting the length of crew service.	INQ010101
01/2017	Strategic Overview of Search and Rescue in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This provides a framework for the strategic and operational oversight of UK SAR and describes the background, scope and responsibilities of UK SAR.	INQ000412
11/05/2017	The Home Office (HO) publishes guidance for Immigration Enforcement officers on "Clandestine illegal entrants". The guidance refers to "small boats" as a means of entry.	INQ004467
01/11/2017	Framework Document for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).	INQ000955
2017	By the end of 2017, RNLI attends 5 small boat crossing incidents. No people are rescued.	INQ010101

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
Early 2018	Border Force Maritime Command (BFMC) provides a dedicated liaison officer working within the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) Dover ¹ during days of predicted high demand (until the Joint Control Room (JCR) is developed by the Clandestine Channel Threat Command (CCTC)).	INQ010137
01/2018	7 migrants ² cross the English Channel using small boats. (There are no further crossings until June 2018.)	INQ010134
18/01/2018	The UK and France sign the Sandhurst Treaty, which aims to improve cooperation on border security and to tackle illegal migration. The UK commits £45.5m to implement the terms of the treaty.	INQ010134 INQ009676 INQ004467
28/03/2018	Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG) ViSION User Guidance (CAPITA) v4.24.	INQ006204
30/05/2018	An updated version of the Anglo-French Joint Maritime Contingency Plan for the English Channel, known as the Mancheplan, comes into effect. (It remains in force on the 23-24 November 2021.)	INQ000095
06/2018	4 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats. (There are no further crossings until August 2018.)	INQ010134
08/2018	10 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
Summer 2018	HO observe that small boats are beginning to be used more frequently.	INQ004467
Autumn 2018	From autumn 2018, there are cross-government meetings between the Department for Transport (DfT), HO, MCA and Border Force (BF) to discuss the UK's response to small boat crossings and departmental roles.	INQ010337
09/2018	7 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
10/2018	23 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
11/2018	110 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
11/2018	A UK-France Centre Conjoint d'Information et Coordination (CCIC) opens in Calais. It is staffed by BF, Police aux Frontières, Immigration Enforcement (IE) and National Crime Agency (NCA) officers.	INQ010134 INQ004467
11/2018	From November 2018, UKBF assets and crews are tasked to assist HMCG in intercepting and responding to small boat crossings. Initially, BF vessels carry out proactive patrols of the English Channel, but, as	INQ010137 INQ006110

¹ References in the chronology to MRCC Dover, Dover Coastguard, DCG, Dover Coastguard Operations Centre and Dover CGOC are to the same location, and reflect the terminology used in the underlying source material.

² Terminology used in the chronology reflects the underlying source material; it does not indicate adoption by the Inquiry of that terminology.

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	crossings increase, to make best use of resources, patrolling is significantly reduced and vessels become more reactive.	INQ006116 INQ006117 INQ006186
08/11/2018	6th Unorthodox Channel Crossings User Group Meeting minutes record that “the issue regarding migrants” has been on the rise and “the rescue boat from Calais will attend” if cross-channel swimmers and their support vessels encounter migrant small boats.	INQ000172
11/12/2018	An AFATG meeting takes place. There is discussion of SAR operations involving migrants in the Dover Strait and associated risks and challenges.	INQ000176
12/2018	A surge of small boat crossings is noted between October and December 2018.	INQ004467
04/12/2018	Ministerial meeting with the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Home Secretary) on small boats.	INQ008165 INQ008162
13/12/2018	A migrant boat is intercepted by a French vessel in French waters, and the migrants initially refuse to leave their craft stating their wish to go to the UK.	INQ006122
19/12/2018	Update submission to the Home Secretary and Minister for Immigration on steps to address illegal crossings in the Channel by small boat, with annexes including a high-level action plan.	INQ006122 INQ006123
28/12/2018	The Home Secretary declares a major incident following the crossing of approximately 200 people in small boats.	INQ004467
31/12/2018	The Home Secretary makes a Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) request to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) requesting immediate assistance in countering illegal migration in the Channel, including by the deployment of a Royal Navy vessel to back-fill operations until the arrival of a BF cutter from the Aegean.	INQ008971
12/2018	138 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats. By the end of 2018, a total of 299 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
2018	By the end of 2018, RNLI attends 24 small boat crossing incidents, rescuing 106 people. RNLI estimate that the average number of occupants on a boat in 2018 is 7.	INQ010101
01/2019	HO create a Clandestine Threat Board, to set the operational and tactical response to clandestine entry into the UK, and feed into the Strategic Coordination and Oversight Group.	INQ004467
02/01/2019	The MACA request is accepted by the MoD minister for 30 days. HMS Mersey is deployed and hands over to HMS Enterprise on the 21 January 2019.	INQ008971 INQ008979

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
Approx 03/01/2019	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure relating to migrant activity is updated on or around the 3-7 January 2019. (A previous version had been created in 2016).	INQ000413 INQ006131
24/01/2019	The Home Secretary and his French counterpart agree a joint action plan on combating illegal migration involving small boats in the English Channel. A declaration is signed relating to the UK-France CCIC.	INQ004467 INQ010134
01/2019	45 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
01/02/2019	HO request to extend deployment of HMS Enterprise to the 10 February 2019 is agreed by MoD.	INQ008972
02/2019	88 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
03/2019	66 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
04/2019	80 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
05/2019	The HMCG Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) moves from using the ViSION system 4 to system 5, receiving two days of training. Migration of the rest of HMCG to system 5 is delayed for technical reasons (with maritime HMCG still using system 4 at 23-24 November 2021).	INQ009628
15/05/2019	Operation Deveran Operational Order is approved. Operation Deveran is the BF-led maritime response at sea to the threat of facilitated illegal migration using small boats. (Operation Deveran is the overarching BF maritime plan until March 2022, when MoD takes primacy for small boats under Operation Isotrope.)	INQ000619 INQ010137
05/2019	The provision of one BF cutter and two coastal patrol vessels for SAR purposes is formalised in May 2019 by Operation Deveran.	INQ010137
09/05/2019	HO give consideration to the return of migrants rescued at sea by BF assets to France.	INQ006154
16/05/2019	At an AFATG meeting, it is recorded that "Migrants in small, overcrowded craft are still a significant problem".	INQ000172
05/2019	150 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
23/06/2019	The Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC) Operational Mandate is approved by its board.	INQ000003 INQ010337 INQ010098 INQ010134
06/2019	HO "Small Boats Response: Lessons Learned Review".	INQ006136
06/2019	163 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
07/2019	HMCG document addresses staffing levels.	INQ007223 INQ001329
07/2019	Concerns are raised about BF assets being “tied up delivering primarily SAR in the Channel”, meaning that they are not available for tasking on other missions.	INQ010337
01/07/2019	Emails between DfT, MCA and other colleagues about a cross-Whitehall meeting on migrants/small boats. These refer to an example question: "perhaps response should be an MCA / RNLI lead rather than Border Force".	INQ008137
05/07/2019	Note, briefing and readout of cross-Whitehall meeting on Migrants Crossing the Channel in Small Boats.	INQ008158 INQ008159 INQ008160 INQ006139
12/07/2019	HMCG produce a document setting out “illegal migration incident statistics for 2019”, which records that 579 migrants have been recovered to date during 2019.	INQ000117
15/07/2019	General Maritime Small Boat Incursions: Break Report v1.	INQ004455
23/07/2019	Email sending readout from small boats meeting, noting “Responsibility for SAR” is the driver of this planning meeting.	INQ001119
24/07/2019	Small Boats Planning Group Meeting 1 Readout.	INQ001131
07/2019	195 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
08/2019	342 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
09/2019	An Addendum to the France / UK Joint Action Plan is agreed, agreeing to seek to reduce the number of successful migrant crossings, whilst reaffirming that “loss of life at sea is to be avoided at all costs”.	INQ004467
16/09/2019	Small Boats Monthly Situation Report August 2019 – Annex 1 Critical Incident Update 12 August 2019 – includes the first reported fatality.	INQ006143
09/2019	210 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
10/2019	75 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
01/11/2019	BFMC Standard Operating Procedure SOP-02 Cutter Migrant Rescue Operating Procedures Operation Deveran 01-11-2019.	INQ003920
19/11/2019	The first 2Excel fixed-wing aircraft contracted to the MCA goes live.	INQ010335

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11/2019	151 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
12/12/2019	HMCG Mission Conduct Policy v7.	INQ008922
12/2019	278 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats. By the end of 2019, a total of 1,843 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
2019	By the end of 2019, RNLI attends 61 small boat crossing incidents, rescuing 230 people. Using BF and HO data, RNLI estimate that the average number of occupants on a boat in 2019 is 11.	INQ010101
2020	HMCG undertake a risk review including Maritime Staffing and identify a risk where there is potential inconsistency with the adoption of Recommended Staffing Levels (RSL) and actions taken when a station operates below RSL.	INQ007223 INQ001329
2020	DfT note that in 2020, “as the scale of the small boats issue increased, so too did the engagement between the Home Office and DfT. DfT’s focus was on ensuring that the Home Office was properly apprised of HMCG’s SAR obligations and representing HMCG’s interests in inter-departmental contexts”.	INQ010337
2020/21	UK/France bilateral relationship is strained as a result of Brexit, fishing rights disputes, AUKUS submarine deal and Operation Sommen (maritime turnaround tactics), though exchange of operational planning products continues.	INQ010134
2020/21	Migrant numbers start significantly increasing as boats get larger.	INQ010137
2020/21	Briefing for DfT Minister for Maritime on Small Boats Migration: Legal Framework. This addresses HO working to develop options to permit the interception of migrants in small boats and their “return at sea” to France, and DfT raising concern about the proposed tactics.	INQ001929
01/2020	94 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
01/2020	From January 2020 to 2022 there is an overall increase in MCA taskings for 2Excel. This is a “planned and contracted increase which was in parallel to the increase in Small Boats”.	INQ010335
01/2020	JMSC holds tabletop exercise to examine a variety of common scenarios relating to the response to small boats, to identify capability gaps and possible improvements.	INQ010134
06/02/2020	At an AFATG meeting, it is noted that “Migrants in small boats still represent a significant problem”, and that both MRCCs need to have a “daily preparation and a fluent dialog [sic].” It is also noted that the UK is trialling maritime drones, to be used for SAR and other missions.	INQ000177
02/2020	183 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
03/2020	During the first Covid lockdown small boats become almost the only method of illegal entry to the UK, resulting in a trend of increased crossings, with numbers continuing to rise steeply post-lockdown.	INQ010134
12/03/2020	On or around this date, HMCG produces an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) relating to migrant activity.	INQ000413
03/2020	188 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
21/04/2020	Strategic briefing – Commission from small boats workshop – Tactical options to interdict migrant vessels.	INQ002350
Prior to 30/04/2020	HO designate the Serious and Organised Crime Group (SOCG) to “own” the coordination of HO maritime security strategy.	INQ001049
30/04/2020	Home Secretary writes to the Secretary of State for Transport (Transport Secretary) to invite him to a briefing on small boats, and to agree an approach on the issue, including by setting up a joint taskforce.	INQ001049
30/04/2020	DfT emails are sent about a small boats briefing.	INQ001084
04/2020	558 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
05/2020	An entry is made in the MCA corporate risk register relating to “The unilateral use of force by Home Office law enforcement bodies to deter, disable or return vessels carrying migrants to the French coast presents a very significant risk to the safety of life at sea.” This is referred to as presenting an “intolerable risk” for HMCG.	INQ000167
04/05/2020	MCA Briefing Note on Small Boats Issue – Home Office policy / process review.	INQ002387
05/05/2020	DfT email to MCA providing updates on developments and offering a further discussion.	INQ001947
06/05/2020	Readout of DfT / MCA meeting, including on small boats.	INQ001163
13/05/2020	DfT and MCA briefing note addressing their SAR role in UK waters, which includes consideration about a developing HO proposed tactic to disable migrant vessels, which HMCG consider is unnecessary to safeguard life at sea and poses a risk to the safety of those on board, raising concerns about legal risk in relation to the policy.	INQ002510
20/05/2020	HO holds an exercise and trial of tactics to prevent small boats arriving in the UK (led by Daniel O’Mahoney as exercise commander). Other organisations are involved in planning this and attend the exercise, including HMCG.	INQ004968 INQ002504
21/05/2020	Review of MCA aerial surveillance aircraft tasking for proactive illegal migration patrols.	INQ006155

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
05/2020	743 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
06/2020	The Clandestine Operations Response Team (CORT) “was formed within IE [Immigration Enforcement] as a dedicated response team to address the increasing numbers of small boats crossing the Channel”. CORT was primarily landside and works with BFMC surface assets and other UK agencies. It is noted that “at this point, each element of the Home Office and partner agencies were working mostly in isolation without a unifying strategy and operational plan”.	INQ010134
10/06/2020	Email is sent by the HO to various with readout of Home Secretary and Transport Secretary meeting on Maritime Security 9 June 2020.	INQ009136
06/2020	727 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
01/07/2020	Minutes of National Maritime Security Committee meeting.	INQ009109
09/07/2020	MCA's Operation Eos (Tasking Policy for Migrant Surveillance Patrols) is published. Operation Eos is "HM Coastguard's proactive deployment of fixed wing air assets for SAR purposes in the Southeast of the UK in response to small boat activity".	INQ000459 INQ010098
22/07/2020	MCA plans to formalise Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) training (later overtaken by a reorganisation of VTS in April 2021).	INQ007384
23/07/2020	MCA Board Meeting Agenda Item 3 Chief Executive Report July 2020.	INQ008042
28-29/07/2020	Update on meeting to discuss closer cooperation for deployment planning and information exchange with France, and discussions about sharing information from aerial surveillance with French authorities.	INQ004977
30/07/2020	HMCG commences a series of “Red Day” meetings. The situation at Dover is discussed, and it is noted that keeping on top of administration is becoming a challenge when BF use different references. It is suggested that “the spreadsheet” could be shared with BF so that both can populate the same document. These are MCA internal only meetings until 16 November 2021.	INQ010098 INQ009930
31/07/2020	Request is sent to the National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) by HMCG for the HMCG spreadsheet to be shared with BF.	INQ009930
07/2020	1,111 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
08/2020	Following a MACA request from the HO, MoD vessels undertake trials with BF to test the turnaround policy. No migrants are involved in the trials. It is noted that the Army Unmanned Aerial System	INQ009649 INQ008978

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	Watchkeeper has delivered effective ISR [Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance] support to Op Deveran.	
08/2020	CCTC is created within HO, absorbing CORT. It is established to lead the overall cross-government response to clandestine entry to the UK and is responsible for the intelligence picture around small boat crossings, including engagement with French authorities on countering organized crime, and the collection, assurance and dissemination of data on migrant crossings. (At 23/24 November 2021, the HO operational response to small boat crossings is led by CCTC). Daniel O'Mahoney (author of HO Corporate Statement INQ010134) is appointed as the Director of the CCTC on its creation and remains in post at the time of the incident (and until December 2022).	INQ010137 INQ001108 INQ010134
04/08/2020	Minutes of HMCG Red Day meeting record an "overview on the current position at Dover with staffing, VTS and migrant incidents and hence the reason for these meetings and the need for support from the National Network."	INQ009929
06/08/2020	Minutes of the HMCG Red Day meeting record "Spreadsheet shared and BF numbers updated as day progresses". There is discussion about arrangements for network flexing to support Dover.	INQ009931
19/08/2020	Small boat incident. An MCA Standards Review of this incident records that there was an extensive search for a vessel which was not located in the Channel, although it was later established that the casualties had safely come to shore. There was effective initial call collection, but it was not possible to obtain positional information, and there were delays in information recording. There was a Mayday relay "free format" an hour and 40 minutes into the incident – it was suggested this should have taken place sooner. There is a reference to intense pressure on Dover and RNLI, impacting on operations due to fatigue and malaise. There is also some criticism of the search planning. Recommendations are made about recording in ViSION, and considering earlier broadcast action.	INQ008902 INQ010098
28/08/2020	Following a MACA request from the HO, the MoD provide uncrewed aerial systems over the Channel to monitor migrant routes, supporting with both crewed and uncrewed surveillance flights.	INQ009649
08/2020	1,469 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
04/09/2020	Readout of MCA / DfT meeting, including agreement of a criteria to assess who is most appropriate to respond to incidents, and volunteers coming under pressure from local communities, with the Secretary of State to be made aware of pressures and resource implications for MCA.	INQ001164

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
09/09/2020	Minutes of the HMCG Red Day meeting note that MRCC Dover was low on staffing numbers.	INQ000214
Autumn 2020	In autumn 2020 (Daniel O'Mahoney) or summer 2021 (Matthew Leat), the JCR is established at MRCC Dover. HO personnel are located in the JCR to share information such as images from HO drones to support HMCG SAR operations and coordinate the HO's "land side" response to small boat crossings.	INQ010134 INQ010098
09/2020	Exchange of emails about draft Home Office Policy Statement (INQ010118) and Impact Assessment addressing "Small Boats – Returns at Sea" for input from other organisations, including DfT, MCA, International Maritime Organization (IMO), MoD and others.	INQ009388 INQ010118 INQ010119
03/09/2020	Discussion points for meeting between DfT and MCA on the 3 September 2020.	INQ001337
17/09/2020	The Home Secretary is briefed on small boat funding and performance impact. The note sets out historic and planned costs.	INQ009676
24/09/2020	Clandestine Threat Briefing Pack April to June 2020.	INQ004462
30/09/2020	At a Migrant Activity Interoperability Meeting between HMCG and Centre Régional Opérationnel de Surveillance et de Sauvetage (Regional Operational Centres for Monitoring and Rescue) (CROSS) Gris-Nez, ³ under the Agenda item "SAR resources available within SRRs" a minute records French assets available. It is also noted that "Both sides have insufficient assets to deal with heavy days". It is recorded that Gris-Nez uses an iPad to communicate with migrants by WhatsApp. HMCG say they will look to do this too.	INQ000217
09/2020	1,949 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
10/2020	HMCG publish a "Major Incident Plan", which remains in force at the date of the incident. It makes no specific reference to migrant incidents.	INQ000415
01/10/2020	Bristow's SAR Operational Support OM Part A Supplement is published.	INQ005345
01/10/2020	HMCG and RNLI sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Search and Rescue.	INQ000096
16/10/2020	HO produce a slide pack addressing the activity of its operations room in relation to small boats. This includes setting up a presence at MRCC Dover. The document addresses "SAR v Law Enforcement", stating that SAR incidents will be coordinated by Dover Coastguard, and will remain under their	INQ000416

³ References in the chronology to MRCC Gris-Nez, CROSS Gris-Nez and Cros Gris-Nez are to the same location, and reflect the terminology used in the underlying source material.

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	coordination until declared as a Law Enforcement Incident. SAR cannot be discontinued unless the vessel was not in distress in any way. It is noted that the policy and procedures for a termination of SAR are still being “worked through” by HMCG, RNLI and BF.	
19/10/2020	HMCG Guidance on Dover WhatsApp Usage is published.	INQ006747
10/2020	474 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
11/2020	First meeting of the CCTC Delivery Board is held (attended by DfT).	INQ001108
11/2020	A report is presented to Parliament on the inspection by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration of the Home Office’s response to in-country clandestine arrivals (“lorry drops”) and to irregular migrants arriving via “small boats”, May-December 2019. This concludes that the HO’s involvement in the response to the surge in small boats is having a negative impact on other business areas. It concludes that the HO does not have the capacity of capabilities to manage this threat effectively. The report addresses contingency plans for dealing with a surge in arrivals. The report makes recommendations, including to engage Cutter and Coastal Patrol Vessel (CPV) crews in consultation to review and address concerns, and to ensure all crew members have personal equipment needed to perform their duties effectively and safely, and that SOPs are comprehensive and updated in line with events.	INQ004467
02/11/2020	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting, which records that there seems to be some inconsistency about communication, and that telephone and email communication has been a little slow for migrant incident information.	INQ000219
09-10/11/2020	Migrant Activity Interoperability Meeting between MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez on the 2 December 2020, which records that French colleagues have been slow with informing the UK about ongoing migrant operations and providing their tracker, requiring chasing. On the same date, Cros Gris-Nez raises for discussion the use of Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) for migrants SAR operations, suggesting Dover CGOC could benefit from this, and that the French are also trying to get one.	INQ000218
17/11/2020	Readout from Director General’s small boats meeting recording concern about HO turnaround proposals.	INQ001105
20/11/2020	MCA briefs the DfT Minister for Maritime on developments and concerns on proposed Home Office policy on returns at sea.	INQ005060

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
20/11/2020	Document for MCA Sponsorship Board December Meeting – Agenda Item 3 Chief Executive High Level Summary. This addresses concerns about small boats and BF tactics.	INQ001016
23/11/2020	Meeting to discuss termination of search and rescue protocol.	INQ005046
28/11/2020	The UK and France sign a joint statement on collaboration on tackling illegal migration.	INQ010134
11/2020	761 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
03/12/2020	Submission from MCA to the Transport Secretary addressing MCA's concerns about the HO proposed turnaround policy, and their potential contravention of international SAR obligations (noted by DfT on 7 Dec 2020).	INQ010098 INQ001171 INQ001174
03-09/12/2020	The CCTC Commander (Daniel O'Mahoney) sends a submission to the Home Secretary and Minister for Immigration Compliance regarding CCTC's winter preparedness, to be read in conjunction with the winter preparedness clandestine response. This confirms that Met Office analysts have been commissioned to provide an enhanced product to predict the likely locations and scale of migrant activity to improve prediction of activity. The CCTC are also considering deploying a Royal Navy autonomous surveillance vessel, known as MADFOX, from January 2021 but this is delayed due to regulation issues and its use does not progress beyond testing.	INQ010134 INQ008340 INQ008338
16/12/2020	Following a MACA request from the HO, the MoD provides two personnel to form an Intelligence Exploitation Team in support of the multi-agency hub.	INQ009649
17/12/2020	Operation Altair - Gold Commander's Strategy published.	INQ005230
21/12/2020	Operation Altair is launched as the cross-government response to end the viability of small boats crossings as a route to entering the UK illegally. Operation Altair's strategic aims are to "save lives, secure the UK border, improve public confidence and identify vulnerable people".	INQ010134 INQ000619 INQ010445
12/2020	209 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats. By the end of 2020, a total of 8,466 migrants have crossed the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
2020	In late 2020, RVL Aviation responds to industry engagement opportunities with the Home Office.	INQ010102
2020	By the end of 2020, RNLI has attended 159 small boat crossing incidents, rescuing 1,374 people. Using BF and HO data, RNLI estimates that the average number of occupants on a boat in 2020 was 13.	INQ010101
01/2021	2Excel's provision of Panther fixed wing aircraft to the MCA is enhanced with a third Panther aircraft added to the Panther contract, to meet a requirement for increased flying hours.	INQ010335

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
01/2021	An MoU is signed between the Home Office and the MCA in respect of the exchange of information.	INQ000100
11/01/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez hold a joint meeting at which MRCC Gris-Nez raises concerns in relation to operational capability in the context of recent migrant incidents. MRCC Gris-Nez are concerned about a change in direction of small boat travel creating a much larger area of water to cross.	INQ000181
14/01/2021	Operational Response Conference Call between HMCG, BF and RNLI. There is a discussion of recent incidents involving migrant activity. It is recorded that intelligence had been requested from partners on changes to launch sites and tactics caused by French law enforcement success.	INQ000182
01/2021	224 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
02/2021	308 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
03/2021	There is a trial of the use of Crew Transfer Vessels (CTV) for small boat operations by Border Force.	INQ010137
04/03/2021	Operational Response Conference Call between HMCG, BF and RNLI, recording that there is a trend developing in relation to medical situations onboard small boats.	INQ000189
04/03/2021	Operational Response Conference Call between HMCG, BF and RNLI, recording RNLI raising concern in relation to the age of BF vessels. BF states that "fleet renewal" was in process.	INQ000189
09/03/2021	AFATG meeting (UK / France), recording that migrant incidents remain common.	INQ000192
16/03/2021	DfT email to MCA on "Small Boats: check in".	INQ004881
29/03/2021	HMCG ViSION – Multiple Call, Scenario & Incident Functions. HMCG Incident Coordination. HMCG Network Conference Call Instructions. HMCG C-Scope Simulated Tracks.	INQ000435 INQ006199 INQ003767 INQ000437
03/2021	831 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
04/2021	The Operation Deveran Operational Plan is revised and updated. Amongst other things, it states that work is underway to move the crew change date of the Deveran surge cutter. This will allow the surge cutter to cover the crew change of the primary Deveran cutter, thereby enhancing operational capabilities.	INQ000619
04/2021	HO Criminal and Financial Investigations (CFI) officers are deployed onto squadron vessels on a regular basis to "enhance the Law Enforcement response" to small boat crossings.	INQ000619

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
01/04/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting. Concern is noted about migrant incidents being left at the median line before UK vessels are on scene, with an action for Dover to investigate direct communications between French and UK assets on scene.	INQ000194
08/04/2021	HMCG Policy SAD Mobile Communications Devices.	INQ003796
09/04/2021	HMCG Policy SAC – Search Patterns.	INQ000431
09/04/2021	HMCG Policy SAC – Datum Point.	INQ003785
15/04/2021	Annotated agenda for and readout from MCA / DfT meeting including discussion of BF proposals.	INQ001338 INQ001175
26/04/2021	HMCG Alerting and Tasking General Guidance.	INQ006200
04/2021	750 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
05/2021	From May 2021, tactical watercraft (including jet skis) are to be deployed by BF under Operation Deveran.	INQ000619
03/05/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting, at which there is “Discussion around direct comms between French & UK assets on scene (VHF CH67 or 68) to ensure casualty vessel is not left unattended.” An action is set for Dover MRCC to speak to BF on this.	INQ000193
04/05/2021	HMCG SAR Coordination and Response and Maritime Assistance Policy.	INQ000430
06/05/2021	HMCG Zone Flexing Policy.	INQ003777
09/05/2021	BF email circulating revised Op Deveran Operational Order.	INQ002059
10/05/2021	HMCG and RNLI sign MoU on Cooperation in International Activity.	INQ000098
12/05/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, RNLI raises a “concern or observation” around BF requesting Dover Coastguard to task Dover All-Weather Lifeboats (ALB), as BF had “reached their hrs”.	INQ000195
29/05/2021	An incident occurs involving a small boat, which resulted in an HMCG Tier 3 incident review. Various issues are raised, and recommendations made, including in relation to information shared between France and HMCG.	INQ008909
05/2021	1,627 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
Summer 2021	HMCG is notified by HO that the predictions of crossings for 2022 could reach 60,000 people. HMCG determines that additional staffing is required for small boats incidents.	INQ010098
06/2021	HMCG provides a Coastguard Clandestine Operations Liaison Officer (COLO) to be based in the JCR and liaise with HO teams.	INQ010098
06/2021	An MCA training document on "Confirmation Bias & Human Factors" is created on or around June 2021.	INQ000362
06/2021	CCTC, via HO, request support to develop new operational plans to respond to the diversification of the small boat threat and the potential of new launch sites.	INQ009649 INQ008980
04/06/2021	An MoU is signed between the HO and MCA for the provision of the MCA spotter aircraft (provided by RVL Aviation) for proactive reconnaissance trials.	INQ000097
07/06/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting, at which there is ongoing discussion about “direct comms between French & UK assets onscene (VHF CH67 or 68) to ensure casualty vessel is not left unattended”.	INQ000196
10/06/2021	HMCG Policy Distress Phase Checklist.	INQ000438
11/06/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, the RNLI state that during an incident there had been no positive communication from Border Force, who were “very grumpy and there appeared to be no mutual friendliness”.	INQ000198
14/06/2021	In response to an earlier CCTC request, MoD provide one planner to the CCTC for period of four weeks from this date.	INQ009649 INQ008980
28/06/2021	In response to an earlier CCTC request, MoD provide one liaison officer to the CCTC for period of four months from this date.	INQ009649 INQ008980
30/06/2021	It has become clear to the HO, "... by the end of Q2 (i.e. by 30 June 2021) that that year’s total [small boats] arrivals were likely to eclipse that of 2020."	INQ010134
30/06/2021	The Home Secretary chairs a "Small Boats - Operationalisation of Maritime Tactics" meeting. At around this time, a timeline has been prepared setting out steps to be taken in relation to turnaround.	INQ004299 INQ001089
06/2021	2,177 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
07/2021	BFMC bring the first CTV (Hurricane) into live service, which goes on to replace a CPV. The CTV has “a platform which was well suited to migrant rescue, particularly given its size and stability.” Hurricane is intended to be deployed during the busiest periods because it is better suited to SAR and can carry larger numbers.	INQ010134 INQ010137

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
07/2021	Regular, often weekly, small boats meetings start to be held by DfT, attended by members of the DfT Maritime Security Division, HMCG and DfT legal advisers. Issues discussed include matters such as the Nationality and Borders Bill and communications strategy (the DfT Corporate Statement emphasises that any discussion of operational matters at these meetings was at a high level). These meetings, which are not minuted, take place via Microsoft Teams.	INQ010337 INQ010098
01/07/2021	HO makes a MACA request to the MoD for support to the CCTC in the form of planning, development of tactics, assets and personnel to support the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) operation. The request is subsequently cancelled.	INQ009649 INQ008936
01/07/2021	HMCG Policy: Vessel – Sinking or Taking Water	INQ000453
01/07/2021	HMCG Policy: Vessel – Unsure of Position	INQ000455
02/07/2021	MCA contract Language Line Solutions to provide an interpreting service. The HMCG document relating to this states that it can be used for operational purposes “whenever language is causing a problem”. The procedure (which involves providing a code, introducing the speaker, briefing the interpreter and other steps, before interpretation is provided) is set out in the document.	INQ006203
05/07/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting, at which there is further discussion about “direct comms between French & UK assets onscene (VHF CH67 or 68) to ensure casualty vessel is not left unattended”.	INQ000197
07/07/2021	HO makes two MACA requests to MoD for planning support to Operation Deveran in the development of an operational capability to safely turn around migrant vessels.	INQ009649
09/07/2021	DfT / MCA small boats actions tracker is circulated.	INQ002940
11/07/2021	SAR incident involving a small boat which results in an HMCG Tier 1 review. It is noted that the floor of the craft had collapsed as a UKBF asset arrived on scene. Various issues are identified, in particular in relation to obtaining and recording information. It is also noted that certain capabilities had not been used. Actions for improvement are recorded.	INQ008906
12/07/2021	RNLI concerns are raised that HMCG are tasking lifeboats to assemble and go afloat preventatively without specific SAR taskings in order to provide resilience to BF. An operational decision is made to not respond to incidents that are not deemed as SAR or distress calls.	INQ003092
12/07/2021	HMCG Flowchart for Migrant Incident – Termination of SAR.	INQ003004

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
16/07/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003061
19/07/2021	Meeting between the MCA and DfT, at which the standing down of SAR and BF tactics are discussed.	INQ001335
20/07/2021	The UK and France sign further joint statement on tackling illegal migration.	INQ010134
21/07/2021	The RNLI inform DfT of plans for media engagement in relation to migrant crossings. The RNLI state that the level of activity being carried out by crews in the South East region is at an all-time high, and there is growing concern and frustration at having to defend the core purpose of the RNLI. The RNLI refer to concerns raised on the 12 July 2021, and state that there is a fear that crews are being put in an impossible position and subject to significant hostility in their personal lives and are losing the support of their employers as they are tasked so heavily during calm weather.	INQ003092
22/07/2021	The Chief Coastguard sends an email stating that he is disappointed that recipients had not come up with a solution to increase the effectiveness of the leadership and migrant incident response at Dover. He is concerned that HMCG are unable to demonstrate that migrant incidents are being managed and recorded in the same way as other distress or alert phase incidents, and this must change.	INQ003103
25/07/2021	Monthly Small Boat Placemat, at which a "Forward Look" records it is likely that small boat activity will increase in the next few months, with small boat activity peaking in August and September 2021. At the time of publication, June 2021 has the highest number of "boat migrants" recorded to date.	INQ003066
27/07/2021	Home Affairs Select Committee visit to Dover to review various areas, including the JCR and MRCC, and Tug Haven facilities.	INQ003174
29/07/2021	HMCG internal email about migrant operations in Dover and plans for changes to arrangements.	INQ003195
29/07/2021	Decision is made to increase the complement at Dover to 2 "MAROPS" (understood to refer to Maritime Operations) controllers (this is ratified at a meeting on 13 October 2021).	INQ007384
29/07/2021	In response to a question in the House of Lords, HO confirm the assets available in the BF fleet, and that as a minimum a Cutter and two CPVs will be permanently deployed to cover the Dover Straits.	INQ000009
30/07/2021	COLO is working with Julie-Ann Wood to develop a training package for HMCG SAR Mission Coordinators (SMC) and Commanders relating to small boats, but the training is said to be on hold at that time due to issues with releasing the updated small boat SOP / Protocol more widely.	INQ003217
07/2021	3,512 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
08/2021	In August and September 2021, presentations on small boat procedures are delivered to officers at the JRCC, MRCC Dover and MRCC Humber. Training includes information on the use of the small boats tracker shared between HMCG and BF, known as the UK Shared Tracker.	INQ010098 INQ008914
Early 08/2021	Proposed protocol is being tested. It is planned that the small boat protocol and SOPs will be implemented in September. Input is being given on the draft SOP and Protocol.	INQ003239 INQ003294 INQ003316
08/2021	HMCG commence recruitment for additional staff at MRCC Dover, resulting in the appointment of 9 officers.	INQ010098
03/08/2021	A SAR incident involving a small boat, resulting in an HMCG Tier 1 review, with concerns noted about the use of the remote SMC, and providing more officers at Dover.	INQ008907
04/08/2021	A Migrant Incident Activity Report is produced by HMCG COLO on a particularly busy day for crossings. This refers to the use of scripts used when contacting emergency services, specifically referring to “vessel sinking”, “critically ill individuals” and “loss of engine”. The report notes that: i. There had been a delay in sharing the French Migrant Tracker, which already contained 23+ incidents when it was shared. ii. As the apparent number of migrant vessels in distress had increased, there had been a loss of effective communication with the remote SMC, which had consequences to shared situational awareness and joint understanding of risk. iii. During a 10-minute aerial tasking meeting four distress phase incidents had been created (many, on review, from the same vessel). iv. There were issues with sufficiency of resources to attend incidents: one migrant vessel had been left for over two hours with a single BF jet-ski, and that resources were becoming stretched. There were often no available assets. v. Later during the incident, the newly appointed SMC had focused on analysing where there were overlaps or duplication in incidents.	INQ007279

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	vi. The Maritime Operations Officers (MOO) had been struggling with the amount of information, logging it, analysing it and communicating with the remote SMC, and had inadequate time for breaks. These were not new observations: BF colleagues had also raised that previous “red days” had seen staff at MRCC Dover displaying signs of tiredness bordering on exhaustion with a consequent drop in performance, particularly when there had been multiple red / amber days, with the same team (often with MOOs under training) having to manage the response. The COLO identifies the critical risks arising from the above to include: (1) Loss of organisational reputation. (2) Staff retention, welfare and morale. (3) Loss of life at sea from ineffective/inadequate preparation and/or response. (4) Failure to recognise/or declare a Major Incident when the criteria have been met. The definition of Major Incident is: An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which require special arrangements to be implemented by one or more responder agency. (5) Inability to adequately defend the organisation at any subsequent investigation, inquest or enquiry which focuses on post-incident reviews and/or lessons learnt. The COLO makes 9 recommendations as follows: (1) The presence of an SMC physically based at MRCC Dover for all ‘amber and red days.’ (2) Sufficient trained personnel at MRCC Dover for all ‘amber and red days’ to support the SMC. (3) Conducting adequate preparation and resourcing when there is credible intelligence and/or information to indicate that an ‘amber and/or red day’ is likely. (4) The implementation of SOPs and Protocols that are tested, trained, exercised and regularly reviewed. (5) The implementation of migrant specific post-incident reviews both internally (and with partner agencies) to ensure that lessons are learnt, and new strategy and/or tactics can be developed. (6) Welfare support for staff that are exhibiting any signs of stress, tiredness and/or a drop in performance due to repetitive exposure to ‘amber and red days.’	

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	(7) The proportionate and careful use of ‘broadcast action’ when dealing with multiple migrant incidents in distress and ‘broadcast actions’ which can be focussed on specific vessels by using C-Scope/Automatic Identification System (AIS). (8) Early access to the French Migrant Tracker can ensure that the Ops Room aren’t overwhelmed with information immediately and have sufficient time to assess the data. This was apparent when Thursday’s (5th August) day started with 7 incidents on the French tracker as opposed to 23 incidents on Wednesday. (9) The creation of one UK Migrant Incident Tracker which all parties (HMCG and BF) can access and input into.	
04/08/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003244
05/08/2021	BF Maritime Command publish a Turnaround Tactic and Delivery Plan for Dover between the 9-29 August 2021. This is a planning document setting out a timeframe and content for training towards operational delivery of the small boats turnaround tactic.	INQ003252
06/08/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003257 INQ003261
15/08/2021	A further Migrant Incident Activity Report is produced by HMCG Head of International Liaison, which “mirrored or further supported” some of the observations, risks and recommendations made in the report dated 4 August 2021. It notes loss of life as a risk and made recommendations which largely mirror those in the 4 August review. The report addresses actions required at the strategic, tactical and support level. The report notes that at the tactical level there was a slow flow of information, and an overwhelm by volume of work, with the tactical and operational levels overwhelmed. It states, “Welfare of staff - it was very clear that the BF JCR staff, Dover ops team...were all under significant stress and effectively “firefighting”. All were unable to take any effective breaks, and/or refreshments which compounded human factor and welfare risks.”	INQ003323
16/08/2021	Chief Coastguard requests an urgent meeting to discuss the Dover Migrant Response.	INQ003320
17/08/2021	HMCG internal email setting out points for discussion relating to reports of the 4 August 2021 and 15 August 2021, including key areas of concern and recommendations. Concerns include lack of situational	INQ003322

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	awareness and challenges of the remote SMC, staff at capacity for long periods, numerous migrant trackers, high level migrant activity not restricted to red days, and not making a declaration of a Major Incident when high intensity days would meet that definition.	
17/08/2021	HMCG internal email states that MRCC Dover is low on staff numbers, experience and competence, and appeals to qualified staff from elsewhere within the Coastguard network to undertake work at Dover until around October, by which time new staff will have been trained.	INQ003327
17/08/2021	HMCG training presentation on Migrant Incidents Phases of Response.	INQ008914
18/08/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting, at which there is further discussion about “direct comms between French & UK assets onscene (VHF CH67 or 68) to ensure casualty vessel is not left unattended”. Dover had spoken to BF a few months back, but this requires further discussion and would be taken to the BF table top exercise for discussion, with a target date of the 31 August 2021. A request is also made for the French migrant tracker to be emailed to Dover as often and early as possible, with the French agreeing to feed this back to their ops room.	INQ000199
19/08/2021	Discussion by HMCG Maritime & Aviation Operational Lead about direct Very High Frequency (VHF) communications between BF and French vessels, which concludes that this will not be possible as VHF communications were not secure, and the operations were too sensitive.	INQ003333
21/08/2021	A further HMCG debrief on migrant activities addresses actions required at the strategic, tactical and support level. This includes notes that at the tactical level there is a slow flow of information, and an overwhelming volume of work, with the tactical and operational levels overwhelmed, and records “Welfare of staff - it was very clear that the BF JCR staff, Dover ops team and [name redacted] were all under significant stress and effectively “firefighting”. All were unable to take any effective breaks, and/or refreshments which compounded human factor and welfare risks.”	INQ003379
23/08/2021	Stephen Whitton sends an email to HMCG officers (including George Papadopoulos) and BF staff to discuss turnaround tactics and the roles, working practices and training that will be required for it.	INQ003344
24/08/2021	HMCG Policy Emergency Telephone Call Handling.	INQ005185
25/08/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ008052

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
25/08/2021	Email from JRCC Manager records that the Chief Coastguard wants a dedicated fixed wing aircraft for migrant activity surveillance for all Red and Amber days, and that this has been discussed and agreed with 2Excel.	INQ003365
27/08/2021	Email chain commencing on the 27 August 2021 and ending on the 15 November 2021, during which time BF request and attempt to obtain access to the UK Shared Tracker.	INQ010051
09-29/08/2021	HO led training programme on turnaround tactics.	INQ003252 INQ003333
End of August 2021	Arrangements are being made for the roll out of training for the new Migrant Incident SOP and SAR Termination Protocol, with a plan for the documents to be published internally by the 6 September 2021.	INQ003384 INQ003387
08/2021	3,053 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
August & September 2021	HO observe a substantial increase in the number of crossing attempts, indicating that the outturn for the year is likely to significantly exceed that of 2020.	INQ010134
August & September 2021	Training is delivered within HMCG on small boat procedures, including use of the HMCG tracker, and on the Use of the Incident Migrant Activity SOP and SAR Termination Protocol. Full training is not provided to all SMCs during the initial period due to shift working.	INQ010098 INQ004663 INQ008914 INQ003396 INQ004550
09/2021	HMCG launch a second recruitment campaign, resulting in 5 officers being recruited.	INQ010098
01/09/2021	HMCG emails about tasking for migrant activity.	INQ003400
02/09/2021	COLO requests assistance in drafting a formal agreement for the sharing of the HMCG Tracker with BF.	INQ009941
07/09/2021	MCA Board meeting held. An update is provided on the latest position on migrant crossings, including an increase in crossings due to recent good weather, and the creation of a new team who would work a shift pattern coinciding with anticipated crossing to minimise pressure on the national network. An update is provided on surveillance cover during recent peak crossing periods.	INQ003736
09/09/2021	An exercise is conducted where HMCG exercised command and control of new small boat tactics with BF. This is held at the JCR at MRCC Dover to test communications and decision making with BF and HMCG.	INQ010098
09/09/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003424

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
09/09/2021	BF holds training on turnback "termination protocol" tactics, with further planned training on the 13 September.	INQ000200
09/09/2021	HMCG Policy: SAR Incidents Involving Migrants.	INQ000449
10/09/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, it is recorded that recent small boat incidents involved "one trip only vessels" which are not made to commercial standards and are not seaworthy, posing a much greater risk of SAR. The RNLI notes that the migrant vessels are "bigger and less safe" and raise the burden on their crews/volunteers.	INQ000200
11/09/2021	The Times report on planned procurement by the HO for BF, including replacing the existing cutter fleet, since its five cutters are "at least 17 years old and are regularly out of service for repair."	INQ000009
13/09/2021	Protocol for HMCG Termination of SAR.	INQ007381
14/09/2021	Stephen Whitton sends an email to George Papadopoulos and other HMCG and BF staff confirming that his team have continued to train in delivering the Operation Sommen tactics while a decision from the Home Secretary remained pending.	INQ003449
16/09/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting attended by the Dutch Coastguard. MRCC Gris-Nez sends apologies.	INQ000216
20/09/2021	HMCG Policy: SMC Roles and Responsibilities.	INQ000401
22/09/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, it is noted that an email sent had had a "negative impact" for RNLI, and it is noted that "RNLI would rather know when BF are low on assets so they can feed it back to the crews".	INQ000201
22/09/2021	In a draft letter titled "2021 09 22 - Draft Letter to centre - UK France position and maritime tactics RM.docx" which appears to have been drafted by the MCA, readiness to deployment maritime turnaround tactics and concerns in relation to France's view of the tactic are discussed.	INQ003472
23/09/2021	MCA Sponsorship Board - Meeting Note and Actions.	INQ008057
23/09/2021	A CCTC campaign plan assessment workshop for Operation Sommen takes place. The aim of the exercise is to review the Operation Sommen procedures and HMCG SAR termination for small boats.	INQ010098
24/09/2021	Updated MCA Aircraft Tasking Policy (Operation EOS HMCG) V 1.12.	INQ005198
24/09/2021	MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez meeting. MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez discuss a recent small boat incident in which a French ship's offer of assistance and rescue had been refused by some of the migrants. MRCC Dover asks if there were "any thoughts around [deploying a second rescue craft] for future incidents that	INQ000208

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	may result in... multiple people in the water". There are also discussions about issues of clarity about who had overall coordination, and Dover not knowing about the incident until seen by a UK helicopter. MRCCs Dover and Gris-Nez discuss how they could "make this better".	
27/09/2021	Report for MCA Board October 2021 Meeting – Agenda Item 03 Chief Executive's Organisational Report	INQ003509
28/09/2021	The CCTC inform the HO and Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice that BFMC stand ready to deploy turnaround tactics and answer further questions arising from a submission on the 16 September 2021 seeking policy clearance.	INQ003508
28/09/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ009215
29/09/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call, RNLI note that there has been a busy weekend for Walmer RNLI, who have been out for over 6hrs, and that there are concerns around landing at Ramsgate.	INQ000212
30/09/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction Migrant – Red / Amber End-of-Day Sweep Tasking.	INQ006195
30/09/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ008050
30/09/2021	The Chief Coastguard issues a "UKARCC Temporary Operation Instruction", stating that on "RED" migrant weather crossing days a fixed wing aircraft would be provided on scene to support Dover HMCG, and that on "AMBER" days an aircraft would be held in readiness at Lydd/Southend. The Operating Instruction notes that the primary function of the fixed wing assets is to build a recognised maritime picture to support maritime operations, which "ideally...should match the Migrant Tracker". The Operating Instruction also recognises that, by the end of each day, not all vessels on the "Migrant Tracker" would be accounted for, and that an end-of-day search would be requested following the conclusion of "RED" and "AMBER" day taskings.	INQ006195
09/2021	3,053 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
10/2021	DfT produce an interim report into the MCA which makes a number of recommendations. The report does not make any substantive recommendations on HMCG's SAR operations.	INQ010337 INQ008152
October & November 2021	In October and November 2021, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons conducts an unannounced inspection of the facilities at Tug Haven in Dover, which is the location where migrants would be disembarked from Border Force vessels and processed by BF and Immigration Enforcement officers.	INQ010134
04/10/2021	Paper for MCA Board October 2021 Meeting – Agenda Item 09 – Response to the DfT Review of the MCA Recommendations.	INQ008153

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
05/10/2021	MCA Board meeting at JRCC, Fareham.	INQ000961
06/10/2021	DfT email sending key points from small boats huddle.	INQ001112
06/10/2021	HMCG Policy: Incidents Involving Migrants	INQ000440
07/10/2021	The MCA holds an initial meeting to discuss how best to procure additional assets for the purpose of situational awareness in the Channel. (This is the first step in the initiation of Operation CAESAR.)	INQ001370
07/10/2021	A multi-stakeholder tabletop training exercise involving HMCG, BF, RNLI and the Police takes place to test the termination of SAR and whether BF can initiate Operation Sommen.	INQ010098
07/10/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003541
08/10/2021	Incident involving small boats, resulting in HMCG Operational Learning Report. This records that there had been a lack of communication with specific information from Dover CG to aerial assets.	INQ008554
09/10/2021	Incident involving small boats, resulting in HMCG Operational Learning Report. This records that there had been better search plans provided than during the previous day's incident, but poor coordination or details of what to do when helicopters came across migrant vessels.	INQ008555
09/10/2021	The first operational flight of Operation Reveal takes place. Under Operation Reveal, RVL Aviation are proactively tasked by CCTC to detect, assess, and track small boats at sea.	INQ010102
12/10/2021	HMCG Declared and Additional Resources document.	INQ003768
12/10/2021	The CCTC request that the JMSC facilitate a mass casualty exercise.	INQ005264 INQ010134
12/10/2021	A Small Boats Tasking and Coordination Forum meeting chaired by the HO takes place. It is noted that use of the Tekever drones continues to be suspended by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).	INQ003689
13/10/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction: SMC Support to Dover.	INQ006190
13/10/2021	HMCG Policy: Search Suspension and Termination	INQ000450
14/10/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003605
14/10/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction: Adoption of Named Search Areas for Migrant SAR.	INQ006192
14/10/2021	HMCG Maritime Tactical Commander Incident Review v2, providing information on the role of a Maritime Tactical Commander.	INQ003775
15/10/2021	HMCG Aircraft Tasking Policy for Migrant Surveillance Patrols.	INQ000461

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
18/10/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, it is noted that it has been a very busy weekend with beach landings and RNLI deployments and lots of duplicates, despite it being a 'green' day.	INQ000202
18/10/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction: Adoption of Named Intelligence Areas for Small Boat Channel Crossings where improved situational awareness is required.	INQ006191
19/10/2021	HMCG Policy: Contacting On Call Duty Personnel.	INQ003766
21/10/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003681
26/10/2021	HMCG Policy: ARCC Small Boat Response.	INQ001456
28/10/2021	At an Operational Response Conference Call attended by HMCG, RNLI, and BF, it is noted that migrants are making attempts to cross on 'green' days.	INQ000210
28/10/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003697
29/10/2021	A CCTC meeting entitled "Resourcing SOLAS 2022" is held to address the issue of resourcing search and rescue at sea. It is suggested at the meeting that civilian vessels be commissioned for SAR operations, manned with BF personnel.	INQ010337
10/2021	2,701 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
11/2021	An MoU between HMCG and the National Police Chiefs' Council on the coordination of search and rescue resources at coastal incidents in England and Wales comes into effect. It refers to Operation Waypoint, HMCG's Major Incident Plan.	INQ008911
11/2021	Insufficient staffing and operational capacity issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic continue to affect the availability of airport services.	INQ010335
11/2021	Dominic Golden (ARCC) states that he is aware of a growing trend of inaccurate and exaggerated information being passed to HMCG and others from small boats.	INQ009628
11/2021	HMCG launches a third recruitment campaign, resulting in 8 officers being recruited.	INQ010098
11/2021	A new risk is added to the MCA corporate risk register that: "HM Coastguard may become overwhelmed due to unquantifiable levels of migrant channel crossing activity occurring during periods of good weather".	INQ000167
11/2021	HMCG SAR-H and ASV (understood to refer to Aerial Surveillance and Verification) Diagram identifying aerial assets available to HMCG for SAR incidents.	INQ008920

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
03/11/2021	Emails about emerging trends and aviation tasking for migrant boats.	INQ003708
04/11/2021	JMSC facilitate a mass casualty exercise that is attended by Kent Police, RNLI, BF, South East Coast Ambulance Service and HMCG.	INQ010134
04/11/2021	Minutes of MCA Board meeting held on the 2 November 2021	INQ008142
04/11/2021	HO staff member begins working on a draft of the BFMCC Mass Casualties at Sea – Response Plan.	INQ005268
04/11/2021	Multi-organisation live training exercises Martingale and Amber are carried out to provide "proof of concept for helicopter deployed life raft operations, and to explore the use of this tactic in the channel migrant and mass rescue operations environment".	INQ008908 INQ009672
04/11/2021	HMCG Alerting and Tasking Operations Guide.	INQ006201
05/11/2021	DfT / MCA small boats action tracker is circulated.	INQ003709
08/11/2021	HMCG draft review of recommended staffing levels proposes a different approach to MRCC staffing levels, encompassing an increased headcount at Dover for small boats activity.	INQ001329
08/11/2021	GWMAH 7608/21 Small Boat Placemat v1 Home Office.	INQ005293
09/11/2021	Concerns are raised at HMCG Red Day meeting about staffing levels.	INQ000215
09/11/2021	The issues relating to the suspension of the Tekever drone (see entry dated 12 October 2021) are resolved and Tekever are flying drones AR3 and AR5 again.	INQ010337
Approx 10/11/2021	The MoD agree a MACA request from the JMSC for support for coordinated "Exercise Joint Blockade" on behalf of the HO, which is to take place on the 23-25 November 2021, to focus on the UK response to an escalating blockade by foreign vessels of a UK port.	INQ008937 INQ009649
10/11/2021	Emails about small boats huddle actions / tracker.	INQ001099
11/11/2021	The HO receives the "go ahead" from HO cyber security to access HMCG's UK Shared Tracker. The request to access the tracker is with HO IT and is confirmed as a priority task.	INQ003714
11/11/2021	A report on the JMSC facilitated mass casualty exercise on 4 November 2021 is published. The report sets out the exercise, the response of the organisations involved and issues arising from their responses. It notes recommendations and opportunities to improve.	INQ009672
11/11/2021	1,250 migrants cross the Channel in 36 boats. This is an "unprecedented number".	INQ010337
11/11/2021	A critical incident is declared at the migrant processing facility at Tug Haven in respect of overcrowding due to the number of incoming migrants received over the course of the day.	INQ010134

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
11/11/2021	Western Jet Foil, a new purpose-built migrant reception facility, opens.	INQ010134
11/11/2021	HMCG Policy: Vessel – Reported in Difficulties.	INQ000433
12/11/2021	A BF Gold Call is held, which focuses on their response to migrant crossings. In an internal follow up email sent by the DfT, it is recorded that a critical incident has been declared in response to the unprecedented number of crossings in the last 24hrs, and the situation at Tug Haven is described as a "humanitarian crisis". BF is said to be under huge resource pressures to deal with the numbers, and BF maritime teams are also under significant pressure. It is also noted that "BF do not have suitable vessels to rescue people due to the types of some crafts used for crossings and are relying heavily on RNLI as they have the right vessels for the wave height. BF shared concerns regarding the resilience of the RNLI due [to] these pressures".	INQ004159
12/11/2021	A cross-Whitehall meeting is held in relation to the small boat situation, which addresses the operational response, contingency planning and diplomatic engagement with the French. Following the meeting, the DfT circulates a note of the meeting internally within the DfT and MCA, noting that there is an issue of processing migrants at Tug Haven, and that deployment of the turnaround tactic could be a concern when capacity is tight because it means less vessels available for SAR. The DfT note records that "key things for us" include "Any concerns around impacts on Dover operations, because of these high numbers...Any concerns around RNLI/HMCG capacity/pressures", recording that an MCA attendee had "raised no immediate concerns. But it was definitely a problem".	INQ001101 INQ010337 INQ001966
12/11/2021	Cabinet Office email to DfT on HMCG / RNLI thresholds and SitRep indicators, requesting that DfT look at determining a threshold at which HMCG / RNLI capacity would likely be overwhelmed.	INQ003715
12/11/2021	DfT request information from HMCG on assets available for SAR in the Channel in relation to small boats, stating that it has been flagged SAR resource was not infinite that there would be a problem if capacity was maintained at such a high level, but that it is understood that capability was okay for the immediate outlook. HMCG provide details about capacity and pressure due to the recent volume of crossings and duration of call outs.	INQ001055 INQ010337 INQ003718 INQ007893 INQ001949
12/11/2021	HO respond to a DfT summary of the cross-Whitehall meeting, stating "My sense is that the maritime element of small boat operations continues to run as BAU [Business as Usual] (though stretched). The critical incident is focused on the land response. Thus, no need therefore to stand up any multi-agency	INQ007886 INQ008099

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
	contingency plans, but let's stay connected over the weekend." The email requests that if there was a request for wider support at sea, there be deconfliction with planning for other activities.	
15/11/2021	Emails between HMCG and HO relating to granting the HO access to HMCG's UK Shared Tracker.	INQ010051
15/11/2021	Further DfT email about SAR capacity, noting that multiple days of consecutive activity at sea put pressure on the RNLI crews and availability to respond, noting that the current lifeboat provision is based on historical SAR data for the area prior to the occurrence of small boat crossings in the Channel.	INQ007893
15/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts with moderate confidence that due to weather the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 was unlikely.	INQ000131
15/11/2021	Annotated Agenda (dated 11 November 2021) for discussion and summary of discussion between Brian Johnson (MCA) and Minister Courts on the 15 November 2021, confirming that turnaround tactics had been signed off, but that there had been no requests to terminate search and rescue activities. The agenda states "There will be winter crossings, but our attention is turning to preparations for when the weather improves in the spring." The summary states that there was "Concern about potential to run out of capacity in peak Spring season".	INQ001336, INQ001179
16/11/2021	There is an incident a week prior to the 23 November 2021 when false information had been provided, which is said to have made triaging calls difficult.	INQ010140
16/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts with moderate confidence that the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 is unlikely.	INQ000134
16/11/2021	1,200 people are intercepted crossing the Dover strait.	INQ010445
16/11/2021	At HMCG Red Day meeting, it is noted "RNLI – overall – very evident that fatigue is playing a part in volunteers and crews – changing crews out – issues regarding employers – being managed – trying to address support".	INQ000209
16/11/2021	HMCG Duty Operations Director Guidelines	INQ000457
17/11/2021	DfT email about SAR capacity, referring to discussions on the subject which "doesn't get at the problem of describing stress on the capability and the ceiling at which that capability will be overwhelmed".	INQ007893
Approx 17/11/2021	A Cabinet Committee, the Domestic & Europe (Illegal Migration) Committee is established, because of the scale of the challenge of the arrival of illegal migrants in small boats.	INQ006725 INQ004191

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
17/11/2021	The CCTC Commander gives evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee about the Home Office's aerial operation to counter small boats crossing.	INQ000009
17/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts with moderate confidence that due to weather the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 is unlikely.	INQ000137
17/11/2021	HMCG Policy: SAC Instructions to SRUs	INQ003795
18/11/2021	HMCG respond to the DfT request on the 12 November 2021 for information on assets available for SAR in the Channel in relation to small boats. In their response, HMCG state that BF and RNLI assets are tasked, but that BF respond to 89% of small boat incidents. HMCG explain that they are currently working to increase air presence to support situational awareness and are due to send a submission to the minister seeking approval for unmanned drone and fixed wing air support.	INQ010337 INQ008168 INQ008169
18/11/2021	The MCA make a submission to DfT for approval of increased capacity in Coastguard Aviation, which is noted.	INQ000103 INQ000106
18/11/2021	A ministerial briefing regarding the capacity of HMCG aviation assets carrying out search and rescue services notes that HMCG planes have reached the limits of their operating capacity. The briefing states that the numbers of small boats crossing and consequent demand for aviation assets is expected to increase.	INQ006725
18/11/2021	An Operation Deveran Joint Activity Review Meeting is attended by HMCG, BF, HO and Tekever. It is noted that attendees had recognised that separation of SAR coordination and duplication of effort had impacted on shared situational awareness, joint understanding of risk and effective communications, and created risks to effective SAR. It is agreed that a co-location of the Border Force Maritime Liaison Officer (BFMLO) and aerial asset positions within the MRCC should be trialed, but that this can only commence once access to the Joint Incident Migrant Tracker is available to all parties. This is an action from the meeting. It is also recognised that BF and RNLI assets are functioning at the highest level of their capacity, and that for BF this situation is at a critical level which will need to be resolved. In relation to air assets, it is noted that the tasking of, communication with and situational awareness derived from the use of aerial assets is somewhat disjointed.	INQ009957
18/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts (without a confidence indicator) that due to weather the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 is unlikely.	INQ000140

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
18/11/2021	BF gain live access and the ability to edit the Shared UK Tracker.	INQ009632
18/11/2021	HMCG Remote SMC Policy	INQ000446
19/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts (without a confidence indicator) that due to weather the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 is unlikely.	INQ000143
19/11/2021	HMCG sends an email to all HMCG stations stating that a decision has been made to provide MRCC Dover with enduring, reliable, operational network support to coordinate the SAR response to small boats crossings.	INQ003731
20/11/2021	827 people are intercepted crossing the Dover Strait.	INQ010445
19/11/2021	Ad hoc HMCG Red Day meeting is attended by HMCG, MCA and RNLI.	INQ000203
19/11/2021	An invitation is sent to an Op Altair Gold Call by the Director of the CCTC.	INQ009674
19/11/2021	Ad hoc HMCG Red Day meeting is attended by HMCG, MCA and RNLI. The RNLI raise a concern about crew fatigue and a "shortfall" on Saturday morning, which they will be planning for, and which they are hoping to manage if one lifeboat station goes off with crew fatigue. There is discussion about how to manage this, and whether to consider a rostering system.	INQ000204
19/11/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction: Transfer of Maritime Zones 11 & 13.	INQ006193
20/11/2021	RNLI Ramsgate refuse a SAR tasking from HMCG to rescue a small boat in the English Channel, on the basis that BF are not doing their jobs, and people are not in the water. HMCG has to wait for BF vessel Hurricane (at the time on another tasking) to attend the incident, at which 25 people are recovered.	INQ004359 INQ010098 INQ000712
20/11/2021	A Small Boats Update Call takes place with HMCG, the RNLI, and the JRCC (Air and Maritime Commanders) in attendance. It is noted that there had been a refusal to launch by RNLI Ramsgate the previous night due to no BF assets being active, with a note that the RNLI would speak to the coxswain to understand decision making and report back.	INQ000205
20/11/2021	27 small boat occupants are rescued from the water.	INQ008357
20/11/2021	An ad hoc HMCG Red Day meeting is held with attendees from HMCG and RNLI. There is a discussion in relation to harbour access in Rye, RNLI crewing, the earlier refusal of RNLI to launch from Ramsgate and BF availability.	INQ000220
22/11/2021	The MCA's submission to DfT on the 18 November 2021 is positively acknowledged by DfT.	INQ000106

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
22/11/2021	The MCA Annual Report and Accounts 2020-2021 is ordered to be printed. The Annual Report records risks associated with the safety of migrants crossing the English Channel as a priority concern.	INQ000166
22/11/2021	A draft HO submission is shared with DfT via HMCG. It addresses the inadequacy of surface assets to deliver SOLAS operations and states that BF maritime and RNLI assets are regularly being overwhelmed by the increased volume of small boat crossings.	INQ001971 INQ010337
22/11/2021	Stephen Whitton sends an email to Daniel O'Mahoney confirming that he cannot identify any periods of time with sufficiently calm weather during which Operation Sommen could be deployed.	INQ010137
22/11/2021	Operation Deveran weather assessment predicts (without a confidence indicator) that due to weather the likelihood of small boat crossings on the night of the 23-24 November 2021 is likely.	INQ000146
22/11/2021	HMCG sends tasking requests to 2Excel in respect of fixed wing aircraft to surveil small boat activity and support SAR in the Dover Strait on the night of the 23-24 November between 03:00-08:00 (Op Eos).	INQ001186 INQ000148 INQ001188
22/11/2021	HMCG Red Day meeting to discuss week ahead, attended by 14 people (HMCG personnel, RNLI, 2Excel, apologies from BF who sent a written briefing instead), with various discussions.	INQ010445 INQ000206 INQ010137
22/11/2021	2Excel informs HMCG that due to having only one aircraft available overnight on the 23-24 November they will not be able to cover the whole tasking period.	INQ001186
22/11/2021	2Excel sends an internal email noting a significant risk in the period discussed in the HMCG Red Day meeting, i.e. 23-25 November.	INQ001190
22/11/2021	HMCG asks 2Excel to confirm what times they will be able to provide coverage, so that HMCG can identify gaps that need cover.	INQ001191
22/11/2021	2Excel inform HMCG that they will look at their plan again and revert.	INQ001192
22/11/2021	2Excel update HMCG that they are working to get enough crew to provide full coverage and will revert with a further update.	INQ001194
22/11/2021	HMCG acknowledge 2Excel's update and state they will wait until 2Excel provide a final outcome on coverage.	INQ001195

Date	Event	Relativity Reference
22/11/2021	Duncan Ley sends an email requesting volunteers to travel to Dover to assist the MRCC with the operational response to anticipated small boats activity during the night shifts on the 23-24 November 2021. The SMC who would support MRCC Dover during the day amends their hours to start watch early at 05:00 on 24 November 2021.	INQ010445 INQ006765
23/11/2021	Paper for MCA Sponsorship Board December Meeting Agenda Item 2.1b Risk – providing an overview of current risks in Corporate Risk Register. This addresses the risk in relation to HO tactics.	INQ000960
23/11/2021	HMCG Policy: Emergency Calls and SMS Text Messages v3.	INQ005192
23/11/2021	HMCG Policy: Terminating a Call Originating from a Migrant Vessel.	INQ010468
24/11/2021	HMCG Policy: Migrant boat incident updates.	INQ000434
24/11/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction: Small Boat Crossings TACOM [Tactical Command] Situation Reports.	INQ006194
24/11/2021	Paper for MCA Board Meeting December 2021. This records as an issue that HMCG is responding to increasing numbers of small boats crossings, and recommends that it is noted this is predicted to continue and will place pressure on HMCG staff, BF and RNLI surface assets, that work is taking place to examine means of addressing the challenge, and that a tabletop exercise will take place on the 2 December 2021 with various stakeholders.	INQ000965
23/11/2021	Letter from Daniel O'Mahoney to the Home Secretary providing an update on small boats.	INQ002233
11/2021	6,971 migrants cross the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
2021	By the end of 2021, a total of 28,526 migrants have crossed the English Channel using small boats.	INQ010134
2021	By the end of 2021, RNLI has attended 240 small boat crossing incidents, rescuing 5,636 people. Using BF and HO data, RNLI estimates that the average number of occupants on a boat in 2021 was 28.	INQ010101