

E MAIL FROM HOME OFFICE 16 MAY 2008

Message from Jacqui Smith

'The [Counter Terrorism Bill](#) will introduce new powers to reinforce the United Kingdom's capability to tackle terrorism. The public evidence sessions took place in April, with appearances from Tony McNulty (Minister of State for Security, Counter-Terrorism, Crime and Policing), Liberty (National Council for Civil Liberties) and the police among others. The standing Committee stages of the Bill began on Tuesday 29th April, continuing every Tuesday and Thursday in May up until the 15th. Report stage is expected to be in the week commencing 16th June. The Bill will then transfer to the Lords.

Our approach throughout has been to emphasise the importance of consensus building. We have consulted widely and many measures, such as post-charge questioning, have already achieved broad support. But the issue of pre-charge detention continues to attract debate. We have therefore listened to concerns and come up with a proposal which will not extend the pre-charge detention limit now but will enable the limit to be extended in future - and only if there is a clear and exceptional need. It will be for Parliament to consider this further in June but we consider that it is right to legislate now to ensure that we can activate the necessary powers when there is a clear operational need for them.'

Message from David Normington

'This week we launched our [Annual Report](#) which sets out how during 2007-08 the Home Office and our delivery partners have worked together to protect the public.

It has been quite a year.

We have achieved our targets, including delivering on our original 2004 PSA targets on crime, anti-social behaviour, drugs and asylum. We have improved our efficiency, reducing our headcount and exceeding the original "Gershon" efficiency targets.

We have a new purpose and a three year strategy, "Working together to protect the public." And this is underpinned by new policy directions on violent crime, citizenship, counter-terrorism and identity.

We have reshaped our organisation following the Machinery of Government changes in May 2007. We now have the lead responsibility across Government for counter-terrorism and have established the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office to take that forward. We have brought together the former Border and Immigration Agency, UK Visas and customs work at the border from HMRC to establish the UK Border Agency.

Our 3 year strategy gives a high priority to improving further our working with partners. Your feedback shows we are making progress. But we are determined to build on that over the next year.

Thank you for all the support you have given us in the past year and for the part you have played in making 2007/08 a year of exceptional progress and performance.'

Current Business at the Home Office

- In a statement to Parliament, the Home Secretary said she believed problems related to cannabis use are serious enough that it should be reclassified into Class B. The decision

reflects the fact that skunk, a much stronger version of the drug, now dominates the UK's cannabis market. If approved by Parliament [cannabis reclassification](#) would take effect from early 2009.

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- Last week the Home Secretary announced a new 'action squad' that will work with police and local agencies in every community to help them take on the problem of [anti-social behaviour](#).
- The work will be backed by £255,000 of new funding, and the Home Secretary called on police, anti-social behaviour coordinators and housing officers to use of all the tools at their disposal to stop low-level violence and street thuggery.
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- The Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 paved the way for the creation of a new body with powers and the obligation to promote, improve, and safeguard official statistics across the UK. The **UK Statistics Authority** was launched on 1 April 2008 and has oversight of all UK official statistics. In future, National Statistics releases from the Home Office as well as any National Statistics outputs from the National Policing Improvement Agency, Independent Police Complaints Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary plus all other Government Departments will be first accessible from the [UK Statistics Authority website](#) at 9:30 am on the day they are published. Further information can be obtained from [David Blunt](#).
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- On 21st April, the Home Secretary announced that John Vine, currently Chief Constable for Tayside Police will be appointed new **Chief Inspector of UK Border Agency** from July.
- The Inspector will have a UK-wide remit and will focus on the overall efficiency and effectiveness across the Agency and its partners' operations.
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- As part of the **Border Force Programme** we will shortly be appointing permanent Lead Officials to act as the key points of contact for stakeholders at a local level. They will work with port operators over the next three months to develop Service Level Agreements to enable us to better match resources with incoming passenger flows and focus more on the on-entry passenger experience.
- Five flagship sites (Gatwick, Coquelles, Teesport, Edinburgh Airport and Harwich) have also been identified where we will integrate certain immigration and customs functions at the border.
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- A pilot to [introduce compulsory identity cards for Foreign Nationals](#) started on 28th April, to test the technology and enrolment process for foreign nationals applying for leave to remain in the UK. This precedes ID cards being issued in November which will further strengthen our border security.
- During the pilot, the fingerprints of 10,000 applicants in the [student and marriage/partnership categories](#) will be taken at the Croydon Public Enquiry Office.
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- Three reports have recently been published by the Identity and Passport Service (IPS):
- [The Identity Cards Scheme Cost Report](#) - the fourth report issued since the Identity Cards Act 2006 received Royal Assent on 30 March 2006. The Government is required to lay before Parliament an estimate of the public expenditure likely to be incurred on the scheme over the following ten years. [Key Projects 2007](#) - focuses on five key projects that IPS has undertaken and lists the lessons that have been learned.
- [Independent Scheme Assurance Panel \(ISAP\) Report](#) - a report of the independent advisory body tasked with overseeing the work to deliver the National Identity Scheme.
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- The **Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT)** has already had a number of successes and achievements across a wide range of activities since its inception in mid-

2007. These include establishing a cross-cutting Public Service Agreement with underpinning performance metrics, securing significant additional funding for Counter-Terrorism in the Comprehensive Spending Review process, and developing and publicising a new approach to **PREVENT** - stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists.

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- Furthermore, the programme to evolve the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy - **CONTEST** - continues. OSCT is hosting two workshops during May for key stakeholders - one for the **PURSUE** refresh project and another on the strategic context for counter-terrorism.

Other Government Business

- Yesterday, the Government published [Preparing Britain for the Future-the Draft Legislative Programme 2008-09](#), which sets out the UK Government's plans for legislative and key non-legislative action in next year's Parliamentary session.
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- If you want to make Your Voice heard, you can comment on the programme at www.CommonsLeader.gov.uk/YourVoice.
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- You can also see what is going on in your region at www.CommonsLeader.gov.uk/regionalactivity.
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- The **National Criminal Justice Board**, chaired by the Home Secretary and with the Justice Secretary and Attorney General present, has endorsed the Office for Criminal Justice Reform's (OCJR) proposal to mainstream the Beacon Approach to all Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB) on a phased programme over the next three years. The decision follows an independent evaluation of a pilot exercise with 10 LCJBs which found that the approach - which gives local boards the tools and capabilities to drive local reform of the Criminal Justice System - could add value to every LCJB. For more information, contact [Jo Jones](#).

Details of upcoming activities

- **19-23 May - National Tackling Drugs Week**
- This week aims to increase public confidence in, and awareness of, the work being done locally to tackle drugs issues. It is a national platform on which local agencies can publicise the wide range of activity being carried out in communities across the country; activity which includes prevention, education, treatment and robust enforcement, including a programme of regional drugs 'action days' and a National Cocaine Summit on 20 May plus a photographic exhibition in Trafalgar Square on the 21 May which shows the impact of cocaine production in Colombia.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is actively supporting the week (Supt [Stuart Lander](#) of Devon and Cornwall police is the designated operational lead.)
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- For further information, contact: [Daniel Walpole](#) or [Louise Graham](#)
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- Nominations for the **2008 Justice Awards** opened this week (running until 4th August) to all staff and volunteers working across the Criminal Justice System. The awards, now in their fifth year, recognise staff and volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty in their work with victims, witnesses, adult and young offenders, and communities.
- Finalists will be invited to attend a national awards ceremony during Inside Justice Week in October. To nominate, visit: www.cjonline.gov.uk/justiceawards or for further information contact [Helen Stear](#).
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- **Honours** are a vital way to recognise the outstanding work done by those working for stakeholder organisations who go the extra mile to help the Home Office achieve its aims. We are looking to honour people who have changed things where they work - especially by practical achievement, or changed the lives of others in their local community for the better. You can nominate a colleague or friend who you consider eligible at any time. Please contact the Honours Secretary Sam.Kruit@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or deputy Duncan.Dunsmore-Rouse@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk for a citation form, guidance notes, and details on how to nominate.

Upcoming conferences

- **20 May: Violent Crime Reduction National Conference** - Local Action through Multi-Agency Working.
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- **20 May (Smith Institute) : Criminal Justice Round Table Debate**
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- **21 May: Closing the Gaps: Crime and Public perceptions** (Ipsos Mori)
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- **20-22 May: Police Federation Annual Conference 2008**
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- **22 May (Birmingham): Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP) - working together to reduce violence**
- The Home Secretary and other Cabinet and Ministerial colleagues will attend this conference to launch a number of products and outputs arising from the work of TGAP; to publicise the impact of TGAP in the four target areas; and give an update on the delivery of the Tackling Violence Action Plan.
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- **17 June: Restorative Approaches** - OCJR event about restorative justice and conflict resolution in public services

Consultations

- The Identity and Passport Service is currently undertaking a series of events as part of the [National Identity Scheme Delivery Plan 2008 consultation process](#). The Delivery Plan was published on 6 March, and this is your chance to hear from the Minister and comment on the proposed way forward.
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- Venues confirmed are Birmingham - 20 May and Newcastle - 11 June with additional events planned in Yorkshire, the South West, the East Midlands, the North West, and Northern Ireland. National events are planned for Wales and Scotland. If you are interested in attending please email IDRoadshow@ips.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact us

If you're having difficulty contacting or engaging with the appropriate part of the Home Office relating to your area of practice, the Stakeholder Strategy Unit may be able to help.

If your query is regarding immigration, asylum, Home Office research and statistics, identity cards, passports or visas, you should [contact each of these areas directly via their own websites](#) in the first instance.

If however you are still having difficulty making contact with the Home Office then please feel free to contact the [Stakeholder Strategy Unit](#) by email or phone: **020 7035 6525**