

(COR0238)

**Written evidence submitted by Heathrow Airport Ltd (COR0238)**

1. I am writing in response to the Home Affairs Select Committee's call for evidence on Home Office preparedness for COVID-19.
2. Heathrow continues to support Border Force to implement health measures to protect our borders as required by Department for Transport and Home Office. However, Border Force must be provided with funding for the resources to deliver these additional measures without generating excessive dwell times in queueing areas.
3. In 2020, Border Force failed to achieve its non-EEA (non-eGate users) Service Level Agreement (SLA) at Heathrow in six of twelve months of the year. Despite the significant reduction in passenger volumes, passengers have experienced longest queue times of over three hours in recent months, and the percentage of non-EEA passengers processed within 45 minutes has been as low as 60% compared to the SLA of 95%. I have enclosed immigration queue time performance data for 2020, which includes the difference in passenger numbers compared to the previous year, which I hope your Committee will find useful.
4. Ensuring the health of all colleagues and passengers is the priority objective of both Heathrow and Border Force, and I am pleased that our local teams have worked effectively together on communicating the latest Government advice and ensuring the airport remains COVID-secure in line with Department for Transport guidance at all times. However, there is a risk that such extreme queue times undermine these efforts unless urgent action is taken by Government to provide consistent eGate opening and additional Border Force resource to improve the passenger flow through the immigration hall.
5. We feel strongly that long-standing resourcing issues at the border have been made worse during the pandemic (see performance data attached). There are a number of complexities such as slot scheduling outside of airport and Border Force control, varying levels of passenger compliance with the UK's latest entry requirements and, as we understand it, an increase in casework as a result of global travel restrictions and new routes to the UK, which have contributed to extremely challenging waiting times at the Heathrow border. And while our teams are on hand to support Border Force and encourage social distancing and ensure face covering compliance, it is the Government's responsibility to ensure the right processes and resource are in place to ensure the UK border remains safe and efficient. This is more pressing than ever with the imminent introduction of managed quarantine.
6. We stand ready to support the Government in improving the situation at the border through a new joint resourcing model and by working together on the design and ongoing optimisation of new and existing processes with the aim of sustaining security and improving passenger compliance and flow through the immigration hall.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Hegarty  
Services Director, Heathrow Airport

Enc: Border Force Performance Data (Heathrow)

**February 2021**

**Border Force Performance at Heathrow – 2020**

**Service Level Agreement (SLA) performance:**

	Non-EEA (SLA = 95% <45 Minutes)				EEA (SLA = 95% <25 Minutes)				Total arrivals	vs. 2019
	Terminal 2	Terminal 3	Terminal 4	Terminal 5	Terminal 2	Terminal 3	Terminal 4	Terminal 5		
<b>Jan-20</b>	92.16%	90.64%	83.92%	92.92%	98.97%	98.07%	98.07%	99.55%	+5.3%	
<b>Feb-20</b>	94.78%	96.55%	96.60%	98.85%	99.23%	98.28%	99.38%	99.66%	+3.8%	
<b>Mar-20</b>	99.44%	99.10%	100.00%	99.71%	99.97%	99.67%	100.00%	100.00%	-52.7%	
<b>Apr-20</b>	100.00%	100.00%	99.95%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.95%	100.00%	-96.9%	
<b>May-20</b>	99.96%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.96%	100.00%	CLOSED	CLOSED	100.00%	-95.9%	
<b>Jun-20</b>	98.98%	CLOSED	CLOSED	100.00%	99.35%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.91%	-94.7%	
<b>Jul-20</b>	91.26%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.78%	99.96%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.28%	-86.6%	
<b>Aug-20</b>	87.50%	CLOSED	CLOSED	92.92%	84.23%	CLOSED	CLOSED	97.67%	-71.8%	
<b>Sep-20</b>	59.91%	CLOSED	CLOSED	79.12%	88.10%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.49%	-74.0%	
<b>Oct-20</b>	70.97%	CLOSED	CLOSED	74.83%	98.03%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.35%	-77.3%	
<b>Nov-20</b>	87.41%	CLOSED	CLOSED	92.68%	98.06%	CLOSED	CLOSED	99.35%	-86.3%	
<b>Dec-20</b>	75.45%	CLOSED	CLOSED	79.88%	94.04%	CLOSED	CLOSED	98.73%	-80.2%	

Longest queue times for non-EEA passengers exceeded three hours in August, September, and October, and was just short of three hours in November and December.