

PROTECTING SMALL PORTS IN EAST ANGLIA

Have you ever spotted suspicious goings on at small ports, airfields or remote coastal areas near you?

If so, the UK Border Agency would like to hear from you.

The UK Border Agency – which helps prevent illegal immigrants, drugs, weapons and other contraband from reaching the UK – has a dedicated team which covers the region north of the River Stour to the Wash, including Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Wisbech, Sutton Bridge, Kings Lynn and the cargo vessels into Ipswich Port.

The team, based at Felixstowe's Customs House, handles all light aviation and maritime traffic coming in and out of marinas, jetties, slip ways, landing points and light aircraft strips in the region.

Its officers are trained to deal with both customs and immigration matters and are constantly on the move intercepting and searching incoming aircraft and vessels from abroad.

Officer Adrian Kudela said:

“We carry out regular visits to harbour masters, coastguards, marina staff and lifeboat stations, but are keen to hear from members of the public too.

“Anyone who has seen suspicious activity along the coast or unusual light aircraft behaviour can reach us 24 hours a day on our hotline - 0800 595000. You can also write to us at Custom House, View Point Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 3RF, or email us at teamindia@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk. All information is treated as confidential.”

Examples of suspicious activity might include:

- Night-time signalling between vessels at sea and people on the shore;
- Large vessels being approached by smaller craft;
- Items or people being landed in remote coastal areas;
- Vessels leaving or arriving at marinas and harbours at irregular times;
- Light aircraft operating at night, flying low in darkness and landing in remote places;
- Items being attached to marker buoys; and,
- Large numbers of passengers embarking or disembarking vessels