



# Department for Transport

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Dear Laura,

Thank you for your email of 29 July on behalf of your constituents about the recent traffic disruption in Kent.

The weekend 22-24 July saw the start of school holidays and the busiest passenger getaway weekend so far this year at Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. Lower than expected volumes of Police Aux Frontières (PAF) staff, the French equivalent of UK's Border Force, and a very serious road traffic accident which caused the M20 to be closed for a prolonged period, led to significant disruption.

The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) is responsible for operational decision making on traffic management measures in response to disruption at Eurotunnel and/or the Port of Dover. The KRF have well-practiced tactical plans in place including Operation Brock. This enables up to 2,000 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to be queued on the coastbound M20 whilst a contraflow system ensures both coastbound and London-bound traffic continues to flow. The scheme was developed by National Highways, the KRF and the Department in 2018 as a better alternative to Operation Stack, which required full closure of the M20.

The traffic management measures the KRF has in place work to mitigate the worst of any disruption, and by the evening of Sunday 24 July congestion had eased. Nevertheless, I fully appreciate the considerable inconvenience caused to residents, hauliers and passengers in Kent when disruption does occur.

My Department is working at pace with the KRF to review the events of the weekend from 22-24 July and to further strengthen response plans where required. In addition, significant diplomatic and Ministerial engagement with our French counterparts has taken place, and will continue, to ensure sufficient PAF resources are deployed at peak times.

I am glad to report there was no disruption on the subsequent weekend (29-20 July) despite similarly high volumes of traffic crossing the Short Straits. We continue to work with local stakeholders to improve existing traffic management plans that reduce the impact of disruption on freight, passengers and local residents, alongside working with the French authorities to maximise the flow of traffic at the border in Kent where they manage the controls.

*Yours,  
Charlotte*

**BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON**