

Press release: Cocaine worth £1.2 million seized by Border Force at Gatwick.

Officers discovered the Class A drugs on the morning of Friday, 6 July when two passengers were stopped after arriving on a flight from Aruba. The weight of the drugs was estimated to be around 15 kilos and a full forensic analysis will now take place.

Tim Kingsberry, Director of Border Force South said:

Using their skill and expertise, Border Force officers protect our country from those who attempt to smuggle in dangerous drugs. In this case, the drugs seized were estimated to have a potential value of approximately £1.2 million once cut and sold on the streets.

Working with law enforcement colleagues like the National Crime Agency (NCA) we are determined to prevent drug trafficking and bring those responsible to justice.

Following the seizure by Border Force, the investigation was passed to the NCA.

A 31-year-old Italian man, David Fasano, and a 25-year-old Spanish woman, Tania Cedino-Piguane were charged with importing a Class A drug. Fasano, of Grove Vale Road, East Dulwich, and Cedino-Piguane, of no fixed address, both appeared at Croydon Magistrates Court on Monday, 9 July and were remanded in custody. They will next appear at Croydon Crown Court on 14 August.

The government's Serious Violence Strategy, which was launched in April, aims to combat the devastating impact drugs have on levels of serious violence.

It also highlights a strong link between drugs and serious violence and the related harm and exploitation from county lines. The government has set out the action it will take to tackle this violent and exploitative criminal activity. The action of Border Force to stop drugs before they get into the country forms a key part of this work.

Border Force officers use hi-tech search equipment to combat immigration crime and detect banned and restricted goods that smugglers attempt to bring into the country.

Nationally, they use an array of search techniques including sniffer dogs, carbon dioxide detectors, heartbeat monitors and scanners – as well as visual searches – to find well-hidden stowaways, illegal drugs, firearms and tobacco which would otherwise end up causing harm to local people, businesses and

communities.

Anyone with information about activity they suspect may be linked to smuggling should call the hotline on 0800 59 5000.