

Dover tailbacks plan would put lives at risk says MP

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Drivers queued for up to 14 hours because of delays at the Port of Dover

Emergency services would be hampered and lives put at risk under a revised plan to help families stuck in traffic at Dover, according to the town's MP.

Two weeks ago hundreds of holidaymakers were stranded for up to 14 hours.

Part of the London-bound A20 had to be closed for police, coastguards and volunteers to hand out water.

Conservative MP Charlie Elphicke said highways officials now wanted to "institutionalise last week's fiasco with added toilet facilities".

He said it was a panic measure which could effectively leave Dover "cut off", with ambulances unable to reach hospitals.

Queues built up when some of the French border control posts at the Port of Dover were left unstaffed on one of the busiest weekends of the year.



There were lengthy waits at the port last weekend with many people stranded overnight and huge numbers stuck in traffic

The government said officials from "various departments" had since been "working round the clock" on robust traffic management plans.

Under "Operation Perch", as queues built up on the A20, the opposite carriageway would again be closed so patrols could provide medical care, "welfare and provisions".

'Worst congestion yet'

In a blog, Mr Elphicke said the A20 was "not fit for purpose for a permanent queuing system".

He called on ministers to spend "less than £500m" to extend motorways to Dover, "upgrade port infrastructure and dig a tunnel".

Traffic data supplier Inrix predicted this weekend holidaymakers could see "the worst congestion yet around Dover and the other side of the Channel".

A spokeswoman at the Port of Dover said it was "still a busy time" but they were "not anticipating any severe delays this weekend".

"Traffic has been flowing well all week and French Border Controls have been adequately staffed," she added.

Highways England told people heading to the port "to check travel conditions before setting out and allow plenty of time".

It advised: "Drivers should also make sure there is plenty of fuel in their vehicles, and they have food, water and things to do for all the people in their vehicle."