



Airport scanner IS the face of things to come

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SCANNERS which match the faces of passengers to their passports are to be fitted at all British airports after a successful trial in Manchester.

More than 300,000 passengers have been scanned since the machines were installed at Manchester Airport's Terminal One a year ago.

They can reduce queues by allowing them to bypass traditional passport control.

The machines take around 15 seconds to scan each passenger's face and check it against the digital photograph recorded in their passport.

Individuals are also checked against international watch-lists before being allowed to pass through. Anyone refused entry is quizzed by UK Border Agency officials who monitor the gates.

Immigration minister Phil Woolas unveiled the latest machines in Terminal Two. He hopes the technology will continue to improve border security and help to cut queues at arrivals.

He said: "Every year over 280 million people come to the UK and in order to keep our borders safe we are introducing these gates at Manchester.

"By scanning passengers' faces we can catch criminals coming into the country and this will help to make the UK safer.

"Manchester was the first place in the country to have these machines and we hope to roll the machines out to all airports within the next three years."

At the moment the system is voluntary and only passengers with the bio-metric passports are eligible.

Mr Woolas told the M.E.N. he is confident that the technology uses elaborate security measures so that even criminals with plastic surgery would not be able to deceive the machines.

The facial recognition gates are part of the biggest shake-up in UK border security for 40 years.

Andrew Cornish, managing director of Manchester Airport, said: "Our passengers tell us that this new technology in our immigration halls provides an even smoother entry process."

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